
Forward

This book contains lessons about the life of Christ from His birth to His ascension. As your students study Jesus' life, they will learn that He came as the fulfillment of ancient prophesy, lived a sinless life, performed many miraculous deeds, and finally died a torturous death on the cross because He knew that it was our only hope of salvation. They will be encouraged to devote themselves to our wonderful Savior.

I have designed these lessons to enable you to teach the Bible expositionally. The idea is to have the kids read the passages in their own Bibles and the teacher explain the scriptures and give good practical applications that are age-appropriate. My goal is to ensure that children learn that God's Word is exciting and meaningful and that teachers teach sound doctrine!

Even though I've scripted the lessons, I don't expect teachers to read my lesson materials verbatim to the children as they teach. My lessons are meant to provide the details you need to get background information and some suggestions for child-oriented personal application. Once you know and understand the Bible lessons for yourself, you'll be ready to teach your class.

The two-column layout of this book is designed so that you can copy and cut the pages in half to fit into your Bible. When the children

observe that you are teaching right out of the Bible, rather than from a curriculum book, it validates God's Word and gives your teaching more authority.

You will discover that there is not always a Craft or Game idea suggested in each lesson. When I've had a good idea that really seems to support the lesson objectives, I've included it. But I have another handbook called *Tips and Tricks — Making Children's Bible Lessons Come to Life* that gives lots of suggestions for activities that will help reinforce your lesson and teach the memory verse. (This is available from my website:

<https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com/>)

Use the Teaching Schedule to help you organize your teaching rotation.

I pray that you will use these lessons for God's glory by teaching the Bible as an entire plan, by a systematic and connected study of the Word.

Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. (Mark 10:14)

Sheila Scroggins

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Teaching Schedule Life of Christ

Date	Teacher	Lesson	Memory Verse
Birth and Boyhood			
		Promised Messiah (Various Prophecies)	<i>For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6)</i>
		An Angel Visits Zechariah (Luke 1:1-18)	<i>For with God nothing will be impossible. (Luke 1:37)</i>
		An Angel Visits Mary (Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38)	<i>Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true." (Luke 1:38)</i>
		Baby Jesus is Born (Luke 2:1-7)	<i>And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21)</i>
		And Jesus Grew (Luke 2:21-52)	<i>And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. (Luke 2:52)</i>
Start of Ministry			
		John Baptizes Jesus (Matt 3:1-17; Mark 1:1-11; Luke 3:1-22)	<i>Let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father. (Matthew 5:16)</i>
		Jesus' Temptation (Matt 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13)	<i>"For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword..." (Hebrews 4:12)</i>
		Jesus calls His Disciples (Matt 4:18-22)	<i>A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. (Proverbs 18:24)</i>
		Jesus' First Miracle (John 2:1-10)	<i>My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)</i>
		Nicodemus Talks to Jesus (John 3:1-20)	<i>For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)</i>
		The Samaritan Woman at the Well (John 4:1-42)	<i>...he who believes in Me shall never thirst. (John 6:35b)</i>
		Two Reactions to Jesus (Luke 4:14-40)	<i>Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. (Joshua 24:15)</i>
		Fishers of Men (Luke 5:1-11)	<i>Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men. (Matthew 4:19)</i>
		Jesus Heals the Paralytic (Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26)	<i>This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. (John 15:12).</i>

Teaching Schedule

Date	Teacher	Lesson	Memory Verse
Early Ministry in Galilee			
		Beatitudes (Pt. 1) (Matthew 5:1-6)	<i>Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. (Psalm 32:1)</i>
		Beatitudes (Pt. 2) (Matthew 5:7-12)	<i>Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matt 5:16)</i>
		Jesus Calms the Storm (Mark 5:35-41)	<i>You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. (Isaiah 26:3)</i>
		Jesus Raises Jairus' Daughter (Mark 5:21-43)	<i>And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6)</i>
		Jesus Feeds 5,000 (Mark 6:30-44)	<i>He who gives to the poor will not lack, but he who hides his eyes will have many curses. (Proverbs 28:27)</i>
		Jesus Walks on Water (Matthew 14:22-33)	<i>God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear. (Psalm 46:1-2a)</i>
Later Ministry in Central and Southern Palestine			
		Rich Young Ruler (Mark 10:17-27)	<i>For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. (James 2:10)</i>
		Blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46-52)	<i>Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law. (Psalms 119:18)</i>
		The Good Shepherd (Luke 15:1-7)	<i>Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8)</i>
		Zacchaeus Meets Christ (Luke 19:1-10)	<i>Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. (Psalm 51:10)</i>
		Lazarus Comes Back to Life (John 11:1-46)	<i>He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. (1 John 5:12)</i>
		The Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-9)	<i>Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. (Rom 12:2a NLT)</i>
Last Week of Jesus' Life			
Date	Teacher	Lesson	Memory Verse
		Jesus' Triumphal Entry (Matt 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-44)	<i>Let my mouth be filled with Your praise and with Your glory all the day. (Psalm 71:8)</i>
		Last Supper (Matt 26:20-30; Mark 14:17-21; Luke 22:1-20)	<i>John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Behold! The lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!" (John 1:29).</i>

Teaching Schedule

Date	Teacher	Lesson	Memory Verse
		Christ Washes the Disciple's Feet (John 13:1-17)	<i>As we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith. (Galatians 6:10)</i> or, <i>He who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. (Matthew 22:11-12)</i>
		Jesus in the Garden (Matthew 26:30-56)	<i>Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16)</i>
		Jesus' Trial and Crucifixion (Mark 14; Luke 22, 23; John 18, 19)	<i>He was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. (Isaiah 53:5 NLT)</i> or, <i>Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. (John 15:13)</i>
		The Resurrection (Matt 27, 28; Mark 16, and John 20)	<i>Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. (John 5:24)</i>
		Jesus Appears on the Emmaus Road (Luke 24:1-43)	<i>And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. (Luke 24:31a)</i>
		Jesus Appears to Thomas (John 20:19-29)	<i>And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved..." (Acts 16:31)</i>
		Jesus Appears in Galilee (John 21:1-17)	<i>The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23)</i>
		The Ascension (Luke 24:36-43; Acts 1:3-11)	<i>And now, dear children, remain in fellowship with Christ so that when He returns, you will be full of courage and not shrink back from Him in shame. (1 John 2:28 NLT)</i>
Names of Jesus			
		Names of Jesus (Isaiah 9:6)	<i>For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6)</i>
		The "I Am's" of Jesus (part 1)	<i>And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst." (John 6:35)</i>
		The "I Am's" of Jesus (part 2)	<i>I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. (John 15:5)</i>

Promised Messiah

(Various Prophecies)

Introduction

Wishes, Hopes and Dreams....

What sorts of things do you look forward to in the future? Are there things that you are hoping for or wishing for? [Teacher, write the children's responses on the board. Suggestions: Snow, participating in winter sports, being out of school for the holidays, birthdays, Christmas...]

Think of things other than gifts you want to receive, such as what job you'd like to have one day. Or, think of something you'd like to learn how to do such as play a musical instrument or learn a sport.

How does it feel to have to wait for wishes, hopes, or dreams to come true? (*Exciting, frustrating, frightening, discouraging*)

Think about how God's people might have felt while waiting for the Savior to be born. How do you think they kept from being discouraged? (*Prayed for patience, studied God's Word, lived God's way.*)

Getting ready is an important part of waiting. What would be a good thing for you to do while you're waiting for your wishes, hopes and dreams to come true?

Opening Prayer

Father, as we anticipate Christ coming, I pray that we will not forget the reason that He came. You promised that you would send a Savior who would rescue us from the penalty of sin. And, You did! Now we look forward to Jesus coming back again and taking us to heaven to be with Him forever. Help us not to waste time as we wait for His return. Cause us to prepare our hearts by living in such a way that is pleasing to You, Father. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6)

Alternate verses:

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live." (John 11:25)

Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)

Lesson

The Promised Messiah

In the beginning, God created a perfect world and He was very satisfied with everything.

Genesis 1:31

Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good.

When Adam and Eve sinned, our holy God was saddened. His perfect creation was ruined. Immediately after that first sin, God made a promise that he would send a Savior. He told Adam and Eve that they would someday have an offspring that would crush Satan. God was referring to Jesus.

God promised Abraham that in him and his descendants all the world would be blessed.

Genesis 12:1-3

Now the Lord had said to Abram, "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation. I will bless you and make your name great. I

will bless those who bless you and I will curse him who curses you. And in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

From the time of this promise to Abram, people expected a Savior to come who would govern a kingdom of God on earth among the children of Israel.

After 400 years of slavery in Egypt, God raised up Moses who is a type of Jesus. Moses led the people out from the bondage of Pharaoh into the Promised Land. Jesus sets us free from the bondage of sin and is the way to everlasting peace in heaven.

Many hundreds of years later, after Moses led the children of Israel into the Promised Land, God passed the promise on to David.

2 Samuel 7:12-13

When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

Here God was telling David that the Savior would come from David's offspring.

Here are just a few of the Old Testament prophecies of the coming Messiah — God's promised Savior:

Major Old Testament Prophecies

Promise	Verse	Text
The Messiah would be born of a virgin.	Isaiah 7:14	Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Emmanuel. Fulfillment: Luke 1:31-33
The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.	Micah 5:2	But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting. Fulfillment: Luke 2:4-5
The Messiah would be a descendant of the house of David.	2 Samuel 7:12	When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom forever.
The Messiah would be a "Man of sorrows."	Isaiah 53:3	He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was

Promise	Verse	Text
		despised, and we did not esteem Him.
The Messiah would be rejected by His own people.	Psalms 69:8	I have become a stranger to my brothers, and an alien to my mother's children.
The Messiah would be betrayed by a friend.	Psalms 41:9	Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me. Fulfillment: John 13:18, 26
The Messiah would be crucified between two thieves.	Isaiah 53:12	He poured out His soul unto death, and he was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many.
As He died, His spirit would be commend-ed to His Father.	Psalms 31:5	Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have redeemed me, O Lord God of truth. Fulfillment: Luke 23:46
The Messiah would be raised from the dead.	Psalms 16:10	For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. Fulfillment: Acts 2:32-36

Promise	Verse	Text
He would take His place at the right hand of God.	Psalms 110:1	The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool."
He will some day return to earth to reign.	Zechariah 6:11-15	He shall bear the glory and shall sit and rule on His throne.

Fulfillment in Jesus Christ

Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies when He came to deliver humans from the reign of sin and bind us into God's family.

Luke 4:16-19

So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the Synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken hearted. To proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Jesus fulfilled over 300 specific prophecies from the Bible. Here are just a few:

Promise	Verse	Text
He prophesied that He would die, and rise again.	Matthew 16:21	From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things ... and be killed, and be raised the third day.
He prophesied that He would sit on David's throne.	Matthew 19:28	So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."
	Luke 1:32-33	He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.
He became the full and final sacrifice for sins.	John 10:11-18	I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep...I lay down My life for the sheep.

Promise	Verse	Text
	Hebrews 9:12	Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.
He taught that His kingdom is not part of this present world system.	John 18:36	Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."

After Jesus' death and resurrection, Peter boldly proclaimed that Jesus was the promised One. At the end of his sermon, he said...

Acts 2:36-39

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

Everyone in the world — including you and me — is born a sinner and needs to be saved. God knew we would need a Savior right from the beginning. That's why He made the promise to Adam and Eve, Abraham, Moses, and David.

And, God was faithful to His promise. He came in human form and was born as a baby in Bethlehem. He lived a sinless life and experienced a savage death by being nailed to a cross. Because Jesus gave His blood when He died on the cross, we can be forgiven and saved from the punishment for sin.

Now we look forward to the fulfillment of God's other promises. He will come back to get us and take us to the place that he went away to prepare for us. We can count on Him being faithful to His Word.

Future Prophecies

Promise	Verse	Text
He promised that He would come again in great power.	Mark 13:26	Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.
	John 14:3	And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.
	Acts 1:11	This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.

We can count on God to be faithful to His Word.

Meanwhile we should prepare ourselves for His coming. What would be the best way to get ready for His return? (*Teacher, let the children respond.*)

Closing Prayer

Father, it is so exciting to think that any day now Jesus could come in great power and glory to get us! We look forward to that day with the same anticipation that we wait for Christmas. But Lord, we don't want You to catch us doing something ungodly on the day that you return. Cause us to keep our minds and hearts centered on the things of God, not on the things of this world. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Heaven is a Wonderful Place. What will the mansion Jesus is preparing for us be like? Copy a Heavenly Mansion from the last page in Lesson #1 for each child onto card stock. Allow them to color and decorate their mansions. Have them choose their favorite door and windows to glue on and color. Ask them which aspect of heaven is most exciting for them to think about. As they work ask, "How do you feel when you remember the hope Jesus gives us? How does hoping in Heaven make your hard problems easier to work through?"

Or, you may also use the following optional directions:

Heavenly-Mansion Doorstop

Purpose: Look forward to Heaven.

Materials: gift wrap, scissors, newspaper, duct tape, clear tape, glue; for each child: small brick or rock, two copies of the Heavenly Mansion (page 6), one copy of the windows and doors (page 6), one cereal box

1. Say: "Jesus is preparing a permanent home for us in Heaven. He is our hope for life that never ends."
2. Ahead of time, use a craft knife to cut open the windows and doors of the mansions. Guide the children to make their doorstops. Give these instructions: Place the brick or rock in the bottom of the cereal box, stuffing crumbled newspaper around it to fill up the box. Tape the cereal box tightly closed with duct tape. Wrap the cereal box in gift wrap. Glue two mansions, side-by-side, on the front, making certain that the brick is at the bottom of the box. Choose which picture to glue behind each window or door.
3. Ask: "Which window or door is your favorite one to open? How do you feel when you remember the hope Jesus gives to us? How does hoping in Heaven make your hard problems easier to work through?"

Game Center

Use the following questions as a hand out, send it home as a "take home" paper, or use in a game of your choice.

The Long Wait

In the beginning, God created a wonderful world.

1. _____ and _____ disobeyed God and brought sin into the world. But God promised a Savior who would save people everywhere from sin.

2. God told a man named _____ that the Savior would come from his family.
3. _____ led God's people out of Egypt where they had been slaves. As they traveled to the promised land, God made another promise: One day a Savior would lead God's people out of the slavery of sin.
4. Later God's people became the nation of Israel. God repeated His promise. The Savior would come through the family of King _____.

Over and over again God spoke to His people through prophets. These men reminded Israel of the coming Messiah — God's promised Savior. God's people listened and waited in hope.

5. One of the greatest prophets was a man named _____. He told Israel many things about the Messiah.

Read Isaiah 7:14.

6. Isaiah said that the Lord would send a sign when the Savior came. A virgin would have a _____ named Emmanuel, which means "God is with us."

Isaiah promised that the Savior's birth would be like a great light that suddenly brings joy and life to people trapped in darkness.

Isaiah wrote that the Savior would come as a child and someday be a great ruler.

Read Isaiah 9:6.

7. For whom would this child be born? _____

(This meant the Jews, but the Savior also came for all of "us.")

8. Also, a prophet named Micah promised that the Savior would be born in the tiny town of _____.

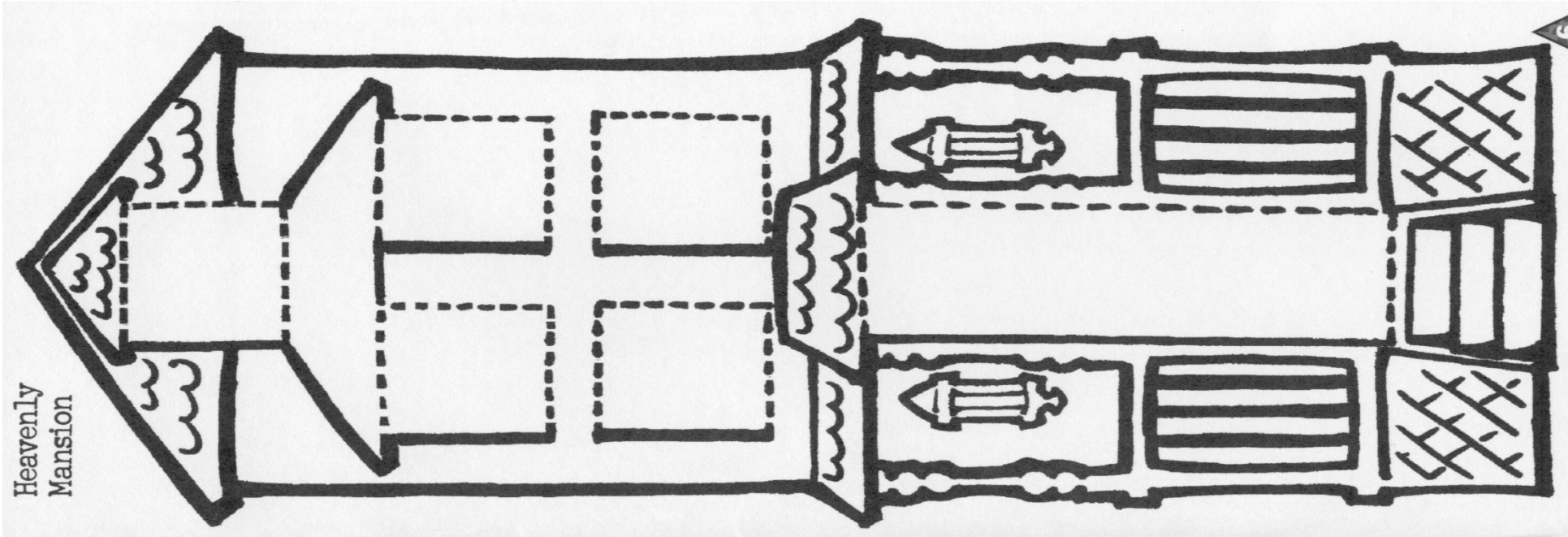
At last the long wait for the Savior was coming to an end. God's great promise was about to come true.

For to us a child is born to us a son is given... (Isaiah 9:6)

Experiment: You will need a kitchen timer, a piece of candy (or some other tantalizing goodie) for each child, and the verses that follow taped to four pieces of candy. Say, "When this timer rings, I will give each of you a piece of candy. I am going to set the timer for 2 minutes. During those 2 minutes I will write down words that you call out that describe your feelings as you wait to get your candy." When the timer rings, pass out the candy. Ask the four children whose candy has an attached scripture to read their verse to the class. Describe how we look forward to Jesus' return using all of the words the children called out that are suitable (i.e., excited, curious, anxious, etc.)

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit <https://www.FreeChildrensMinistryLessons.com>]





We will see Jesus. Revelation 22:4	We will rule forever. Revelation 22:5	We won't need the sun. Revelation 22:5
There will be no death. Revelation 21:4	There will be no pain. Revelation 21:4	We will live with Jesus. Revelation 21:3
He will wipe away all tears. Revelation 21:4	There will be no sadness. Revelation 21:4	The glory of God will shine. Revelation 21:11
We will eat from the tree of life. Revelation 22:14	We will enter the gates of Heaven. Revelation 22:14	Angels will guard the gates. Revelation 21:12
		There will be no night. Revelation 21:25
		There will be streets of gold. Revelation 21:4

An Angel Visits Zechariah

(Luke 1:1-18)

Introduction

Can you think of anything that is impossible, like flying or running 100 MPH? (Lick your elbow, touch your tongue to the end of your nose, or pull yourself up with a strap.) [Teacher, bring a belt or strap and step on it with both feet to demonstrate how you can't pull yourself up. Let the children try it!]

There are many things that are impossible for us to do. But, did you know, that if God wanted you to fly or run 100 MPH, He could do it?!

Before Jesus was born, God made two things that weren't possible, become possible. God chose two special women to become pregnant and have babies.

In our lesson today we are going to learn about Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist; next week we will learn about Mary, the mother of Jesus.

Opening Prayer

Father, truly with You there is nothing that is impossible! Nothing is too hard for You to accomplish! You have no problem keeping every promise that You've made. Sometimes we have a hard time trusting You because our little minds cannot figure out how You can possibly be so great and awesome. Open the eyes of our understanding so that we may see You in Your power and might! In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

For with God nothing will be impossible. (Luke 1:37)

Lesson

Today we begin lessons from the New Testament. The first four books of the New Testament are called the Gospels, and they were written by four different men that knew Jesus: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The word "gospel" simply means "good news". These 4 books tell us all about Jesus. This is where we learn the amazing facts about His birth, life, death, and resurrection. They are called "gospels" because they tell us the *good news* that Jesus came to save us from our sins.

Our very first lesson is from the book of Luke. He begins the story of Jesus before He was even born. It starts with two people named Zechariah and Elizabeth, relatives of Jesus.

Zechariah and Elizabeth were old and they had never had a child.

Luke 1:6-7

Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous in God's eyes, careful to obey all of the Lord's commandments and regulations. (7) They had no children because Elizabeth was unable to conceive, and they were both very old.

What did we just learn about Zechariah and Elizabeth?

Zechariah was a priest. He and his wife Elizabeth were very good people. And, while Zechariah was serving in the temple, something amazing happened to him. Suddenly, the angel Gabriel appeared to him.

If an angel suddenly appeared to you, how would you react?

Luke 1:12-14

Zechariah was shaken and overwhelmed with fear when he saw him. (13) But the angel said, "Don't be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and you are to name him John. (14) You will have great joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth,

What was the news the angel gave to Zechariah?

Wow! What kind of a child would this be? Why was John the Baptist's birth so important that it was announced by an angel? What was John the Baptist going to do? Verse 16 tells us...

Luke 1:16

And he will turn many Israelites to the Lord their God.

It had been over 400 years since the children of Israel had heard any messages from God. Many people had given up believing in Him. So, God sent John the Baptist to come ahead of Jesus to help prepare the people for Jesus' arrival.

But Zechariah didn't believe Gabriel, he thought it would be impossible for Elizabeth to have a baby because they were so old.

Luke 1:18

Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I be sure this will happen? I'm an old man now, and my wife is also well along in years."

For his unbelief in the angel's announcement, Zechariah was stricken silent, unable to speak until the child was born.

Zechariah stayed a long time in the temple and people wondered what had happened to him.

Luke 1:22

When he finally did come out, he couldn't speak to them. Then they realized from his gestures and his silence that he must have seen a vision in the sanctuary.

Zechariah could hardly wait to tell Elizabeth the good news. When he arrived home, he wrote on a piece of paper: "We are going to have a son!"

In a very short time, Elizabeth got pregnant after all the years of waiting! And when it was time for the baby to be born, it was a boy just as the angel had said. Zechariah probably shouted for joy when the baby was born and he could speak again.

Zechariah doubted God, because to him having a child at his age seemed impossible. Sometimes we doubt God, too, and make the mistake of trusting our own thoughts and ideas. But with God, nothing is impossible.

What seems impossible to you in your life? What is your biggest fear? [Teacher discuss things that worry the children, such as fear of the dark, taking tests at school, scary dreams, hearing parents argue, etc.] Do you have any big problems in your life? (bully at school) Do you have any bad habits you want to break? (nail biting, anger)

God will help you have courage to face your fears and overcome your bad habits. He has a plan for your life! Trust that He will lead you and guide you and protect you.

Elizabeth was very old, much too old to become pregnant. But that didn't stop God. God wanted Elizabeth to be the mother of John the Baptist, so God gave her the ability to have a healthy baby boy.

It can be difficult to understand how something that is impossible can suddenly become possible. Usually, when we think something is impossible, that's it, our thinking stops right there. I can't run 100 MPH. You can't sprout feathers and fly home. But there is something very important we are not thinking of. Do you know what it is? God! Elizabeth didn't just get pregnant. God made it happen!

Can you think of any other impossible things God has made happen? (God made the world, the animals boarded Noah's ark, the parting of the Red Sea, God sent manna from heaven, the wall of Jericho fell down, a whale swallowed Jonah, Daniel was safe in the lion's den, three men were safe in the fiery furnace, Jesus came back from the dead.)

If God wanted you to sprout feathers and fly, you would. And if God wanted me to run 100 MPH, I would be ready for the Olympics! Because if God wants it that way, God will make it that way. Because NOTHING is impossible with God.

Closing Prayer

Father, you are so great, so mighty and powerful, I should never doubt that you are always with me and that you have all the right answers. I ask you to lead me and guide me through my life. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Game Center

Silent Draw (Like Pictionary)

Prepare: Write one impossible thing God has made happen on individual index cards. (See list above for ideas.)

Play: Today we learned that God made Zechariah silent for a long time because he didn't believe God. During that time, Zechariah had to write or draw his messages. Let's play a game where we take turns drawing one of the Bible miracles we have learned about this year. Remember, you cannot talk or write words, you must draw (or act out) the miracle.

You will have 1 minute to get the other children to guess the miracle. If a child guesses correctly, he or she is the next to draw. If that child has already drawn, he or she may choose someone else to draw. [Teacher, if no one guesses correctly, tell the children what the miracle is and choose a child to draw the next miracle.]

Or, use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. What are the two sections of the Bible? (Old Testament and New Testament.)
2. What are the four gospels? (Four different stories about Jesus told by four men: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.)
3. What had Zechariah and Elizabeth been praying for, for many years? (A baby.)
4. Who visited Zechariah when he was serving in the temple? (The angel Gabriel appeared to him.)
5. What news did the angel bring to Zechariah? (His wife, Elizabeth would have a child in her old age.)
6. What would John grow up to do? (He would turn many people to the Lord their God.)
7. Why had the people's hearts turned away from God? (They hadn't heard from him in over 400 years. People had given up their faith in God.)
8. Why did Zechariah doubt God? (Having a child at their ages seemed impossible.)
9. What happened to Zechariah when he doubted Gabriel's message? (He was struck silent, unable to speak.)
10. Has God ever done something that you thought was impossible?

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit <https://www.FreeChildrensMinistryLessons.com>]

An Angel Visits Mary

(Luke 1:26-38; Matthew 1:18-25)

Introduction

What do you know about angels? (Where do they live? What do they look like? Do they have halos? Do they have wings? Are they boys or girls? What is their job (see Heb 1:14)?) Have you seen an angel? (See Heb 13:2) What angels have you learned about?

Do you know what an announcement is? Has anyone ever made an announcement to you? Last week we learned that the angel Gabriel visited Zechariah to tell him that although he and his wife, Elizabeth, were very old, God was going to answer their prayers and give them a baby. God sent Gabriel to make this amazing birth announcement!

Today we're going to learn about what happened when the angel Gabriel visited Mary.

Opening Prayer

Father, we're so thankful to have the Bible. Thank You we live in a country where we can freely come together to read and study it and learn of You. This morning I pray You would speak to each of our hearts in a fresh new way. Give us good listening ears so that we might hear You speaking into our hearts. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Memory Verse

Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true." (Luke 1:38)

Lesson

Last week we learned about the birth announcement for John the Baptist. Today, we pick up the story when Elizabeth is about 6 months along...

At this time, Mary and Joseph were engaged to be married. And, suddenly an angel came to Mary telling her that God would do a miracle in her, like he did for her cousin, Elizabeth!

Luke 1:26-29

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, (27) to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. (28) Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!" (29) Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean.

[Teacher, show where Nazareth is on the map.]

You can imagine how startling it would be to suddenly have a visit from the angel Gabriel! Mary and Joseph weren't married yet. Mary was still living at home with her parents. People think that Mary was about 14 or 15 years old. She was probably excited about her upcoming marriage to Joseph. She probably wondered what kind of a life she'd have as the wife of a carpenter. She probably thought she'd have a quiet and peaceful life. Then, suddenly an angel shows up! It must have frightened her!

Luke 1:30-33

"Don't be afraid, Mary," the angel told her, "for you have found favor with God! (31) You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. (32) He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. (33) And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!"

How do you think Mary might have reacted to this news? (Excited; happy to be chosen; curious about how it would happen; scared. Mary is confused about why God has chosen her and what the angel's message might mean. Mary might have felt too young or unimportant for such a special task.)

Mary knew where babies come from. She knew life is produced only when a man and a woman come together. Since she had kept herself pure for her future husband, she wondered how she could possibly get pregnant.

Luke 1:34

Mary asked the angel, "But how can this happen? I am a virgin."

Mary wasn't doubting God's ability to perform a miracle, she just wondered how He was going to do this.

Here's what the angel Gabriel said...

Luke 1:35-37

The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. What's more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she has conceived a son and is now in her sixth month. For the word of God will never fail."

Can you think of anything too hard for God to do? He created the whole world! He said, "*Let there be light*," and there was light. Making Mary pregnant was a synch for Him!

Mary's response is so beautiful... It's our verse for this week.

Luke 1:38

Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true." And then the angel left her.

From what we have just read about Mary, what do we know about her? She was favored by God (vs 28, 30). She was a virgin (vs 34), she kept herself pure. She is humble; she viewed herself as the Lord's servant (vr 38). She was eager to please God in everything she did (vs 38).

We should follow Mary's example of eagerly wanting to follow God's plan for our lives!

We've learned about Mary; now turn to the Gospel of Matthew, the first book in the New Testament and we'll learn about Joseph.

Matthew 1:18

This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Mary got pregnant, but NOT by Joseph. They had never been together. What do you think was going on in Joseph's heart when he heard that his fiancé was pregnant? How would you have felt? Joseph had every right to have Mary stoned to death in the public square.

But, an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him that the child Mary was carrying is the Savior that his people, the Jews, had been waiting for since the beginning of time.

Matthew 1:19-23

Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly. (20) As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. (21) And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." (22) All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet: (23) "Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.'"

No other child had ever been or would ever be born like this. Our loving God was coming into the world miraculously, born as a baby. He would be God in a human body. And, because He would be both perfect God and perfect man, He alone could pay the price for all the sin of the world. Jesus, who would never sin, would die on a cross and take the punishment for our sins: yours and mine.

God is holy and he cannot have anything sinful in heaven with him. He hates our sin and says that all sin must be punished. The Bible tells us that the punishment for any sin is death. That means being separated from God forever. We deserve to be punished for all the wrong things we think, say, and do. But God loves us so much that He came from heaven to take our punishment.

Joseph obeyed the angel and took Mary as his wife.

Matthew 1:24

When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife.

From what we have read about Joseph, what kind of man was he? (He was a righteous man. He was kind; he didn't want to disgrace Mary publicly. And, he trusted God. After receiving the message from the angel, Joseph immediately obeyed God and took Mary as his wife.)

Sometimes it is hard to obey God, but He will help you and give you His strength to say, "No" to wrong and "Yes" to His way.

Aren't you glad Joseph didn't have Mary put to death? What do you think would have happened if Mary and Joseph hadn't obeyed the angel? (Jesus wouldn't have been born and couldn't have gone to the cross for us.)

If Jesus had never been born, what would be different in our lives? (No Christmas, our calendar years would be numbered differently, no hope of heaven, no churches, no forgiveness of sin.)

It's very important that we be willing to do what God wants us to do. Let's pray and ask the Lord to help us to be willing servants. And let's thank him for sending us His Son to save us from our sins....

Closing Prayer

Lord, thank You for coming to earth and being born as a man. That means that You know full well what it's like for us to be humans here on earth. And thank You for dying on the cross and taking the punishment for my sins. I look forward to being with you in heaven one of these days. And thank You for giving us your Word, the holy Bible that tells us about your wonderful plan for our lives. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Write "Thank You" notes to God for sending Jesus to take the punishment of our sins.

Game Center

Or, use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. What are some of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the coming of Jesus? (He would be born of a virgin, born in Bethlehem, a descendant of David.)
2. What was it about the announcement of Jesus' birth that shows us that He would be more than an ordinary man? (His birth was announced by an angel, He would be born of a virgin, and called, "Son of the Most High.")
3. From what we read about Mary, what kind of a person was she? (She's honest; she kept herself pure; she was eager to please God in everything she did.)

4. How did Mary feel when she first heard the angel's news about the Savior? (Confused; then joyful.)
5. What kind of person was Joseph? (Matthew 1:19 says he was a just man. He immediately obeyed God.)
6. How do you think Joseph felt when he first found out Mary was having a baby? (Confused, sad, angry, disappointed)
7. What changed Joseph's mind? (A visit from an angel in a dream.)
8. How did Joseph know that Mary's baby would be special? (The angel explained that the child was sent from God, and the baby was to be named "Jesus", a name that means "Savior.")
9. How do you think Joseph felt when he realized he would be helping Mary take care of God's Son? (Happy, proud, anxious to do God's will.)
10. Why did God come to earth in the form of a baby? Why did God have to become a man? (He came specifically to take the punishment for our sins.)
11. Why is it important to understand that Jesus is God? (He was sinless and had all power.)
12. Why does sin have to be punished? (God is perfect and He cannot tolerate any impurity in His presence. Since He wants us to spend eternity with Him in heaven, He knew He had to do something about our sin problem.)
13. What prophecies concerning Jesus have not been fulfilled yet? (He's coming back!)
14. If Jesus had never been born, what would be different in our lives? (No Christmas, our calendar years would be numbered differently, no hope of heaven, no churches, no forgiveness of sin.)

Questions for younger children:

1. Who came to see Mary? (Angel Gabriel)
2. How did Mary react when the angel suddenly appeared to her? (She was confused and disturbed)
3. What did the angel tell Mary? (You will have a son.)
4. What did the angel tell Mary to name her son? (Jesus)
5. What does Jesus mean? (Savior)
6. Mary asks how this will happen since she isn't married. What does the angel tell her? (The Holy Spirit will come on you.)
7. Did Mary agree to have this baby? (Yes. She said, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true.")
8. How did Joseph take the news that Mary was going to have a baby? (He was sad. So, he was going to divorce her quietly.)
9. Then the angel visited Joseph. What did the angel tell him? (That it was OK to marry Mary, because the baby was from the Holy Spirit.)
10. Did Joseph obey the angel? (Yes, he took Mary home to be his wife.)
11. What do you think would have happened if Mary and Joseph hadn't obeyed the angel? (Jesus wouldn't have been born.)

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<https://www.FreeChildrensMinistryLessons.com>]

Baby Jesus is Born

(Luke 2:1-20)

Introduction

The last two weeks we have learned about two amazing birth announcements. Who can remember whose births were announced in a special miraculous way? (*John the Baptist and Jesus.*)

It's important for us to remember that John was special, but he was only a man; Jesus was unique in that He was God and Man.

God sent an angel to announce both John's and Jesus' birth. In our lesson today we will learn about the fulfillment of God's promise to send a Messiah.

Opening Prayer

Lord, You promised for 5,000 years that You would send a Savior to the people of the earth. And just as You promised, You sent Jesus, born in Bethlehem, to a virgin. Thank You that You are a good God, who keeps His promises. Help us to never doubt Your love and care for us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21)

Lesson

Mary and Joseph lived in a city called Nazareth. [Point this out on the map.] Joseph worked as a carpenter. One day the Roman soldiers came into the town of Nazareth to tell all the people they had to go to the city where their families had originally come from to sign up and pay taxes. Joseph and Mary's family had come from Bethlehem.

Luke 2:1-3 [Teacher, read:]

At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. (2) (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) (3) All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census.

Bethlehem was a long way from Nazareth (70 miles). Mary rode on a donkey and Joseph walked along side of her. They had to travel for many days to get there.

Luke 2:4-5 [Teacher, read:]

And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. (5) He took with him Mary, to whom he was engaged, who was now expecting a child.

Can you imagine how hard it was for Mary to ride a donkey when she was just about to have her baby? [Teacher, let the children respond.]

When they arrived, they found the town very crowded with people. They looked and looked for a place to stay, but all the hotels were full. Joseph saw a shed, a barn, or a cave where the animals were kept. And, they were probably glad to find a place to rest from their long journey. Can you picture the place where Mary and Joseph slept? What do you think it smelled like? What noises do you think they heard? (Mooing cows, braying donkeys, neighing horses, cooing doves.) Does this seem like a fitting place for God the Son to be born?

Luke 2:6-7

And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. (7) She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

When Jesus was born, only Mary and Joseph knew that the King of kings had arrived. No trumpets sounded; there was no royal announcement. They were alone with their newborn baby, far from home and their families.

Nobody else knew that the greatest event in all history had just taken place! Jesus, the creator of the whole universe (Colossians 1:16), had left the glorious splendor of His home in Heaven and came to earth in the form of a little baby and was born in a stable.

Then, God sent some angels to tell someone else about what had happened!

Luke 2:8

That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep.

There was a group of shepherds outside the little town of Bethlehem minding their own business, watching their sheep.

I can imagine that the night was really dark. This was hundreds of years before electricity was used for lighting, so there would have been no glow rising from the city lights. The only light that shone that night was the soft moonlight. I bet they could clearly see all the stars in the sky.

Then, suddenly, a bright light pierced the darkness, and the shepherds saw a messenger from God.

Luke 2:9

Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified.

The angel didn't just appear, it says, "*the glory of the Lord shone around them!*" I don't know exactly what the "glory of the Lord" looks like, but it must have been bright!

Have you ever been visited by an angel? Would you be afraid? This was unlike anything they had ever seen, and it says they were terrified.

Luke 2:10-12

but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

First, the angel told the shepherds not to be afraid! He wanted to reassure them that this was a good visit!

Then the angel told the shepherds that the Savior had been born! This was fantastic news! God had promised Adam and Eve that He would send a Savior—someone who would come and rescue us from the punishment for our sin. People had been waiting for Him for thousands of years. Wondering and waiting. And, here they were, the shepherds, the first to hear this good news!

Luke 2:13-14

Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, "Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

First there was just one angel, then suddenly a large group of angels joined him – "*a multitude of the heavenly host*" it says. This was the armies of heaven. And they were singing praises to the Lord. The shepherds must have been amazed at the sight of the heavenly host! Then the angels left and went into heaven.

Luke 2:15

When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

The shepherds didn't waste a minute. They rushed off to Bethlehem. They knew what they were looking for. They had been told that the

Messiah had been born in Bethlehem. So, they knew that the Messiah was a newborn baby! That must have been a wonder to them. And, they knew the baby would be lying in a manger wrapped snugly in strips of cloth. So off they went to look for this new born baby boy.

Luke 2:16

They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger.

I wonder how many places they had to look before they found Him. Did animals all over Bethlehem begin to whinny and bray as the shepherds poked their heads into every stall in every stable until they came to the right one? Did they hear the cry of the newborn baby? I bet they were out of breath when they finally found Him.

Luke 2:17

After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child.

After the shepherds had seen the baby, they told everyone what happened – what the angels had said and what they saw with their own eyes. (*We were out in the field, minding our own business and all of a sudden, an angel appeared!*) They couldn't keep this good news to themselves.

Do you get excited about telling people about the great things about Jesus?

Luke 2:18

All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished.

Everyone who heard the good news was amazed!

Luke 2:19

but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often.

It says, "*Mary kept all these things in her heart...*" I'm sure she would never forget the miraculous events that had happened to her.

What do you think that Mary was thinking about? She knew that Jesus was the very Son of God. Do you suppose she was wondering how He was going to be the Savior of the whole world? How could my baby have created the whole world?

Luke 2:20

The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.

After things settled down, the shepherds had to get back to their sheep. But it says they went back to their flocks, "*glorifying and praising God*". What an incredible night they had.

What do you know about shepherds? Shepherds are people that take care of flocks of sheep. Shepherds in Bible times were not usually very well educated. Being a shepherd was a lowly job. Usually, the youngest member of the family – the least important son – got the job of tending the sheep out on the range.

Shepherds certainly didn't live in luxury; they were low-lifers. They slept on the ground and smelled like sheep. Shepherds were not "important" people like government officials.

Why do you think God chose to announce Jesus' birth to a bunch of shepherds and not to the rulers or the Jewish religious leaders?

God knew that people who thought they were "important" – like the government officials and the religious leaders – probably would not have been willing to bow down to praise even God's own Son.

God thinks that each one of us is important. He is not concerned about how much education you have or if you have money or a powerful position at your job. He loves each one of us and He wants everyone to worship Him.

Why did God, the Creator of the Universe, leave the glory of heaven and come to earth in the form of a man?

Heaven is a perfect place. God cannot have any sin come into His presence. He knew we couldn't be good enough to come into His kingdom on our own. So, because He loves us so much, He sent Jesus to come to earth so that He could take the punishment we deserve. Jesus did it willingly because he knew it was our only hope of salvation!

Jesus is 100% human and 100% God. As a baby, He got tired, hungry, and thirsty. As He grew up, He played and learned like you do. But, even though Jesus was human, He was never naughty; He never sinned! We know that He was truly human because He actually died on the cross. He was the only perfect person that ever lived or who will ever live.

But we can't forget the fact that Jesus is God (God, the Son). We know He is God because he healed the sick, made the lame to walk and the blind to see and because He rose from the dead.

He was the perfect God-Man, the only one that was perfectly qualified to take our place on the cross.

Let's bow our heads and thank God for sending Jesus to us.

Closing Prayer

Lord, praise You for coming to earth to be our Savior. I pray that each of us would stop and think for minute about what we have been saved from and to give You thanks for coming to earth to save us from the

punishment we deserve for our sins. Thank You for loving us so much. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Cone Angel

Items Needed:

- ½ paper plate per child
- Construction paper
- Yellow yarn
- Cotton balls
- Scissors, glitter, glue, markers, stapler

Procedure:

- Roll the ½ paper plate into a cone and staple.
- Trace the child's hands onto construction paper and cut out.
- Glue hand shape onto the cone for the angel's wings.
- Cut a face out of construction paper and glue to their cone
- Glue the yellow yarn as a halo.
- Stretch the cotton balls and glue them onto the angel
- Decorate the angels as desired.

Game Center

Relay Race Memory Verse Activities

Split children into two groups for a relay race. Cut the memory verse into 8 parts; write each part on a separate piece of paper. Have the children form two lines. The first child runs up and gets a piece of the memory verse out of a lunch sack and tapes it to the wall. He then

runs back to the front of the line and tags the next person on his team to repeat the activity until a team has all the pieces of the verse up on the wall in the correct order.

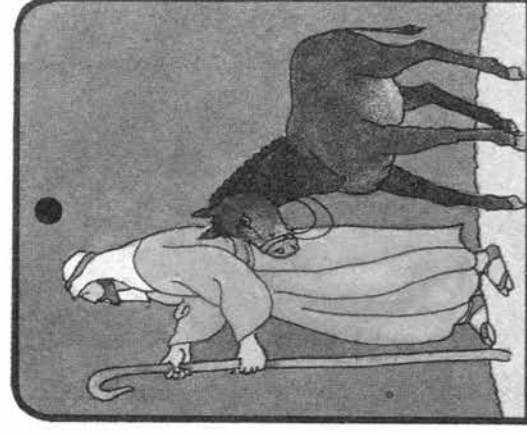
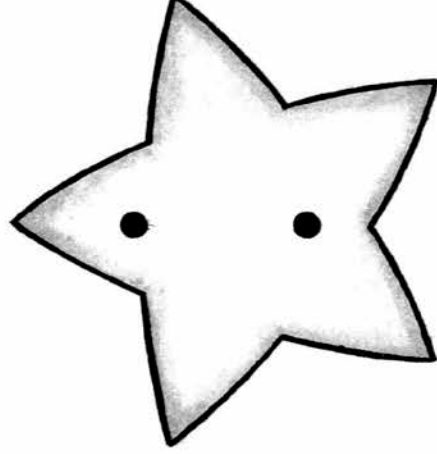
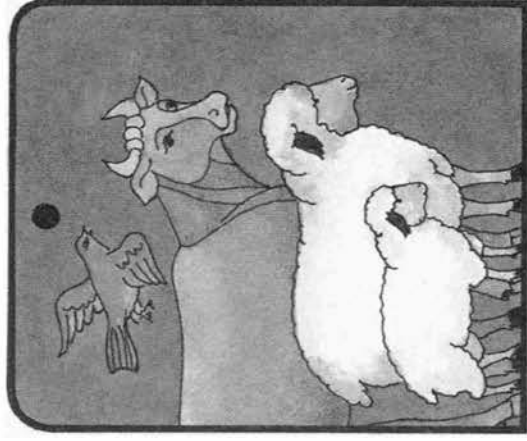
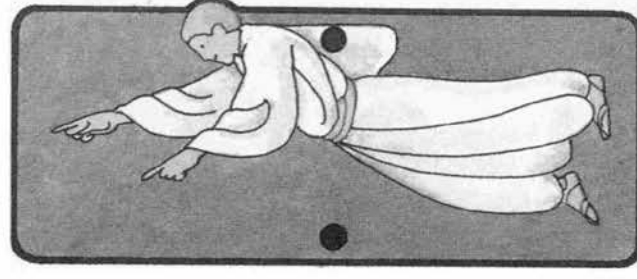
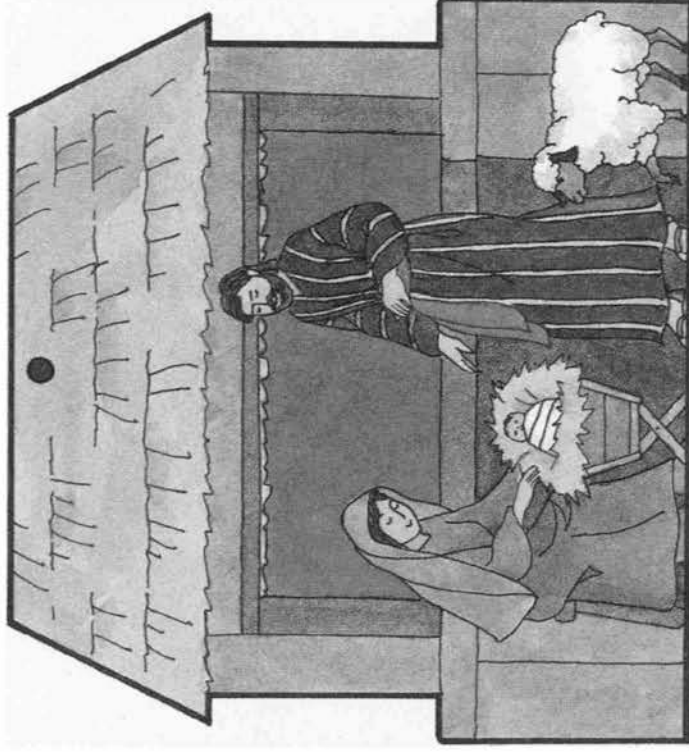
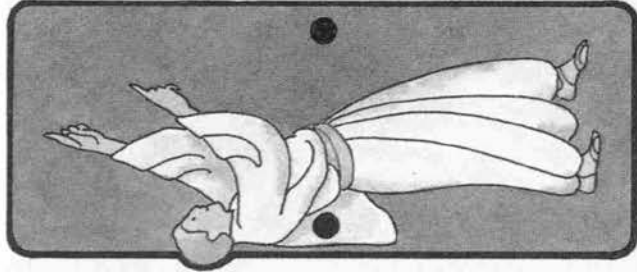
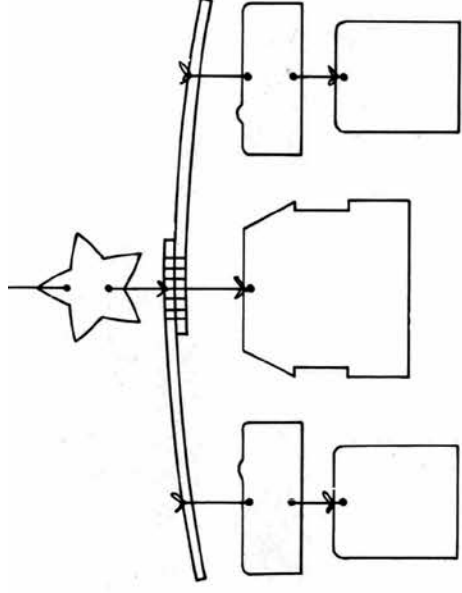
Or, use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. What town did Joseph and Mary live in? (Nazareth)
2. What did Joseph do for a living? (He was a carpenter)
3. Why did Joseph and Mary have to go to Bethlehem? (To pay taxes)
4. How did Joseph and Mary travel to Bethlehem? (Joseph walked and Mary rode a donkey)
5. Where did Joseph and Mary stay while they were in Bethlehem? (In a stable)
6. Why did Jesus come to earth? (To show us how God wants us to act and so that He could take the punishment for our sins)
7. How can we know that Jesus is God? (He was born of a virgin, He healed the sick, made the lame to walk and the blind to see)
8. How can we know that Jesus is man? (He got hungry, tired, thirsty, etc.)
9. Why was the birth of baby Jesus such good news?
10. Why did shepherds have to guard their flocks of sheep? (The sheep could get attacked by animals.)
11. Why do you think that God chose to announce Jesus' birth to a bunch of shepherds and not to the government officials or Jewish religious leaders?
12. Why did the shepherds run to Bethlehem? (To find Jesus)
13. What do you think Mary was thinking about when the shepherds found her and the baby Jesus?
14. After the shepherds had seen Jesus, why did they tell everyone what happened? (They were amazed at the events! The news that the Messiah had finally come was way too incredible to keep to themselves.)
15. Who did the shepherds share the good news with? (Everyone! They didn't just go home and tell their own friends and family.)
16. Why do we call Jesus our *Savior*? What has He saved us from? (Everlasting punishment in hell.)
17. What great things can you tell people about Jesus? Who will you tell the good news to?
18. What are some ways we can glorify and praise God? (Sing songs, write Him a poem or a letter of thanks for coming to earth to save us.)

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit
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Make a Mobile

1. Cut out each piece on the heavy lines.
2. Paste each piece on heavy paper; trim the borders.
3. Punch a hole at each heavy dot.
4. Use yarn to string the pieces together as shown in the sketch.
5. Overlap the ends of two drinking straws and tape them together.
6. Tie the pieces of the mobile to the straws.



Will you keep your mobile, or use it as a gift?

And Jesus Grew

(Luke 2:21-52)

Introduction

Last week we learned about Jesus' birth. Today we will learn a little bit about his childhood. [Teacher, review some of the highlights from last week's lesson. Show the children on a map where Jesus was born in Bethlehem and where He lived as a boy in Nazareth.]

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, we want to grow up to be just like You. This morning as we learn about Your childhood, help us to want to be as kind and thoughtful as You were as a boy. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. (Luke 2:52)

Lesson

The Bible only tells us a little bit about Jesus' life as a child.

The first thing we learn is that Mary and Joseph had Jesus circumcised on the eighth day and named Him "Jesus" just as the angel had instructed them. "Jesus" means "the Lord is salvation."

Luke 2:21

Eight days later, when the baby was circumcised, he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel even before he was conceived.

Then when Jesus was 40 days old, Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the Temple to present Him to the Lord. [This is was like a Baby Dedication.]

Luke 2:22-24

Then it was time for their purification offering, as required by the law of Moses after the birth of a child; so his parents took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. (23) The law of the Lord says, "If a woman's first child is a boy, he must be dedicated to the LORD." (24) So they offered the sacrifice required in the law of the Lord— "either a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

While they were at the Temple to dedicate Jesus to God for His service, they met an old man named Simeon. God had promised Simeon that he would see the Messiah before he died.

Luke 2:25-33

At that time there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout and was eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him (26) and had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah. (27) That day the Spirit led him to the Temple. So when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required, (28) Simeon was there. He took the child in his arms and praised God, saying, (29) "Sovereign Lord, now let your servant die in peace, as you have promised. (30) I have seen your salvation, (31) which you have prepared for all people. (32) He is a light to reveal God to the nations, and he is the glory of your people Israel!" (33) Jesus' parents were amazed at what was being said about him.

Simeon recognized Jesus as the fulfillment of God's promise to him, so, he blessed the baby, knowing that He was holding the Messiah. In his praise, Simeon made it clear that he could now die with complete confidence that God would provide salvation for His people.

Luke 2:34-35

Then Simeon blessed them, and he said to Mary, the baby's mother, "This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall, and many others to rise. He has been sent as a sign from God, but many will oppose him. (35) As a result, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your very soul."

Also at the Temple was an old woman named Anna. She was a prophetess. She also gave witness that Jesus would save Israel.

Luke 2:36-38

Anna, a prophet, was also there in the Temple. She was the daughter of Phanuel from the tribe of Asher, and she was very old. Her husband died when they had been married only seven years. (37) Then she lived as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the Temple but stayed there day and night, worshiping God with fasting and prayer. (38) She came along just as Simeon was talking with Mary and Joseph, and she began praising God. She talked about the child to everyone who had been waiting expectantly for God to rescue Jerusalem.

After Mary and Joseph had dedicated Jesus, they returned home.

Luke 2:39-40

When Jesus' parents had fulfilled all the requirements of the law of the Lord, they returned home to Nazareth in Galilee. (40) There the child grew up healthy and strong. He was filled with wisdom, and God's favor was on him.

12 Years Later...

Every year Jewish families would plan a trip to the Temple at Jerusalem, to celebrate the Passover. They gathered together to praise God for sending Moses to rescue them from Egypt and lead them to the Promised Land. It was a great time of thanksgiving. [Teacher, explain why the Jews celebrate Passover and what the Temple is.]

In Bible times, when a boy turned 12 years old, he was considered to be one of the men and was allowed to go to the Temple. When Jesus was twelve years old, He and His parents, and His aunts and uncles, and cousins, and many other people from Nazareth made the long walk up to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover.

Luke 2:41-42

Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Passover festival. (42) When Jesus was twelve years old, they attended the festival as usual.

This was Jesus' first trip to the Temple in Jerusalem for the Passover. It probably took them several days to walk there from Nazareth. I'm sure as they were getting closer and closer to Jerusalem, they got more and more excited.

Jerusalem was a big city compared to Nazareth. Jerusalem has many little streets that wind around the city. The streets are lined with little shops and places to eat. And the celebration week is a busy time as many people gather there from long distances.

Jesus especially liked spending time at the Temple, taking part in the special services.

All too soon the celebration was over and it was time to start for home. Crowds of people were leaving the city, walking and talking about the wonderful time they had just enjoyed. Mary and Joseph and all their aunts and uncles and cousins were among the crowds of people leaving the city.

They had been traveling for a whole day when they began to wonder where Jesus was.

Luke 2:43-44

After the celebration was over, they started home to Nazareth, but Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents didn't miss him at first, (44) because they assumed he was among the other travelers. But when he didn't show up that evening, they started looking for him among their relatives and friends.

At first Mary and Joseph didn't notice that Jesus wasn't with them. They probably just thought He was walking along with one of His cousins. But that evening when they made camp and it was time for dinner, Mary started to worry. They couldn't find Jesus anywhere.

They looked for Him among the many people travelling with them, but He was nowhere to be found.

Would your mom and dad worry if they couldn't find you? How do you think Jesus' mom and dad felt when they couldn't find Him? They must have said, "Jesus should be here somewhere! What happened to Jesus? Did He get hurt? Is He lost?"

Luke 2:45

When they couldn't find him, they went back to Jerusalem to search for him there.

Mary and Joseph had to walk all the way back to Jerusalem to find Him. They looked and looked for Him. After three days of looking, do you know where they found Him? (Let's read on...)

Luke 2:46-47

Three days later they finally discovered him in the Temple, sitting among the religious teachers, listening to them and asking questions. (47) All who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

When Mary and Joseph walked into the Temple area, they could see the Temple teachers, huddled together, deep in discussion. They stopped in amazement. There was Jesus, sitting among the wise men of Jerusalem. He was talking to them and asking them questions! And, it says, they were amazed at His understanding and His answers!

Why do you think Jesus had this amazing knowledge when He was only 12 years old? (He was God the Son!)

Do you think Mary and Joseph were angry with Jesus when they finally found him?

I'm sure they were happy to finally find Him, but Mary scolded Him. She had been worried sick about not being able to find Him. Would your parents scold you if they couldn't find you?

Luke 2:48

His parents didn't know what to think. "Son," his mother said to him, "why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been frantic, searching for you everywhere."

Jesus asks His parents why they came looking for Him...

Luke 2:49-50

"But why did you need to search?" he asked. "Didn't you know that I must be in my Father's house?" (50) But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.

Jesus knew that God the Father had sent Him to earth to be the Savior of the human race, but the Temple teachers and Joseph didn't understand that Jesus was the Son of God, the promised Messiah.

Luke 2:51

Then he returned to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. And his mother stored all these things in her heart.

Although God was His real Father, Jesus lived with and obeyed Mary and Joseph, His earthly parents. Mary would never forget all the amazing things that happened that day; she kept all these memories in her heart.

Luke 2:52 (Our verse for today)

*Jesus grew in **wisdom** and in **stature** and in **favor** with God and all the people.*

As a boy, Jesus grew up going to school and learning how to read. He memorized scriptures, just like you do. As the years went on, He grew in His knowledge of the Word of God and His understanding of what it meant for Him to be the Messiah, the Savior of the world.

And as He did that, it says that he grew in **favor** with God and all the people. As Jesus lived His life in a way that pleased God the Father, everyone around Him loved and respected Him for that.

Jesus obeyed his parents and He was kind and thoughtful to His brothers and sisters and He was helpful around His house.

God wants us to live our lives just like Jesus. When we live our lives in a way that pleases God, everyone around us will love us all the more, too. Let's pray and ask God to help us to do that, too.

Closing Prayer

Father, as Jesus was growing up, the Bible tells us that He grew in **wisdom** and in **favor** with both other people and with God the Father. Jesus is our example. We want to grow up to be wise so that You will be very proud of us. Make our hearts tender towards Your ways so that we will always choose to follow after You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

To learn more about Jesus' life as a child, turn to Matthew 13:55-56 and discuss the following:

❖ How many brothers did Jesus have? (Matthew 13:55)

Jesus and his brothers went to school. The girls in Bible times did not go to school, but they stayed home and helped their mother with household tasks like going to the market and buying food and learning how to cook and sew.

❖ Did Jesus have any sisters? (Matthew 13:56)

We know he had more than one because it says, "sisters"!

Everyone in the family had work to do. Fathers taught their sons the family business.

❖ What kind of work did Jesus learn from Joseph? (Matthew 13:55)

As they worked, Joseph probably taught Jesus what it means to be a man of God. God knew that the best way for children to learn was by listening to their parents. At the time of Moses, God told Israelite parents to teach their children about Him and His rules.

❖ When were parents supposed to talk to their children about God? (Deuteronomy 6:6-9)

Or, use the following review questions in a discussion or game of your choice:

1. How did Simeon know that this baby was God's promised Messiah? (Vs. 26-27; God revealed it to him)
2. What did Simeon prophesy that Jesus would be? (Vs. 30-32; Salvation, a light.)
3. What do you think Simeon meant when he said "a sword would pierce Mary's heart"? (Vs. 34-35; She would be broken-hearted when Jesus died.)

4. Why did Mary and Joseph take Jesus to Jerusalem? (Vs. 41; To celebrate the Passover Feast.)
5. What was the Temple? (The large beautiful building in Jerusalem where the Jews worshipped God.)
6. How often did Mary and Joseph go to the Temple? (Vs. 41; Once a year to celebrate the Passover.)
7. How old was Jesus when He went to the Temple? (Vs. 42; Twelve. At twelve, a boy was considered one of the men and was allowed to go with them to the Temple.)
8. Why didn't Mary and Joseph realize that Jesus was missing right away? (Vs. 44; They thought He was going home with friends or relatives.)
9. When they couldn't find Him, what did Mary and Joseph do? (Vs. 44; They went back to Jerusalem to search for him.)
10. How long did it take to find Him (Vs. 46; 3 days.)
11. Where was Jesus for those three days, and what was He doing? (Vs. 46; He was in the Temple talking with the teachers.)
12. Why were the teachers in the Temple amazed at Jesus? (Vs. 47; They were amazed at his understanding and his answers.)
13. Why did Jesus have this amazing knowledge when He was only twelve years old? (Vs. 47; He was God the Son.)
14. What did Mary say to Jesus when they found him? (Vs. 48; She scolded him.)
15. What did Jesus mean by "my Father's House?" (Vs. 49; God was Jesus' Father and the Temple was God's House.)
16. What did Jesus do after Mary and Joseph came for Him? (Vs. 51; He obeyed them and went home with them.)
17. What are the four ways that Jesus grew? (Vs. 52; Jesus grew in wisdom, in stature, in favor with God and in favor with people.)
18. What do **wisdom**, **stature**, and **favor** mean? (Vs. 52)
 - **Wisdom** – Understood and did what was right and good
 - **Stature** – became taller and stronger
 - **Favor with God** – became of friend of God
 - **Favor with Man** – got along with people and became their friend

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John Baptizes Jesus

(Mark 1:1-11)

Introduction

Teacher, invite your students to think of a famous sports figure they wish would visit their home. What might they do to prepare for his or her visit? Challenge every student in your class to give a different answer. Consider preparations such as cleaning, painting, redecorating, fixing fancy food, getting nice clothes to wear, etc. List answers on the board.

Then ask students to imagine that Jesus is coming to visit their home. What might they do to prepare? Would they do some of the same things they did for the sports figure? Would some preparations not be as important? What would be important if Jesus were coming to visit? What if He were coming to stay? Discuss how a clean, willing heart gives Jesus the best welcome of all into a person's life.

Opening Prayer

Father, help us to want to be more and more like John the Baptist, whose job it was to point the way to the coming of Jesus. I pray that we will realize this morning that you want each and every one of us to be eager to tell someone about how wonderful You are. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father. (Matthew 5:16)

Lesson

Alternative Lesson Plan

Invite a guest speaker to dress up as John the Baptist (beard, sandals, rugged clothing including some sort of animal skin) or dress up as John the Baptist yourself. Have your guest read Luke 3:1-38 in preparation for the dramatic, first-person account of the events of Luke 3. Make sure that your special guest includes the following events from this chapter:

- John preached that people should be baptized to show they had turned away from their sins to God (Luke 3:1-3).
- John preached, "Prepare the way for the Lord." His ministry was to prepare people for the Messiah (Luke 3:4-6).
- John warned the crowds not to be baptized for the wrong reasons (Luke 3:7-14).
- John denied that he was the Messiah: "One more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie." (Luke 3:15-20)
- John baptized Jesus. The Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove. God announced His favor for His Son. Jesus was ready to begin His ministry. (Luke 3:21-23)

Make sure that your special "John the Baptist" guest speaker explains baptism. It is a public expression of salvation and a desire to follow and obey God. Jesus did not need to repent or be forgiven of sins (He had none) but He desired to obey His Father. He wanted to publicly express His desire to follow God, so He was baptized. Tell students about your own salvation and baptism experiences. Allow children to tell of their own salvation and baptism experiences.

Teacher, ask why sin is such an important issue to God. Why does He care? Why doesn't He simply overlook some of the small things people do? Discuss the holiness and perfection of God.

Regular Lesson Plan

[Teacher, invite your students to think of a famous sports figure they wish would visit their home. What might they do to prepare for his or her visit? Consider preparations such as cleaning, painting, redecorating, fixing fancy food, getting nice clothes to wear, etc. List answers on the board.

Then ask students to imagine that Jesus is coming to visit their home. What might they do to prepare? Would they do some of the same things they did for the sports figure? Would some preparations not be as important? What would be important if Jesus were coming to visit? What if He were coming to stay? Discuss how a clean, willing heart gives Jesus the best welcome of all into a person's life.]

Opening Prayer

Father, we know that You can return to earth at any time. We don't know when You are coming back, but we are told that it could be anytime. Please help us to always live our lives in a way that is pleasing to You so that we are ready for Your return. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

Lesson

[Teacher, review with the children, who John the Baptist was...]

An angel had appeared to Zechariah and told him that he and his wife, Elizabeth, were to have a special son and his name was to be John.

They knew that God had a special job for John to do. God had told them that before He sent the Messiah into the world that He wanted John to prepare people's hearts to listen to Him when He came.

God had made this plan known to the people through the Prophet Isaiah 700 years before John and Jesus were born.

Mark 1:1-3

This is the Good News about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God. It began just as the prophet Isaiah had written: "Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, and he will prepare your way. 3He is a voice shouting in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the LORD's coming! Clear the road for him!'"

The Prophet Isaiah told the people that God was going to send a messenger ahead to help people get ready for the Messiah, the Savior of the world.

This messenger was John the Baptist.

Mark 1:4

This messenger was John the Baptist. He was in the wilderness and preached that people should be baptized to show that they had repented of their sins and turned to God to be forgiven.

John the Baptist was to tell people to be baptized to show that they had repented of their sins and turned to God to be forgiven.

Mark 1:5

All of Judea, including all the people of Jerusalem, went out to see and hear John. And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River.

Everyone went out to see and hear John. He told them to confess their sins so that they could have their hearts cleansed and ready before the Messiah came. And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River.

How many of you have been baptized? Why did you get baptized? [Teacher, discuss the significance of baptism with the children.]

We all do wrong things. We've been mean to our friends; or disrespectful to our moms, or disobedient to our dads. Some of us have told lies. When we sin, our hearts become dirty. We need to be cleansed on the inside. We do that by coming to the Lord and confessing our sins.

To confess your sins is just telling God that you know you are a sinner. You can say, "Lord, I said that bad word." Or, "I was disrespectful to my mom." Or, "I disobeyed my dad." And when you tell Him that you are truly sorry for doing something that displeases Him and ask Him to forgive you, "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

Baptism shows other people that you have spoken to the Lord, confessed your sins and are now cleansed on the inside.

John was helping people prepare their hearts for the coming of Jesus. They had all been expecting the Messiah to come.

Luke 3:15 [Teacher, read...]

Everyone was expecting the Messiah to come soon, and they were eager to know whether John might be the Messiah.

When they heard John preach, they wondered whether John might be the messiah. Then John told them that Someone greater than he, was coming.

Mark 1:7-8

John announced: "Someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I'm not even worthy to stoop down like a slave and untie the straps of his sandals. 8I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit!"

Who was John talking about? Jesus, the Messiah, the Savior!

Then at last, Jesus traveled from his home in Nazareth out to the Jordan River where John was baptizing people. [Teacher, show on map.]

John 1:29 [Teacher, read...]

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

The people looked where John was pointing. There stood the Lord Jesus Christ! John was telling them that the Christ, the promised Savior, had come.

Why do you think John called Jesus the "Lamb of God"? [Discuss.]

Jesus came to John to get baptized, but John tried to talk him out of it.

Matthew 3:13-15 [Teacher, read...]

Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. (14) But John tried to talk him out of it. "I am the one who needs to be baptized by you," he said, "so why are you coming to me?" (15) But Jesus said, "It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires." So John agreed to baptize him.

John said, "I'm the one who needs to be baptized by you." He was trying to tell Jesus that he was unworthy to baptize Him. John knew that Jesus was God the Son, Who had never done anything sinful in His life.

Why do you think that Jesus allowed John to baptize Him? (Jesus said, "It should be done" in order to fulfill the scriptures.)

Have you ever seen someone get baptized? You baptize someone by carefully helping them go under the water and come up again. It is not a game. It is a way to show other people that God has cleaned you on the inside.

Baptism is a symbol of the death and resurrection of Jesus. When you go under the water it is a picture of the death to your old sinful ways. When you come up out of the water it is a picture that shows people

you have been born again. We have a new start in life. God has forgiven you of your sins and cleansed you of all your sins so that you can now live your life in a way that brings honor to God.

John baptized God the Son! Think about that! When Jesus came up out of the water, something marvelous happened!

Mark 1:10-11

As Jesus came up out of the water, he saw the heavens splitting apart and the Holy Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11And a voice from heaven said, "You are my dearly loved Son, and you bring me great joy."

Because Jesus obeyed the Father and was baptized, the Holy Spirit came down upon Him and the Father told Him that He was overjoyed with Him.

John helped people get ready to meet Jesus. God wants you and I to do the same thing. Our world is full of pain and misery and evil because of sin. Many people today do not know about the Lord Jesus. God wants you to point others to Jesus. People need to believe in the Lord Jesus so they can have their sins forgiven and live for God.

How do you think you can point people to Jesus? [Discuss.]

Jesus loves each one of us and wants to make each one of us clean on the inside. You can ask God to make you clean on the inside right now if you want to. All you need to do is ask God to forgive you of all the naughty things you have ever done and to make you clean in the inside. As I pray, you pray to God...

Closing Prayer

Father, all of us do wrong things. Some of us have been mean to our friends; some of us have been disrespectful to our moms; or disobedient to our dads. Some of us have told lies. I ask you to forgive us our sins. Then help us want to do what's right. Fill us with your Holy Spirit so that we might live our lives in a way that brings honor and glory to You. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

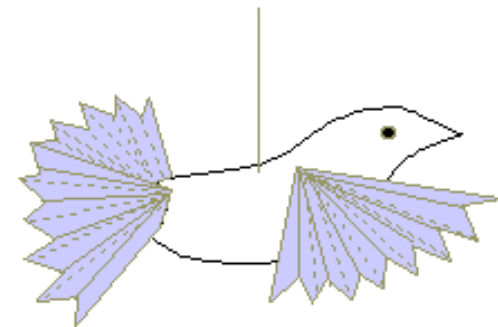
Lesson Review Activity

Make a path in your room with a long rope. Put lots of bends, twists, and curves in the path. Have the children take off their shoes and walk on the "tightrope." When the first child is several feet along the path, have the next child begin. After everyone has walked the path, straighten the rope, and have the children walk along the path again. Then, gather the children and ask:

- Was it easier to walk along the crooked path or the straight path?
- Why did John ask the people to straighten the road?
- How can we straighten the road today?

To straighten the road for Jesus means to get ready for his coming. We can get ready for Jesus by looking at our lives and by getting rid of the things that keep us from following Jesus. Then we'll be able to welcome Jesus with our whole hearts.

Craft Corner



Supplies needed:

- White construction paper or card stock
- White tissue paper, 6"x10"
- Ribbon
- Scissors
- Pencil
- Clear tape
- Optional: markers, glue, glitter, wiggly eyes

Procedures;

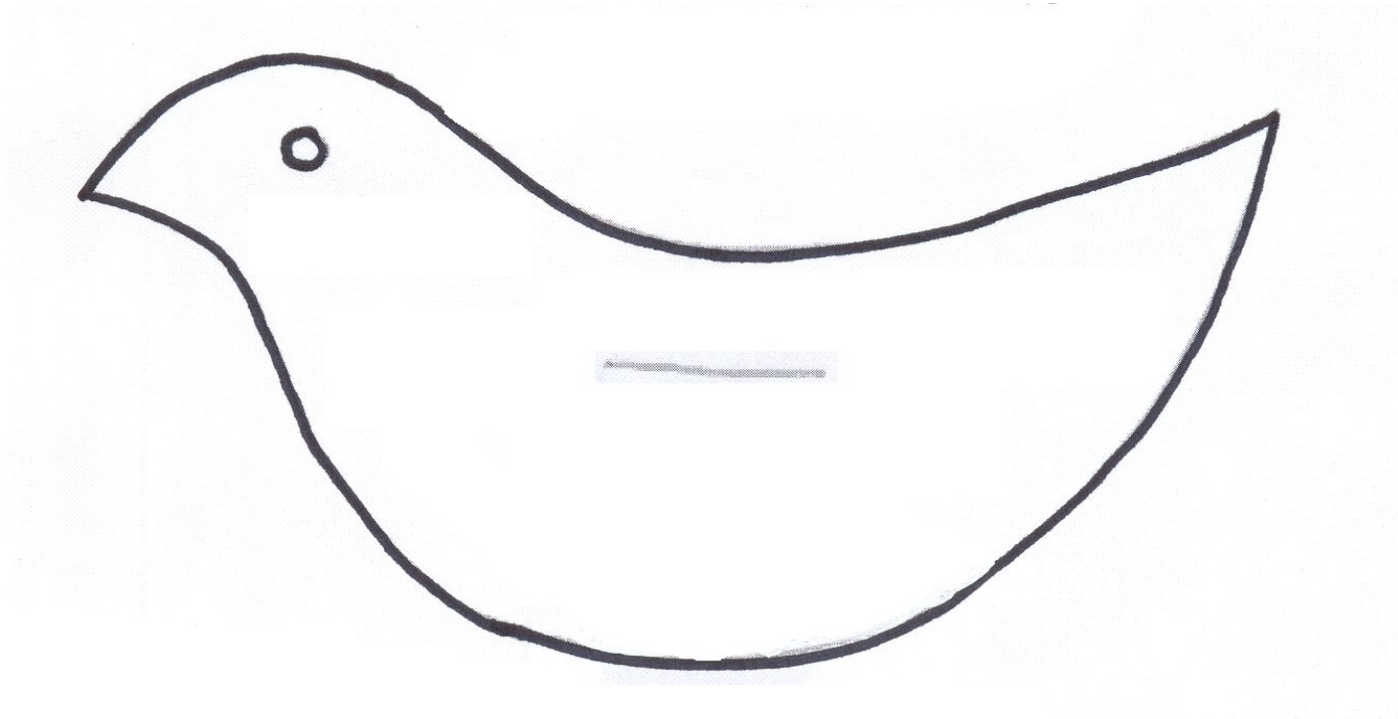
1. Cut the body out of stiff white paper.
2. Make a slit in the body for the wings.
3. Fold each piece of tissue like an accordion, ½" folds.
4. Insert the folded tissue paper (wings) into the slit in the bird's body.
5. Punch a hole and thread it with the ribbon to hang it up.
6. Optional: decorate the dove with markers or glitter or wiggly eyes.

Game Center

Use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. Who did God send to prepare a way for the Messiah (Christ)? (John the Baptist announced that the Jewish Messiah would soon come.)
2. What did John do to prepare the Jewish people for the Messiah? (John preached about Repentance for the forgiveness of sins and baptized people in the Jordan River when they did repent of their sins.)
3. What did John the Baptist mean when he called Jesus "The Lamb of God"? (Jesus was the one who would be sacrificed for their sins.)
4. What does "repent" mean? (Repent means to STOP a bad attitude or action, and to START a good one. It means "change directions" or "turn around.")
5. What did John the Baptist use water for? (Baptism)
6. Who was John preparing the way for? (Jesus)
7. Why did John want people to be ready for Jesus? (so they would listen to Him)
8. How can we prepare our hearts to love Jesus? (turn from our sins)
9. Why did Jesus get baptized? (Jesus was baptized to set an example for us of obedience to God. Or, He was baptized to mark the beginning of his public ministry.)
10. How did God show he was pleased with Jesus' obedience? (God spoke out of Heaven and the Spirit of God descended upon Him.)
11. Name at least one special thing that happened when John baptized Jesus. (The Holy Spirit came down as a dove and remained on Jesus. Heaven was opened; God spoke audibly.)
12. What does it mean to you that "the kingdom of heaven is near?" (Jesus is coming again!)
13. What would you like to change about your heart and life?
14. What can you do to be like John the Baptist and "prepare the way for the Lord"? (be a witness and an evangelist)
15. How can you prepare your heart for Jesus? (I can repent, confess my sins, be baptized, etc.)

16. Why is baptism important? (God commands us to be baptized; it is a sign of our death and rebirth in Christ; it shows the world that we are followers of Jesus.)



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The Temptation of Jesus

(Matthew 4:1-11)

Introduction

How do we know right from wrong? For example, how do you know it is wrong to lie?

The Bible is God's word. It tells us everything we need to know in order to live our lives in a way that pleases Him. He gave us Ten Commandments to help us know the best way to live our lives. But sometimes it's hard to follow God's rules! That's because we have an enemy that tries to make us sin against God. But God has given us a weapon to use against that sneaky devil—God's word! The Bible tells us that it is sharper than a two-edged sword!

Today we're going to learn why it is so important for us to know God's Word.

Opening Prayer

Father, even though the devil is invisible, he's real and he wants to make us sin against You. Please help us to learn Your word so that we might live our lives in a way that pleases You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

"For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword..." (Hebrews 4:12a)

Lesson

Last week we learned about the baptism of Jesus. When Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River by John, something very wonderful happened to Him. The Holy Spirit came down in the form of a dove and God the Father spoke to Jesus. He said, "*You are my dearly loved Son, and you bring me great joy.*" (Mark 1:11)

Jesus needed to hear this for He was about to begin a very important work for God. But the devil, the source of all evil, was determined to stop Jesus from obeying God.

After Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit led Him out into the desert. Jesus went there to be alone with God the Father. While He was there, God allowed Jesus to be tempted by the devil to sin.

Matthew 4:1

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil.

Why do you think the Spirit brought Jesus to a place where He could be tempted by the devil? (I think God wanted to prove His Son to be a sinless and worthy Savior. Plus, He wanted Jesus's faith to be strengthened.) Sometimes God allows us to go through trials in life so that we will learn that God faithfully provides strength and protection for us.

Why do you think the devil wanted Jesus to sin? (He wanted to destroy God's plan to save us from our sins.) If the devil could make Jesus sin, then He wouldn't be perfect and His death on the cross would not have been effective. He had to be the perfect Lamb of God.

While He was in the wilderness, Jesus fasted. Who knows what "fasting" is? Fasting is when you do not eat any food or drink any water so that you can spend time praying and talking to God.

Matthew 4:2

For forty days and forty nights He fasted and became very hungry.

It says he didn't eat for 40 days. Jesus spent His time praying to God, His Father, so He would know what God wanted Him to do next.

How would you feel if you didn't eat or drink for 40 days? [Teacher discuss how Jesus must have felt: tired, hungry, hot, and miserable.] He must have been very hungry.

Soon the devil appeared. He knew that Jesus was tired and hungry. So, he thought this would be a good time to get Jesus to sin.

1st Temptation: Stones to bread – not trusting God, not waiting for God

Matthew 4:3

During that time the devil came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread."

The devil came to Jesus and said, "I imagine You're pretty hungry by now, aren't You? If You are really God's Son, You could just say to these stones, 'Turn into bread!' and they would."

But Jesus knew that the devil was just trying to get Him to do what the devil wanted instead of what God wanted.

Why was it wrong for Jesus to turn the rocks into bread? (Because that would prove that Jesus didn't trust God the Father to provide for Him.)

So, Jesus used the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, to defeat the devil.

Matthew 4:4

But Jesus told Him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Jesus knew God's word and told the devil that man needs more than bread to live on; he needs to trust every word God says.

2nd Temptation: Jump off the temple – test God's power

So, the devil tried again. This time he took Jesus to Jerusalem and stood him on the very top of the temple where God's people worshipped God. Perhaps he could make Jesus misuse His power to impress the people.

Matthew 4:5-6

Then the devil took Him to the holy city, Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, "If You are the Son of God, jump off! For the

Scriptures say, 'He will order His angels to protect you. And they will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.'"

The devil was saying, "I know how you could get people to believe You're the Son of God. Just climb up to the highest part of the temple and jump off. You wouldn't even get hurt, because Scripture says that God's angels will catch You."

Of course, Jesus wanted people to believe in Him, so He could tell them about God's wonderful plan of salvation. But Jesus knew that would be the wrong way to get people to follow Him.

Why was it wrong for Jesus to jump off the Temple? (Jesus knew if He did that, he would be testing God's power to save His life and that would prove that Jesus didn't really trust God the Father.)

So again, Jesus used the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, to defeat the devil.

Matthew 4:7

Jesus responded, "The Scriptures also say, 'You must not test the LORD your God.'"

3rd Temptation: Get all the kingdoms by worshiping the devil – wanting to get power

That sneaky devil had one more temptation up his sleeve. Next Satan took Jesus to the top of a very high mountain.

Matthew 4:8-9

Next the devil took Him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. "I will give it all to You," he said, "if You will kneel down and worship me."

The devil was tempting Jesus with power. He said, "Look at all the kingdoms of the world. I can give you power and authority over the whole world if you will just worship me."

Why was it wrong for Jesus to bow down and worship the devil? (Jesus knew we are only to worship God.) Jesus knew that the devil isn't in charge of the world—God is! And He knew that by dying on the cross He would break the devil's power forever.

So again, Jesus used the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, to defeat the devil.

Matthew 4:10

"Get out of here, Satan," Jesus told him. "For the Scriptures say, 'You must worship the LORD your God and serve only Him.'"

Jesus had made up His mind to do God's will, and there was nothing the devil could do to stop Him.

Matthew 4:11

Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus.

Finally, the devil left Jesus and God sent angels to help and strengthen Jesus after His struggle against the evil one.

Conclusion

Jesus was human, so He was tempted. But He was also God, so He did not sin. Because Jesus faced temptations, He understands how hard it is for us to say, "No!" to temptations. But if we ask Him, God will give us the power of the Holy Spirit Who will help us fight off the devil's attempts to make us sin.

When Jesus was tempted, He used verses from the Bible to overpower the devil. (See vv. 4, 7, 10) The Bible can help us know what God wants us to do. The Bible tells us what is right and wrong.

The devil and his evil spirits are real! They are trying to get you to sin against God. Why does he want you to sin against God? (He wants to ruin your friendship with Jesus and make you feel as if God doesn't love you. He's trying to steal your joy.)

What are some ways that the devil tempts you to sin? (Stealing, making fun of someone or being mean to your sibling, disobeying parents or teachers, lying, cheating.)

Here are 5 ways God can help us when the devil tempts us to sin:

[Teacher, use your five fingers to help them remember this.]

1. **Memorize God's Word.** Read the bible and memorize the verses. God's Word has an answer for every test or problem you have. That is why it is so important to learn as many bible verses as you can. Jesus used God's Word to defeat the devil! These verses will help you make the right choices, just like they helped Jesus.
2. **Pray.** Spend time each day praying to God. Ask God to help you do what is right.
3. **Ask other Christians to help you.** Other Christians can pray for you and help you make right choices.
4. **Tell the devil to go away.** We need to say, "No!" to the devil's temptation to sin. Jesus was weak, tired, and hungry and could have given in to the sin, but He didn't. He said, "*Get out of here, Satan!*" God expects us to choose not to sin, too, just like Jesus.
5. **Be careful.** Stay away from people, places, and things that make you want to do wrong.

Remember, it is not a sin to be tempted by the devil to sin. Even the Lord Jesus was tempted. Sin comes when we give in to the temptation and do the sinful thing.

Jesus won the victory over each of the devil's temptations by using God's word, and He will give you the victory, too.

Closing Prayer

Father, please give us a desire in our hearts to learn and memorize Your Word. We want it to be tucked away inside our hearts for those times when the devil tempts us to sin. Then give us the strength we need to say “No” to sin. Help us to make wise choices as we live our daily lives. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Swords: Supplies needed: cardboard, scissors, paint or aluminum foil. Use the sword pattern (below).

Read Hebrews 4:12. This verse compares the Bible to a sword. Jesus used Scriptures as His “sword” to fight against Satan’s attacks. Have the students make swords out of cardboard. They may paint them or cover them with aluminum foil. Talk about how swords were used in medieval times for protection against enemies. The swords the students make will remind them that the Word of God is for their protection, and for a weapon against Satan.

To carry this idea further, use the sword as a memorization tool. Let the students attach fake gems to their swords for each Scripture verse they memorize. Keep the swords for use throughout the unit. After completing the sword, have students write a short prayer asking God to help them defeat temptation.

Game Center

Hiding God’s Word

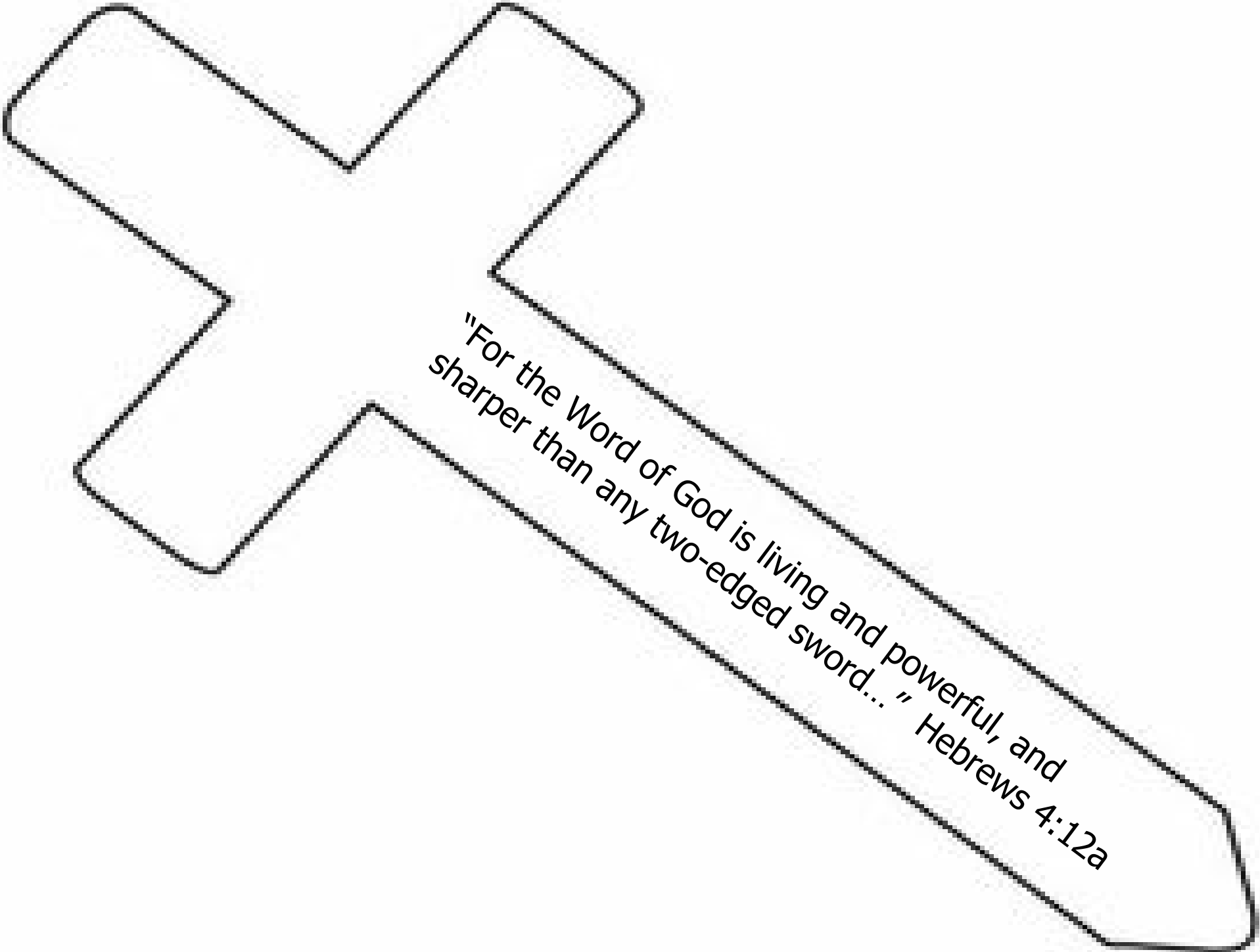
Write the Memory verse on the board. Have the children read it out loud with you several times. Erase one or two words and have the children read the verse again, reciting the erased words from memory. Continue to erase words until they are all gone and the class knows the verse from memory.

Explain how important it is to hide God’s word in their hearts. *God’s Word in our heart keeps us from sinning.* Share a time in your life when you were tempted to sin and the Word of God protected you.

Or, use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

Review Questions

1. Who is our enemy? (The devil is God’s great enemy and our enemy also.)
2. What’s another name for the devil? (Satan)
3. What does the devil want us to do? (Sin against God.)
4. After Jesus was baptized, where did the Holy Spirit lead Him? (Out into the desert wilderness.)
5. What happened to Jesus in the dessert? (For 40 days the devil came and tempted Jesus to sin.)
6. What is one way that Jesus was tempted? (Stones to bread, Jump off Temple, worship the devil.)
7. What did Jesus use to defeat the devil? (God’s word.)
8. Why was Jesus able to overcome the devil’s temptation to sin? (Jesus used God’s word to answer the devil.)
9. Why does the devil tempt you to sin? (To ruin my friendship with Jesus and make me feel as if God doesn’t love me.)
10. How did Jesus overcome each of the devil’s temptations? (When the devil tempted Him to sin, Jesus quoted Scripture.)
11. Name a sin the devil might tempt you to do. (Stealing, making fun of or being mean to someone, disobeying parents, lying.)
12. What can you do to make sure you do not sin against God? (We can overcome temptations to sin by: prayer, quoting Bible verses, saying “No” to what is wrong, etc.)



"For the Word of God is living and powerful, and
sharper than any two-edged sword..." Hebrews 4:12a

Jesus Calls His Disciples

(Matthew 4:18-22)

Introduction

[Teacher, discuss the importance of having friends.] If you were looking for a friend, what would you look for in that person? [Help the children discover words that describe good character traits such as someone who is honest, fun, caring, interesting, good listener, shares, plays fair, etc.] Why are these traits important?

What is one characteristic *you* would want to develop in order to become a better friend? Why do you think prayer is an important part of making decisions about friends? (God knows the kind of friends we need better than we do!)

Today you will be learning about the twelve men Jesus chose to be his closest friends. As we discuss the men Jesus chose to be his closest friends, let's think about what we need to do to be a good friend to others.

Opening Prayer

Father, this morning I pray that we might all consider ways to grow strong friendships, not only with other people, Lord, but also with You. I want You to be my best friend! In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. (Proverbs 18:24)

Lesson

After Jesus was tempted by the devil, He was ready to begin His ministry here on earth. He gathered followers who could learn about the things of God from Him. We call these people, Jesus' disciples. The word *disciple* means "*follower*" or "*student*". Disciples of Jesus listen to Him and try to follow His instructions. So, a disciple is anyone

who believes in Jesus, listens to Him, trusts Him, and obeys Him. That makes you and I disciples of Jesus, too!

Let's read about how Jesus met His first two disciples:

Matthew 4:18-20

*One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers—**Simon**, also called Peter, and **Andrew**—throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. ¹⁹Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!" ²⁰And they left their nets at once and followed him.*

Simon Peter and Andrew were brothers and worked as fishermen on the Sea of Galilee. [Teacher, point this out on the map.]

Matthew 4:21-22

*A little farther up the shore he saw two other brothers, **James** and **John**, sitting in a boat with their father, Zebedee, repairing their nets. And he called them to come, too. ²²They immediately followed him, leaving the boat and their father behind.*

Like Peter and Andrew, James and John were fisherman, too. Fishing was their job. Every day they caught fish, cleaned them, and sold them. That's how they took care of their families.

Now here's an interesting man...

Matthew 9:9

*As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man named **Matthew** sitting at his tax collector's booth. "Follow me and be my disciple," Jesus said to him. So Matthew got up and followed him.*

Before Jesus called Matthew to be one of his followers, many people hated him because he was a tax collector. People hated tax collectors in Bible times because they were often dishonest. They charged people more than the Roman government required and kept the difference. Many of them got very rich that way and people felt like they were being robbed by the tax collectors. But, as soon as Matthew met Jesus, he changed his ways. He stopped being dishonest and followed Jesus.

John 1:43-45

*The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found **Philip** and said to him, “Come, follow me.” ⁴⁴Philip was from Bethsaida, Andrew and Peter’s hometown. ⁴⁵Philip went to look for **Nathanael** and told him, “We have found the very person Moses and the prophets wrote about! His name is Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth.”*

As soon as Jesus called Philip, he went and found his friend, Nathaniel. He wanted him to meet Jesus, too!

And so it was, the twelve men that we now call Jesus’ disciples left everything behind to follow Jesus. They left their livelihood, their way of making a living, their homes, everything because they knew that following Jesus would change their lives forever.

Why do you think these men were willing to drop everything and follow Jesus immediately? When they realized that Jesus was the Messiah, everything changed. They were hungry for the truth of God. They trusted Him and wanted to do what He said. So, they stayed with Jesus as disciples from that time on, learning from Him and helping Him teach people about God.

What was it about these men that attracted Jesus to them? Why did Jesus ask them to be His disciples? What character qualities did these men have? (Jesus did not choose his disciples because they were more intelligent than others. Jesus chose them because they had hearts that were ready and willing to serve. They cared about others, they weren’t selfish, and they wanted to share the good news about what Jesus came to earth to do.)

Luke 6:12-16

*One day soon afterward Jesus went up on a mountain to pray, and he prayed to God all night. ¹³At daybreak he called together all of his disciples and chose twelve of them to be **apostles**. Here are their names: ¹⁴Simon (whom he named Peter), Andrew (Peter’s brother), James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, ¹⁵Matthew, Thomas, James (son of Alphaeus), Simon (who was called the zealot), ¹⁶Judas (son of James), Judas Iscariot (who later betrayed him).*

Now Jesus had many followers; that is, He had many disciples, but these 12 he called “*apostles*.” The word *apostle* means “*messenger*”. These were special disciples that Jesus prepared to send out into the world to tell others the truth about God and the kingdom of heaven. He took the time to train them so that they could go out and teach others the Good News—that Jesus had come to save sinners from the punishment for their sins.

Jesus called these men to a life of special service and commitment to Him beyond anything they had ever known before! When Jesus called them to follow Him, they didn’t make excuses; they left at once and followed. From this point on these 12 men remained with Jesus until He died.

What do you think a day in the life of Jesus’ disciple was like? Every day they walked long distances with Him, they ate meals together, they watched Him do miracles, they listened to Him teach, they learned from Jesus, and they wanted to follow His example.

What did Jesus and the disciples do together that caused them to grow to be such close friends? They spent time together, talked with each other, they all served each other and cared about each other.

He is calling you and I to follow Him, as well. Following Jesus means that we must listen to Him, learn from Him, and be careful to do things His way!

For us, following Jesus means more than just saying that we are a Christian. If you want to be one of Jesus’ disciples, it may mean that you need to leave something behind so that you can live in a way that is pleasing to Him. He might be calling you to leave your bad temper behind, or bad language, or a bad attitude! Maybe God is calling you to leave certain “friends” behind because they are not a good influence on you.

God has called you to be one of Jesus’ disciples. In order to be a disciple of Jesus, He must become your very best friend. What are some ways you can make Jesus your best friend? (By spending time with Him, listening to Him, and sharing your heart with Him.)

What are some ways you can be a good friend to others at home, at school, and with friends? [Let the children respond.]

Have you ever asked God to help you choose your friends? Prayer is so important when choosing a new friend. God knows the kind of friends we need better than we do! Ask God to give you good friends that will help you walk more closely with Him.

Closing Prayer

Father, help us develop the kinds of character qualities that would make us good, dependable, thoughtful and loving friends. Give each of us a great desire to become better friends both with others and with You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

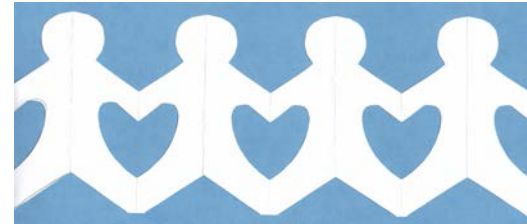
Craft Corner

Paper Chain Friends

1. Take an 8.5" x 11" piece of paper and cut in half horizontally so you have two pieces that are 4.25" x 11".
1. Fold each piece in half three times. You'll have 8 panels. Note: It's important to have the folds exactly right.
2. Unfold the paper and then using the same fold marks, refold it according style.
3. This this template, draw a figure of a person on the top layer. being careful to put the straight edge on the fold. Be sure that the arms extend beyond the edge of the folded sheet.



4. Cut the figure out.
2. Unfold the paper and you will have 4 friends, hand-in-hand. **Look what's holding them together!**



5. They can color the dolls (one would be themselves; the others are their friends). Help them write their name on one doll and the names of their friends on the others.
6. As the children are working, you can ask them about their friends. Why is she your friend? What is it about him that you like? How can you be a good friend to your friend? and so forth....

Game Center

Use the following review questions in a review game:

1. What do we call followers of Jesus? (Disciples)
2. What does the word disciple mean? (Pupil, student, or learner. A disciple is one who follows the teachings of another.)
3. What did the first 4 disciples do for living? (They were fishermen.)
4. How many apostles did Jesus choose to be with Him. (Jesus chose 12 men - His closest friends.)
5. What do you think a day in the life of Jesus' disciple was like? (Every day they listened to Jesus teach, they walked long

distances with Him, they ate meals together, they watched Him do miracles, they obeyed His commands.)

6. What did Jesus and the disciples do together that caused them to grow to be such close friends? (Spent time together, talked with each other, learned from Jesus, all served each other and cared about each other for a long time.)
7. How can you help your friendship with Jesus grow? (By spending time with Him, listening to Him, and sharing my heart with Him.)
8. What do friends do together that helps them grow to be better friends? (Play, pray, eat, share, work)
9. The disciples grew to be best friends with Jesus by spending time with Him. What can you do during your time with Jesus to help your friendship grow? (Talk, laugh, work, play, take a walk, study.)
10. Have you ever asked God to help you choose your friends?
11. Why is prayer an important part of making decisions about friends? (God knows the kind of friends we need better than we do!)

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One day as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee He saw two brothers, Simon Peter and his brother Andrew. They were fishing. Use the code to find out what Jesus called them to do. Read Matthew 4:19 to check your work.

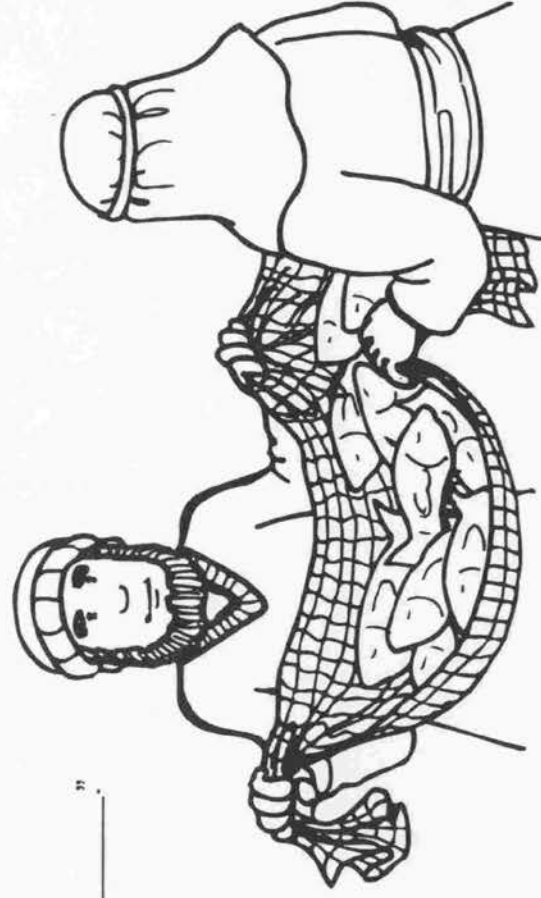
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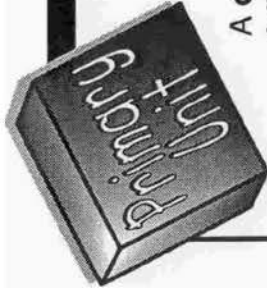
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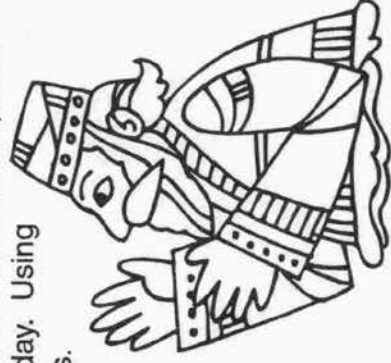






Disciples Acrostic

A **disciple** is a learner or one who follows a teacher. Jesus had twelve special followers, but you can also be a disciple and learner today. Using the Scripture references, identify Jesus' twelve disciples.



T _ _ _ _ _ (the "doubter") John 20:27

_ _ _ _ _ H _ _ (the "beloved" disciple) Mark 1:19-20

E

_ _ _ _ _ T _ _ _ _ _ (also known as Nathanael) Luke 6:14

_ _ _ _ _ W _ _ (a tax collector) Matthew 9:9

E

L

V

_ _ _ _ _ E _ _ (brother of John) Matthew 4:21-22

_ _ _ _ _ D _ _ _ _ _ Matthew 10:3

_ _ _ _ _ I _ _ _ _ _ (the "Zealot," the eager one) Acts 1:13

_ _ _ _ _ S (son of Alphaeus) Matthew 10:3

C

I

_ _ _ _ _ P _ _ _ _ _ (leader of the disciples; he denied Jesus) Luke 6:14

_ _ _ _ _ L _ _ _ _ _ (told his friend, Nathanael, about Jesus) John 1:43-45

_ _ _ _ _ E _ _ (brother of Peter) Matthew 4:18-19

_ _ _ _ _ S _ _ _ _ _ (treasurer of the disciples and betrayer of Jesus) Matthew 26:14-15



Jesus' First Miracle

(John 2:1-10)

Introduction

Who knows what a miracle is? [Teacher, discuss miracles with the children.] Miracles are extraordinary or supernatural events that defy nature. For example, Jesus restored sight to a blind man, he made a lame man walk, and He even revived a dead man back to life. Have you ever experienced a miracle in your life? Have you ever skinned your knee? Did you know that when God heals your cuts or bruises, that is a miracle of God!

Opening Prayer

Father, encourage our hearts this morning as we learn that You are a God of miracles. We know that You love to amaze us so that we will know that You are God the Son and worthy of our praise. Thank You that nothing is too hard for You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)

Lesson

Have you ever been invited to a wedding? What was it like? Was there a big banquet with lots of things to eat and drink? Were there a lot of people there having a good time? Even Jesus went to parties.

Weddings in Jesus' day were week-long celebrations. Often the whole town was invited and everybody would come. They always had a large banquet table full of specially prepared goodies to eat and drink.

One time, Jesus and the disciples were invited to a wedding at Cana.

John 2:1-2

The next day there was a wedding celebration in the village of Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, (2) and Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the celebration.

Jesus' mother was there, too. She was helping to make sure that there was plenty of food and wine for everyone. And boy, was she happy to see her Son arrive.

Everyone was having a good time at this wedding in Cana until something very embarrassing happened to the father of the bride. Suddenly, Jesus' mother discovered that they ran out of wine! There was nothing to give the guests to drink.

John 2:3

The wine supply ran out during the festivities, so Jesus' mother told him, "They have no more wine."

Now this would have been very embarrassing for the father of the bride. So Mary told Jesus what had happened. She was hoping that her son would help solve this major problem and find some wine. She was certain that He would help.

John 2:4

"Dear woman, that's not our problem," Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come."

When Mary told Jesus about the problem, He told her, *"That's not our problem!"* and explained to her that it was not yet time for Him to reveal Himself to the world as the Messiah.

John 2:5

But his mother told the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

Mary trusted that Jesus would do the right thing. So, she told the servants to do whatever He says. She knew that Jesus was compassionate and wouldn't want the family to be humiliated in front of all their guests.

Jesus listened to His mother; He knew just what to do. He saw that there were six huge water jars standing nearby.

John 2:6-8

Standing nearby were six stone water jars, used for Jewish ceremonial washing. Each could hold twenty to thirty gallons. (7) Jesus told the servants, "Fill the jars with water." When the jars had been filled, (8) he said, "Now dip some out, and take it to the master of ceremonies." So the servants followed his instructions.

These water pots were huge. It says they held 20 or 30 gallons of water each. A bathtub holds about 30 gallons, so you can imagine how big these were. Each jar weighed about 300 pounds.

These servants must have wondered what in the world Jesus was doing. They might have looked at each other wondering why they should serve water to the master of the feast (probably the bride's father). But they obeyed Jesus. And, something very unusual happened as they poured... [Teacher, pour water from a clear pitcher into an opaque one containing a package of Kool-Aid.]

John 2:9-10

When the master of ceremonies tasted the water that was now wine, not knowing where it had come from (though, of course, the servants knew), he called the bridegroom over. (10) "A host always serves the best wine first," he said. "Then, when everyone has had a lot to drink, he brings out the less expensive wine. But you have kept the best until now!"

[Now pour the Kool-Aid from the opaque pitcher back into the clear one.] Jesus turned ordinary water into fine wine. He helped keep the family from being embarrassed or humiliated in front of their guests.

John 2:11

This miraculous sign at Cana in Galilee was the first time Jesus revealed his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

This was the first miracle Jesus performed. When the disciples saw it they believed that He was truly God the Son. The miracle showed his power.

Jesus loves people and wants to take care of their needs.

Jesus will take care of your needs, too. Do you know what your greatest need is? [Teacher, entertain answers.] Your greatest need is forgiveness for your sins. Because without that, you cannot see God.

Sometimes our hearts are filled with the wrong things, such as bad attitudes and thoughts. We can change how we look on the outside, but only Jesus can change what's on the inside. We can ask for His help just like Mary did!

He can change us just like He changed the water into wine. Jesus is the Son of God and has power to change anything. He can change the worst sinner into a child of God!

One day there will be a wedding in heaven and you have been invited to attend! At this wedding Jesus will be the *groom* and His church will be the *bride*. Anyone who has asked Jesus to be their personal Savior will be there. The church is called the *bride of Christ*.

God created marriage between a man and woman to be a picture of our relationship with Him. He wants a husband and a wife to enjoy a close and personal relationship. And, in the same way He wants us to enjoy a close personal relationship with Him for all eternity. And it all starts when we are born again.

Object Lesson: Before class, secretly place red Kool-Aid package in an opaque pitcher. Fill another clear pitcher with water. While you are telling the story of the servants filling the pots with water, pour the water from the clear pitcher into the opaque one. When you get to the part of the story when they draw some water out, pour some Kool-Aid out of the opaque pitcher into a clear glass. The students will be surprised to find that it has turned red. (Be sure to share your "trick" with them so they will know that you did not perform a miracle!) Pour all the Kool-Aid back into the pitcher, add sugar, stir it up and share the treat with the children.

Discuss the Object Lesson

1. What was your reaction when the water came out red?

- How was this activity like Jesus' miracle at the wedding?

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for sending Jesus to show Your power and take our sins away. Help us look to You for help in every situation. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Activity Corner

"Water To Wine" Worksheet

Have the children circle the actions or attitudes they want Jesus to help them with. Or, have them write five or six attitudes that they would like to change on a "jar" pattern. Then, on the back have, them write the attitude that they would like Jesus to give them instead.

Game Center

Or, use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

- Where did Jesus perform His first miracle? (In Cana of Galilee.)
- What celebration was Jesus attending? (A wedding.)
- Who else was at the wedding that Jesus knew well? (His mother.)
- What did they run out of at the feast? (Wine.)
- What did Jesus do with the water in the jar? (Turned it into wine.)
- What enabled Jesus to change the water to wine? (He is God; He can do anything.)

- How do you think the guests and disciples reacted when Jesus turned water to wine?
- What would you have said to Jesus if you had been at the wedding?
- Why do you think Jesus performed a miracle at the wedding?
- How did His disciples respond to what Jesus did? (Vs 11)
- What miracles does God perform today?
- Can we ask Jesus for help today, too?

Discussion Questions for Older Children

- Look at **verse 3**. When the wine ran out why did Mary tell Jesus about the situation? In other words, why did Mary think that Jesus could help with this embarrassing situation?
(She must have known that He had miraculous powers. Possibly she had witnessed Jesus doing miracles before so had the confidence to ask Him to help. If anyone should have known Jesus' ability to do miracles it should have been Mary. Also, Mary trusted that Jesus would do the right thing.)
- In **verse 4**, what did Jesus mean when He said, "*My hour has not yet come.*"
(He meant it was not time for Him to begin His public ministry to reveal Himself to the world as the Messiah.)

So, why did He do the miracle if it wasn't time for Him to reveal Himself to the world?
(Jesus is compassionate and didn't want this family to be humiliated in front of their guests. Jesus loves people and wants to take care of their needs.)

3. When you make wine, it takes a long period of time for the grape juice to ferment and become wine. However, Jesus turned this water to wine immediately. In an instant, He created wine far tastier than the best. How does this compare to when Jesus created the universe (Col 1:16)?
(Jesus simply willed it to happen; He spoke it into existence.)
4. Trick Question: How do you think the guests, the bridegroom, and the bride's father reacted when Jesus turned water to wine?
(He did do the miracle as His mother wanted, but He did not show the public that it was He who did the miracle. Look at **verse 9**, only the servants knew. So, the bridegroom and guests, did not know that Jesus was the one who supplied the wine or how it was supplied.)
5. The wine that Jesus created was far better than any wine they had ever tasted. What does this tell you about the things of God?
(The things of God are always better than the things of man. God gives the absolute best; you can only receive the best for your life from God.)
6. Can Satan perform miracles?
(Yes! Satan has unusual power and ability. The bible tells us that he can perform false signs and lying wonders (2 Thes 2:7-10).

What is the difference between magic and miracles?

Miracles	Magic
Under God's control.	Under man's control.
Not available on command.	Available on command.
Draws people to God.	Diverts people's attention away from God.
Always glorifies God.	Always takes the glory away from God.

Miracles	Magic
Helps us believe that Jesus is God.	Tricks us into believing something that is not true.

Jesus' miracles always had a purpose. John calls them **signs**. We use signs to identify a person, place or thing. For example, you have signs on the bathroom door so you know where to go; you have a sign marking the Exit of a building so if there's a fire you can escape.

What was this sign meant to teach us about Jesus?

(Look at **verse 11**. This sign revealed His glory and caused His disciples to truly believe He was the Messiah. Jesus' signs show us that He is God.)

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit <https://www.FreeChildrensMinistryLessons.com>]

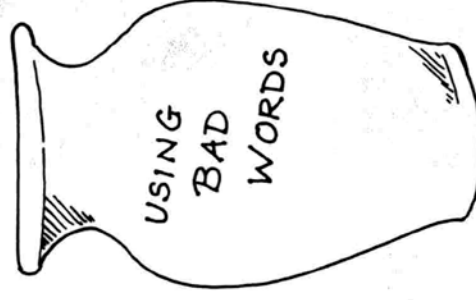
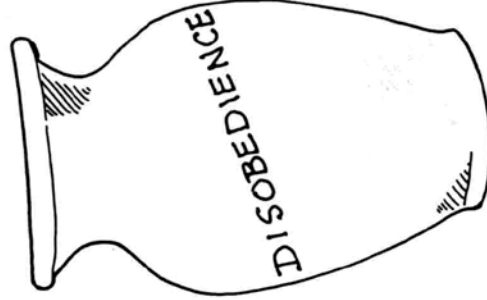
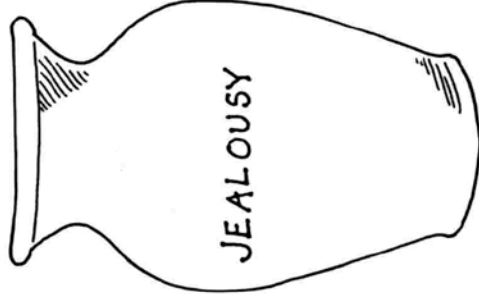
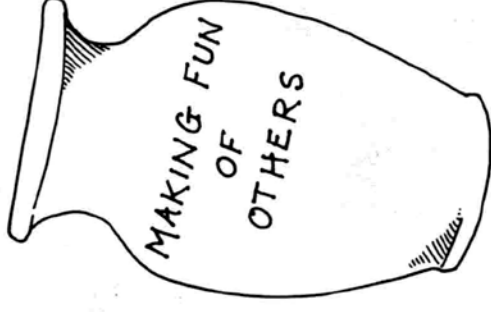
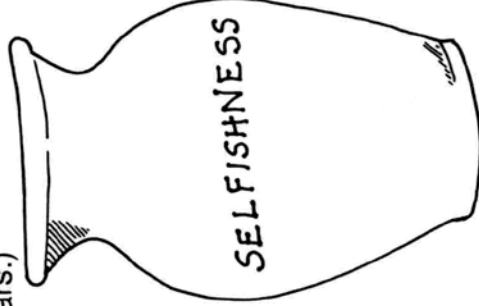
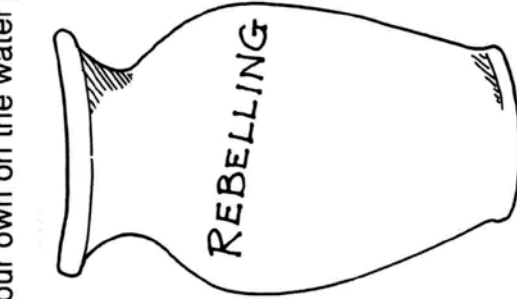
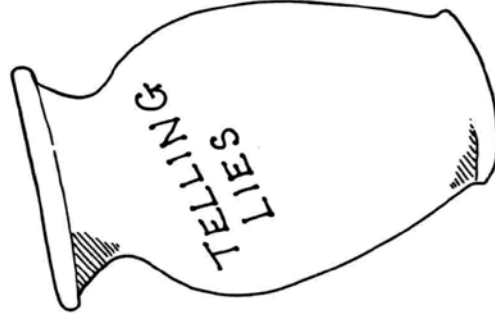
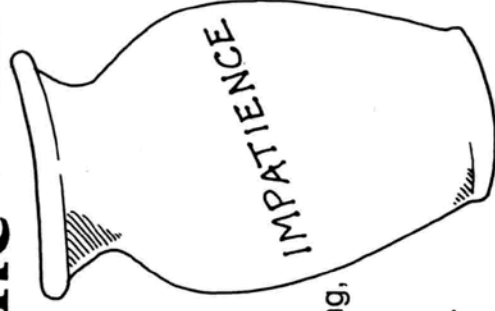
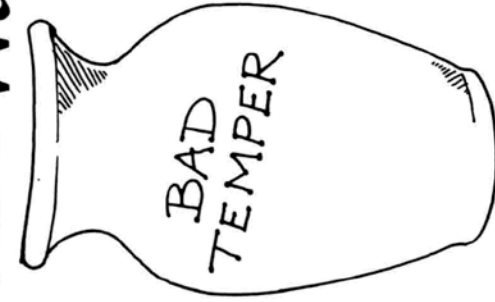
Water Turned to Wine

Changes

One day at a wedding in Cana,
Jesus changed water to wine.
The wedding guests all were delighted.
Nothing ever had tasted so fine!

There are things in my life that need changing,
Wrong actions and bad attitudes.
But I know if I give them to Jesus,
He will change them and make me renewed.

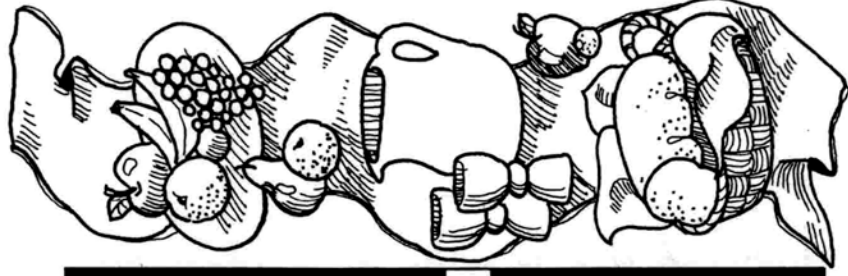
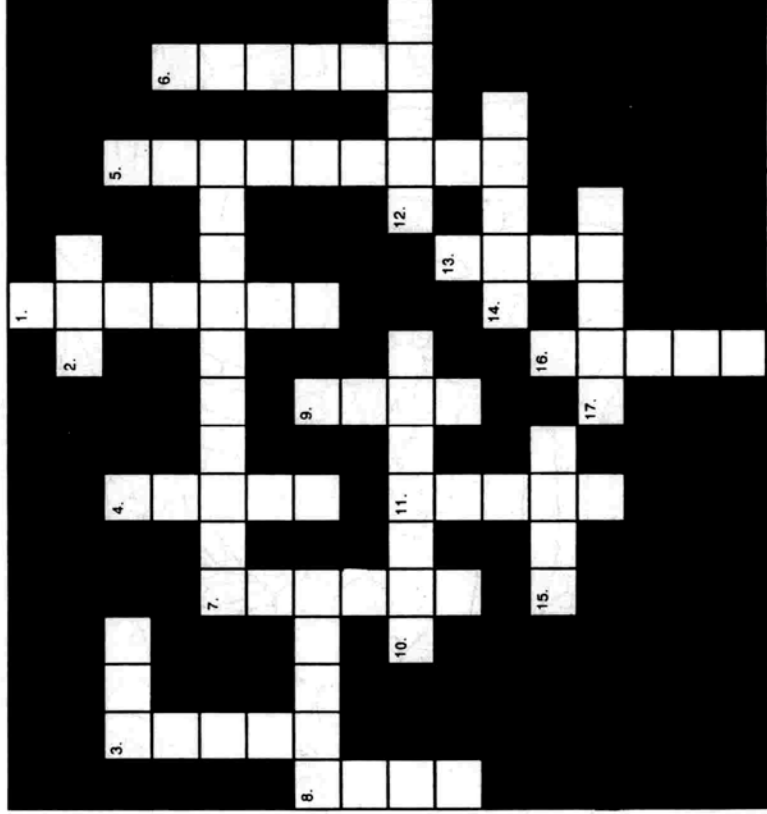
Here are the things I want Jesus to change in my life. (Circle the actions or attitudes you need help with, or add your own on the water jars.)



"Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me." Psalm 119:133

Water Turned to Wine

The words in this crossword puzzle are from the story in John 2:1-11. You may look up the verses to find the answers.



ACROSS

2. Jesus told the servants to fill the _____ with water. (vs.7)
3. There were _____ jars. (vs.6)
7. This story tells of the first of Jesus' _____ signs. (vs.11)
8. He performed a miracle. (vs.11)
10. This miracle took place at a _____ feast. (vs.11)
12. Jesus revealed His _____. (vs.11)
14. This is another name for a large dinner.
15. Jesus changed the water into _____. (vs.9)
17. The disciples put their _____ in Him. (vs.11)

DOWN

1. The wedding feast took place at Cana in _____. (vs.1)
3. The water jars were made of _____. (vs.6)
4. This was Jesus' _____ miracle. (vs.11)
5. After this miracle, Jesus' _____ put their faith in Him. (vs.11)
6. She told the servants to do whatever Jesus told them to do. (vs.5)
7. He tasted the water first. (vs.9)
8. This story is written in this book of the Bible.
9. This is the name of the town where this miracle happened. (vs.1)
11. Some guests had too much to _____. (vs.10)
13. This wine was the _____. (vs.10)
16. Jesus had changed _____ into the best wine. (vs.9)

Nicodemus Talks to Jesus

(John 3:1-20)

Introduction

[Teacher, ask each student to tell you their birth date. Record names and dates for each student. Tell students that these dates are very important because they signify when they entered into this world. It is their “earthly birthday.”]

Today in class you will learn about a second birthday, one even more important than the first. It is God’s desire that everyone have a “spiritual birthday.”

Opening Prayer

Father, this morning if there are any children here that do not know You on a personal basis, who have not trusted You for your gift of forgiveness of sins and for their personal salvation, then I pray that this morning might be the day that they put their trust in You and become “born again.” In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.
(John 3:16)

Lesson

Alternative Lesson Presentation

Invite a “mystery guest” dressed as Nicodemus into your classroom and talk to the students as though sharing secret information. Have “Nicodemus” tell the students about his night encounter with Jesus. Include an explanation of who Nicodemus is (a Pharisee) and why he had to meet with Jesus secretly, the questions that Nicodemus asked Jesus and Jesus’ reply to him, an explanation of the term “born again” and a clear explanation of the plan of salvation.

Traditional Lesson Presentation

Shhh.... It was a dark and quiet night. A man walked quickly down the shadowy streets of Jerusalem. Who was the man? Where was he going? It all happened like this...

John 3:1-2

There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. (2) After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. “Rabbi,” he said, “we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you.”

Nicodemus was an important man. He was a Pharisee, a well-respected religious leader of the Jews. Nicodemus had heard much about Jesus. He wanted to find out more about His teachings. But, Nicodemus was not very brave about going to see Him. The Jewish leaders were watching Jesus; Nicodemus was afraid to be seen talking to Him. So he came to visit Jesus at night.

Nicodemus told Jesus, “Your miracles show that You are a teacher sent from God.” (vr. 2) He knew that no one could do such miracles unless he was a man of God. Jesus wanted Nicodemus to know about His kingdom of love.

John 3:3

Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.”

Nicodemus had never heard about being “born again.” Do any of you know what that means? [Teacher, let the children respond.]

Nicodemus had a hard time understanding that it isn’t enough just to know about God – that he had to begin a new life by being “born again.”

John 3:4

“What do you mean?” exclaimed Nicodemus. “How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?”

Did you know that you must be born again to have your sins forgiven?

Nicodemus still didn’t get it.

John 3:5-7

Jesus replied, "I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. (6) Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. (7) So don't be surprised when I say, 'You must be born again.'

When we are born as babies into our human family, we are born with a sinful nature. Sin is anything you and I think, say, or do that does not please God. The Bible says, *"No one is righteous—not even one."* (Romans 3:10 NLT). God says we must be punished for our sin. That punishment is to be separated from Him forever in Hell after we die.

To be "born again" means to be born spiritually. This is a work that only the Holy Spirit can do in our lives. God alone is able to make you and me new on the inside when we put our trust in the Lord Jesus. When that happens, we come alive spiritually and we know we will be in heaven with Him someday.

John 3:9

"How are these things possible?" Nicodemus asked.

Jesus scolded Nicodemus for not understanding...

John 3:10

Jesus replied, "You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don't understand these things?"

Nicodemus was a leader of the Jewish religion; he should have known that God can change someone's heart.

Jesus told Nicodemus why God had sent Him to earth.

John 3:16

"For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."

God is a holy God – 100 % pure. He cannot allow anything that is unholy into His presence; He hates sin. But God loves His creation. God loves each person in the whole world. He loved Nicodemus and He loves you, too. God's love is so great, He sent the Lord Jesus to be punished for sin. He wants you to believe in, that is, trust in what Jesus did so that you will not die in your sins and be separated forever from God.

Anybody, anywhere may enter the Kingdom of God. How? By believing in Jesus.

John 3:17

God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.

God hates evil, but He loves people. That is why we need Jesus. God doesn't want anyone to go to Hell. He wants everyone to come to the saving knowledge of what Jesus did for them on the cross. People send themselves to Hell by refusing to believe in Jesus.

John 3:18

"There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only Son."

Those people who have not trusted in what Jesus did for them on the cross will be punished for their sin. You must be born again and have your sins forgiven so that you can see the Kingdom of God.

Jesus is perfect. Jesus took the punishment that we deserve. When we trust Jesus (that is, believe that He is God and ask Him to come into our lives) we are "born again" into God's family.

What about you? Are you born again? Do you want to be? Bow your heads and repeat after me,

“Lord Jesus, I have disobeyed Your commands. I know I deserve to be punished. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. Today I want to believe in You as my Savior and be born into Your forever family and called a child of God.”

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for making me a new person. Thank You for saving me from the punishment of sin and for allowing me to be part of Your family. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen

Learning Activities

Activity Ideas

Testimonies

Invite one or more people to come into your class and share their salvation experiences with the students. Be sure to have them share the steps involved in becoming a Christian.

Birthday Party

Decorate the room with balloons and streamers. Give each student a cupcake with a candle on it. Sing “Happy Birthday”. Explain that it is God’s desire that each of us have a “spiritual” birthday.

Craft Corner

Salvation Bracelets

This is a good conversation starter to tell their friends about salvation. Encourage the students to practice sharing the bead story with a friend.

For each student you will need:

- 1 piece of leather string
 - 5 beads, one each of yellow, black, red, white, and green
1. String the beads on the leather string in order given. Tie a knot at each end of the beads to keep them together and centered. Tie the bracelets onto the student's wrists.
 2. Guide them to discuss the meaning of each color.
 - o Yellow (or gold)—Heaven is a wonderful place.
 - o Black—Sin, my heart is sinful. I can't get to heaven with sin in my heart.
 - o Red—Jesus died on the cross and shed His blood for me. He took the punishment for my sin.
 - o White—Now my heart is clean, I am forgiven!
 - o Green—I am growing in my walk with the Lord.

As they work on the craft, invite them to share the story of their own spiritual birthdays, explaining when and where they came to know Jesus as their Savior. Let them practice sharing the bead story.

Game Center***Bean Bag Toss***

Cut a triangle, square, and a circle in the bottom of a cardboard box. Make the openings big enough for a beanbag. Decorate the box and label the shapes "Who," "What," and "Where."

When a child throws a beanbag through a shape he may select a card of the corresponding shape with a question to answer for points for his team.

Who Questions

1. Who was the man who came to Jesus by night? (John 3:1 – Nicodemus)
2. Who did Nicodemus come to see by night? (John 3:2 – Jesus)
3. Who will be able to see the kingdom of God? (John 3:3 – Those who are born again.)
4. Who loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son? (John 3:16 – God)
5. Who gets eternal life? (John 3:16 – Whoever believes in Jesus)
6. Who stands judged before God? (John 3:18 – Whoever does not believe in Jesus)

What Questions

1. What was Nicodemus' job? (John 3:1 – He was a Jewish religious leader)
2. What did Nicodemus say to Jesus when he first came to Him by night? And why? (John 3:2 – He said, "Rabbi, we all know that God has sent you to teach us" because of the miracles you do.)

3. What did Nicodemus come to Jesus by night for? And why? (He wanted to examine Jesus for himself. He came at night because he was afraid of persecution from the Jews.)
4. What did Jesus say you have to do before you can see the kingdom of God? (John 3:3 – Be born again.)
5. What does it mean to be "born again"? (When you trust that Jesus took the penalty for your sins and made it possible for you to go to heaven, you become a new person – born of the Spirit!)
6. What two things do you have to be "born of" before you can enter the kingdom of God? (John 3:5 – Water and the Spirit.)
7. What does it mean to be born of water? (Physical birth)
8. What do humans produce? (John 3:6 – Human life)
9. What does the Spirit produce? (John 3:6 – Spiritual life)
10. What does it mean to be born of the Spirit? (To receive the new life given by the Holy Spirit.)
11. What did God send His Son into the world to do? (John 3:17 – To save the world)

Where Questions

1. Where did Nicodemus think Jesus came from? And why? (John 3:2 – He thought Jesus came from God because of the miracles he had done.)
2. Where do you get to go if you become born again? (John 3:3 – the Kingdom of God)
3. Where was Nicodemus a teacher? (John 3:10 – Of the Jews in Israel)

4. Where did God send His son? And why? (John 3:17 – Into this world to save the world)
5. Where does someone who does not believe in Jesus go after they die? (John 3:18 – Hell. They are condemned.)

Or, use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. What did Jesus talk about one night with a man named Nicodemus? (They talked about how to go to heaven – being born again).
2. Why did Jesus tell Nicodemus that he could not go to heaven and see the kingdom of God? (John 3:3 – because he had not been “born again.”)
3. What does it mean to be “born again”? (Being “born again” means to begin a new life with God as my “boss.” We are born again when we believe that Jesus died to forgive our sins.)
4. How did Jesus know so much about heavenly things? (John 3:12-13 – He came from heaven)
5. To whom does God give eternal life? (God gives eternal life to everyone who is “born again” – to all who believe that Jesus died to forgive their sins.)
6. Recite the memory verse. (John 3:16 or Romans 10:9)
7. Why is it important for us to tell other people about the way to eternal life? (Possible answer: Because if no one tells them, they might never find out.)
8. Was Nicodemus a sinner? (Nicodemus was a good, honest man, but he was a sinner like everyone else.)
9. What is the difference between your physical birthday and your spiritual birthday? (Possible answers: your physical birthday

comes before your spiritual birthday; your physical birth comes from your mother; your spiritual comes from your Heavenly Father; etc.)

10. How does God save us? (We are saved when we believe that Jesus died to forgive our sins.)
11. How does it feel to know that God loves you enough to die for you?

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit <https://www.FreeChildrensMinistryLessons.com>]

Two Birthdays

Read John 3:1-21

How is your spiritual birthday different from your physical birthday?

Physical Birthday

first birth

born of water
(3:5)

born to a family

takes place in your
mother's body

my physical
brothers and sisters

my physical birthday

Spiritual Birthday

_____ birth

born of the _____
(3:5)

born to _____

takes place in your

my spiritual
brothers and sisters

my spiritual birthday



The Samaritan Woman

(John 4:3-42)

Introduction

[Teacher, pour yourself a glass of water and take a drink.]

Ah yes, cool, refreshing water! What are some things you use water for here on earth? (Drinking, cleaning, plants need water to grow, too. Water not only gives us life, it gives plants and animals life, too.)

Do you drink a lot of water? How much water do you drink each day? Most experts agree that we should drink about eight or nine glasses of water a day. That seems like a lot of water, but did you know that your body is more than 60% water? And, we are constantly losing the water in our body when we sweat or go to the bathroom. That's why we need to keep drinking water all day long.

We all know what it means to be thirsty. Our throats and mouths get dry. We need to drink something cool and wet to make it better. If we don't drink something, we can get sick. But after you had your drink did you ever thirst again? (Yes) How come? Our bodies need water.

Wouldn't it be great if we never got thirsty? What if there was special water that we could drink once and it would take care of us forever?

In a different way, our hearts and minds and souls can also get thirsty. Have you ever wondered what God is like? Or what heaven is like? Have you ever wondered what happens to your life when you get through with it here on earth?

We call that a spiritual thirst—a thirst for an understanding of the things of God; a thirst for truth and righteousness. So, just as your body needs water, your heart and mind and soul needs something to satisfy it, too. When our hearts are thirsty, we can go to God to quench our spiritual thirst.

Jesus called Himself the “Living Water.” How is He like water to people's hearts? (Jesus refreshes our inner being, helps us grow spiritually, gives us spiritual life, and cleans our hearts from sin.)

Just as everyone in the world needs water to stay healthy in this life, everyone needs Jesus, the Living Water to give them eternal life.

Opening Prayer

Lord, we are so thankful that we can come to Sunday school and learn about Jesus. Prepare our hearts this morning to receive what You have planned for us in this lesson. Give me the desire to tell others about Him, too. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

...he who believes in Me shall never thirst. (John 6:35b)

Lesson

One day Jesus and His disciples were traveling to Galilee through an area called Samaria. [Teacher, show the students the map of Israel.]

John 4:3-5

So he left Judea and returned to Galilee. (4) He had to go through Samaria on the way. (5) Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

Now Jesus and His disciples were Jewish, and most Jewish people would not travel through Samaria. The Jews didn't like the Samaritans and the Samaritans didn't like the Jews. So, they normally chose a different route to avoid Samaria. But this didn't stop Jesus from visiting Samaria. He had an important appointment to keep!

John 4:6

Jacob's well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime.

They had been walking all day and they were tired and hungry and thirsty. About noon, Jesus sat down by a well of cool water to rest while His disciples went into a village near by to find food.

Jesus was alone by the well and had no way to get water. Pretty soon a woman came to the well to get some water.

John 4:7-8

Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink." (8) He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food.

When Jesus spoke to her, the woman must have been surprised. In those days men and women didn't usually speak to one another unless they knew each other. Besides that, Jews and Samaritans usually never talked to each other. But Jesus loves all people. He would never treat someone rudely.

John 4:9

The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. She said to Jesus, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?"

Little did this woman know who she was talking to!

John 4:10

Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water."

Jesus was saying, *"If you only knew that you were talking to the creator of the universe, you would ask Me for water..."*

Jesus' answer must have confused her. He didn't even have a bucket, so how could He give her water?

John 4:11

"But sir, you don't have a rope or a bucket," she said, "and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water?"

Jesus was talking about a different kind of water.

John 4:13-14

Jesus replied, "Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. (14) But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life."

Jesus was saying that if she drinks of ordinary water, she will be thirsty again, but the water He wants to give her will last forever. He said it will give her eternal life.

Even though this woman didn't understand exactly what Jesus meant, this living water sounded almost too good to be true!

John 4:15

"Please, sir," the woman said, "give me this water! Then I'll never be thirsty again, and I won't have to come here to get water."

She's excited to think that she would never have to make the long trip out to the well and have to carry the heavy water back to town. It is likely that she had to walk several miles out to the well and the water pot could have weighed up to 45 pounds. (A gallon of water is 8 lbs.)

She still doesn't understand what Jesus is trying to tell her. So, Jesus confronts this woman with her own sinful life.

John 4:16

"Go and get your husband," Jesus told her.

This was His way of getting her to confess her sin to Him. Before the woman could believe in Jesus as the One who could give her "living water" (everlasting life) she had to recognize that she was a sinner.

The same is true for us. Before we can believe that Jesus is the answer to our sin problem, we have to recognize we have a sin problem. That's what gives us a "spiritual thirst" that must be satisfied. The Bible says that you must be willing to admit you're a sinner and that you need the Lord Jesus to give you "living water" (everlasting life). You need to now in your heart you desperately need Jesus to forgive you your sins.

Jesus was trying to help the Samaritan woman see that she was a sinner.

John 4:17-18

"I don't have a husband," the woman replied. Jesus said, "You're right! You don't have a husband— (18) for you have had five husbands, and you aren't even married to the man you're living with now. You certainly spoke the truth!"

The woman was face-to-face with the Savior of the world, the Messiah, the perfect One Who would die for her sins and the sins of the whole world. This woman was beginning to think that Jesus was not an ordinary man.

John 4:19

"Sir," the woman said, "you must be a prophet."

There was something about Jesus that was special.

John 4:25

The woman said, "I know the Messiah is coming—the one who is called Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

The Samaritans were waiting for God to send a Savior who would be a great teacher.

John 4:26

Then Jesus told her, "I AM the Messiah!"

Jesus told her that He is the Savior of the world that everyone had been waiting for since the beginning of time. Immediately the woman believed that Jesus was truly the Messiah, and she got excited...

The woman was so excited, she set her water jar by the well and hurried to town to tell everyone about Him, *"Come and meet a man I think is the Christ, the Promised One from God that we have read about in the scriptures!"*

John 4:28-30

The woman left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the village, telling everyone, (29) "Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?" (30) So the people came streaming from the village to see him.

Many people came to the well to meet Jesus. They wanted to hear what He said.

When the crowd of people from the town got to Jesus, they sat close by to hear Him tell them about the kingdom of God. Jesus told them about God's love. Jesus told them that anyone who believes in Him and obeys His words would be happy because they could have a home in Heaven.

Many people believed what Jesus said and they became Christ followers, or Christians, just like us.

John 4:39-42

Many Samaritans from the village believed in Jesus because the woman had said, "He told me everything I ever did!" (40) When they came out to see him, they begged him to stay in their village. So he stayed for two days, (41) long enough for many more to hear his message and believe. (42) Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not just because of what you told us, but because we have heard him ourselves. Now we know that he is indeed the Savior of the world."

Jesus showed love to the Samaritan woman, and it made her eager to tell everyone she knew about Him. Many Samaritans from the village

believed in Jesus because of what the woman told them. But, then, once they heard Jesus for themselves, they knew without a doubt that Jesus was the Savior of the world.

Is Jesus doing exciting things for you in your life? Are you telling your friends about all the great things He does for you? Don't you want everyone to have this "living water"? All they need to do is believe that Jesus their Savior. But how can they believe if you don't tell them?

[Give the children a mini bottle of water as a treat.]

Closing Prayer

Father, we admit we are sinners in need of the Living Water to wash our souls. Thank You for sending Jesus to satisfy our thirst for forgiveness of our sins. We can't wait to tell others about You. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Cup of Living Water Craft

Materials:

- Paper 9-oz. Party Cups
- Scissors
- Hole Punch
- Blue Card Stock
- Yarn

Procedure:

1. Print water-drop shapes on heavy paper.
2. Have children cut out drop shapes and write the memory verse one word per waterdrop. If you have younger children, you can precut the water drops.



3. Punch holes at the top of each water drop.
4. Have children string the water drops in order on the string, tying each waterdrop to the string before they add the next one.
5. Have your children color the paper cup to hold the waterdrops and write the Bible verse on one side. Punch a hole in the bottom of the cup and string the yarn through the hole. Tape the string to the bottom of the cup.
6. Children can pull the drops out to practice their memory verse at home.

Cross Cultural Collage

Materials: poster board, markers, scissors, glue, old magazines.

Divide the class into groups. Have each group make a poster. On the poster they will first write the words, "Jesus Loves the People of the World." The rest of the poster they will fill in with a collage of pictures cut out of the magazines of children or people of all different backgrounds. Display the poster in the classroom as a reminder that Jesus was not prejudiced. He loves people from all cultures.

Game Center

Living Water Commercial

Jesus said He could offer people living water. That living water is Jesus Himself! Because Jesus died on the cross for our sins, we can live forever in heaven. That's what living water is all about.

Have the children pair up and create a commercial for the Living Water of Jesus based on John 4:13-14. For example, a child could hold up a bottle of water and say, "You need this!" Encourage them to make their commercial as convincing as they can. Let the kids show or perform their commercial for the rest of the class. You could even video tape their commercial, just for fun.

Memory Verse Relay Race

Divide the group into two teams (boys against girls?)

Provide a bucket and a soup ladle for each team.

Create a set of Waterdrop Memory Verse cards for each team cut from card stock or construction paper. Using a different color for each team, write one word or phrase from the Bible verse on each waterdrop.

Put each team's Memory Verse "drops" in a bucket on the opposite side of the room.

On "GO", let the first child on the team run to the bucket and put one "drop" in the scoop and carry it back to the team.

The first team to have their Memory Verse Waterdrops in the correct order wins!

Or, use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. Where was Jesus going when he met the woman at the well? (Jesus traveled through Samaria on His way to Galilee.)
2. Why didn't Jews normally travel through Samaria and why do you think Jesus chose to go that way? (The Jews and Samaritans didn't like each other.)
3. Why was it unusual for Jesus to have talked with the Samaritan woman at the well? (She was a Samaritan and a woman.)
4. Jews and Samaritans did not like each other. How did Jesus show He was different? (Jesus loves all people.)
5. What did Jesus offer the Samaritan woman? (Living water.)



6. When Jesus told the Samaritan woman about "living water," what did He mean? (The life Jesus gives us constantly satisfies our needs and desires.)
7. What kinds of "thirsts" do you think Jesus' water can quench? (Thirst for truth and righteousness)
8. How is Jesus like water to our souls? (Jesus brings refreshment, helps us grow, gives us life, and cleans us.)
9. Why are people spiritually "thirsty"? Why do we need the "Living Water?" (Because we are not right with God on the inside. We know we are sinners and that we cannot change ourselves.)
10. How do you drink of the "living water?" (By receiving Jesus as your Lord and Savior He will give you everlasting life.)
11. Why is it important to recognize that you are sinner before you ask Jesus for the "Living Water?" (You need to know in your heart that you cannot change yourself and that you desperately need Jesus to forgive your sins.)

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit <https://www.FreeChildrensMinistryLessons.com>]

Two Reactions to Jesus

(Luke 4:14-40)

Introduction

Do you know anyone who has been rejected by others? People are disliked for many reasons. Can you think of a reason someone would be put down or disrespected? Have you ever been rejected by your friends? How did it feel? How did you react? Did you want to fight, argue, pout, feel sorry for yourself, get angry, withdraw, defend yourself or take revenge? What would Jesus do? (He would forgive and continue to love.) What's a way you could "stick up for" a person who has been rejected by others?

Opening Prayer

Lord, it must have been awfully hard when Your best friends and family in Nazareth rejected You. Yet You faced the pain and obediently walked forward. Thank You for enduring so much for me. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. (Joshua 24:15)

Lesson

God had promised to send the Messiah to the people of Israel. The Jewish people prayed for the day when He would come. However, when He got here some people didn't recognize who He was. Many people in Galilee believed He was the Messiah, but people back in His home town of Nazareth were not so easily convinced. [Teacher, point out the locals on the map.]

Luke 4:14-15

Then Jesus returned to Galilee, filled with the Holy Spirit's power. Reports about him spread quickly through the whole region. (15) He taught regularly in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

A synagogue is a place where Jewish families meet together to worship and study the Bible. Jesus went to synagogue every Sabbath, just like we go to church every Sunday.

Luke 4:16

When he came to the village of Nazareth, his boyhood home, he went as usual to the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read the Scriptures.

It was customary for the leader of the synagogue to invite a visitor to read from the Scriptures and to teach.

Luke 4:17

The scroll of Isaiah the prophet was handed to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where this was written:

[Teacher, point to the book of Isaiah on the Books of The Bible chart.]

Luke 4:18-19

"The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, (19) and that the time of the LORD's favor has come."

Then, Jesus surprised everyone...

Luke 4:20

He rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the attendant, and sat down. All eyes in the synagogue looked at him intently.

Jesus stopped reading in the middle of the passage and closed the Scriptures.

Luke 4:21

Then he began to speak to them. "The Scripture you've just heard has been fulfilled this very day!"

Jesus was saying, "I'm the One this scripture is talking about." He was proclaiming that He Himself was the One who would bring this good news to pass. Everyone in the Synagogue gazed at Him intently.

Luke 4:22

Everyone spoke well of him and was amazed by the gracious words that came from his lips. "How can this be?" they asked. "Isn't this Joseph's son?"

Everyone was amazed by the beautiful words that came from his lips. But they wondered how a mere carpenter's son could speak so well.

Jesus was not taken seriously in his hometown. These people had known him since he was a child. They watched him grow up, and now he was telling people He was the Messiah. They just couldn't believe.

Then the people of Nazareth were filled with anger.

Luke 4:28-29

When they heard this, the people in the synagogue were furious. (29) Jumping up, they mobbed him and forced him to the edge of the hill on which the town was built. They intended to push him over the cliff,

These people rejected Jesus' message and wanted to throw Jesus over the cliff and kill Him. But Jesus slipped away...



Luke 4:30

but he passed right through the crowd and went on his way.

If you were there that day, what could you have said or done to "stick up for" Jesus?

After this, Jesus went about 20 miles away to Capernaum on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee and began a ministry of healing and teaching. [Teacher, point out the locals on the map.]

Luke 4:31-32

Then Jesus went to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and taught there in the synagogue every Sabbath day. (32) There, too, the people were amazed at his teaching, for he spoke with authority.

Jesus was welcomed there.

One time Jesus met a man that was filled with demons.

Luke 4:33-34

Once when he was in the synagogue, a man possessed by a demon—an evil spirit—cried out, shouting, (34) "Go away! Why are you interfering with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!"

Demons are fallen angels who have joined Satan in rebellion against God. Demons can cause a person to become mute, deaf, blind, or insane. Jesus faced many demons during His time on earth, and He always exerted authority over them. Jesus' authority is greater than Satan's; where Jesus is present, demons cannot stay.

Luke 4:35

But Jesus reprimanded him. "Be quiet! Come out of the man," he ordered. At that, the demon threw the man to the floor as the crowd watched; then it came out of him without hurting him further.

The people were amazed at Jesus' authority to drive out demons. Not only did the evil spirit leave this man, the man was not even injured.

Luke 4:36-37

Amazed, the people exclaimed, "What authority and power this man's words possess! Even evil spirits obey him, and they flee at his command!" (37) The news about Jesus spread through every village in the entire region.

Have you ever had bad dreams? Those could be thoughts that come to you from Satan's demons. Evil permeates our world, and it is no wonder that people are often fearful. But Jesus' power is far greater than Satan's. The first step toward conquering fear of evil is to recognize Jesus' authority and power. He has overcome all evil, including Satan himself. All you need to do is call upon the name of Jesus and the evil will flee!

Jesus not only has authority over demons, He has authority over disease.

Luke 4:38-39

After leaving the synagogue that day, Jesus went to Simon's home, where he found Simon's mother-in-law very sick with a high fever. "Please heal her," everyone begged. (39) Standing at her bedside, he rebuked the fever, and it left her. And she got up at once and prepared a meal for them.

Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law so completely that not only did the fever leave, but her strength was restored, and immediately she got up and took care of other's needs. What a beautiful attitude of service she showed! God gives us health so that we may serve others.

Luke 4:40

As the sun went down that evening, people throughout the village brought sick family members to Jesus. No matter what their diseases were, the touch of his hand healed every one.

The people came with all kinds of diseases and Jesus healed each one.

People in the towns of Nazareth and Capernaum treated Jesus very differently. The people in Nazareth became very angry. They rejected Jesus' message and wanted to kill Him. But Jesus' masterful teachings and powerful miracles caused many people in Capernaum to believe that He was the Messiah, the Savior. They welcomed him and honored Him.

Even today people have different reactions to Jesus. They either accept Him as God and welcome Him into their lives; or they reject Him and refuse to believe the truth.

What about you? Do you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior? [Teacher, review the Memory Verse.]

Closing Prayer

Father, strengthen our faith in You so that we might be willing to stand up for You even when others don't believe what we're telling them. Give us compassion in our hearts to reach out to others and to keep on loving them, just like You did, no matter if they believe in You or not. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Scrolls

Students will make scrolls to remind them that Jesus read from a scroll in Nazareth.

- Cut 8 ½ x 11 paper in half horizontally.
- Glue "sticks" (pencils, dowels, popsicle sticks, straws) to both short ends.
- Have the child write today's Memory Verse on their "scrolls".
- Roll paper up from both sides.

Game Center

Release Tag

When Jesus read the scroll, he was telling the people that God had sent Him to set the captives free. The scripture didn't mean that Jesus

came to free people from a jail. It was talking about people who were caught in sin. Sin takes away our happiness and keeps us away from God.

Jesus came to take the punishment for sin so that anyone who believes in Him can be forgiven and be made right with God.

How to play:

Identify one child to be “Jesus”. Divide the children into two teams. One team will form pairs who will attempt to “capture” a child from the other team by joining hands around that person. When “Jesus” touches a child held inside the pair, the child is set free. Once a child is set free, he or she may free other children as well. Play again, identifying a new person as “Jesus”.

Game Center

Or, use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. How did people respond to Jesus’ teachings and miracles? (Some people rejected Him; others accepted Him.)
2. What is a synagogue? (A place where Jewish families meet together to worship and study the Bible, like a church)
3. What was the name of Jesus’ home town? (Nazareth)
4. What book of the Old Testament did Jesus read from in the synagogue in Nazareth? (Vr. 17: Isaiah)
5. What happened when Jesus stopped reading the passage in Isaiah? (Vr. 20: Everyone looked at Him.)
6. Why did the people in Nazareth, Jesus’ hometown, reject Jesus’ message? (Many of the people in Nazareth were not ready to believe that Jesus was God the Son.)
7. What were the people going to do because they were upset with Jesus? (They tried to throw Him off a cliff.)
8. If you had been in Nazareth the day the mob ran Him out of town, what could you have said or done to “stick up for” Jesus?
9. In which city, Nazareth or Capernaum, was Jesus treated well? (Jesus was treated well in Capernaum.)
10. When Jesus met a man who had a demon, what did the demon cry out? (Vr. 34: I know who you are—the Holy One of God!)
11. How did the evil spirit know who Jesus was? (They knew He was the Christ.)
12. Why are demons afraid of Jesus? (His authority is greater than Satan’s.)
13. Why do you think the people of Capernaum welcomed Jesus so warmly? (He taught with authority and did many miracles among the people.)
14. What miracle did Jesus perform at Simon Peter’s house? (He made his mother-in-law well.)
15. What did Peter’s mother-in-law do when she got healed? (She served them.)
16. How does Jesus want you to respond when others reject you? (God wants us to always love others—even though they may reject us.)

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Fishers of Men

(Luke 5:1-11)

Introduction

[Teacher, have a fisherman visit the classroom and talk to students about the basics of fishing. Have this person select common fly-fishing flies and explain how each fly is used. For example, a fly may be used to catch fish of a specific size, fish in murky water, fish that are close to the surface, or fish that prefer a certain type of insect. Ask him to also show and tell about important equipment used in fishing, such as rods, flies, tackle boxes, waders, nets, and vests. Compare this to fishing for men.] How is telling others about Jesus similar to fishing? What preparations would be necessary? What kind of "bait" would you use? Fishing flies are created to be attractive to fish. How can you make the good news about Jesus attractive to your friends?

Opening Prayer

Father, this morning we want to learn what it takes to be fishers of men's souls. I pray that you will show us how to be disciples and followers of Jesus. In His name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men. (Matthew 4:19)

Lesson

Jesus began his ministry on the north end of the Sea of Galilee. By now, many people in Galilee had heard about Jesus. His messages and miracles thrilled the people. People were now following Jesus everywhere He went.

One day the crowds pressed around Him to hear Him teach by the lake.

Luke 5:1-2

One day as Jesus was preaching on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, great crowds pressed in on him to listen to the word of God. (2) He noticed two empty boats at the water's edge, for the fishermen had left them and were washing their nets.

The Sea of Galilee is really a large lake. About 30 fishing villages surrounded it during Jesus' day.

Fishermen on the Sea of Galilee used nets, often bell-shaped nets with lead weights around the edges. A net would be thrown flat onto the water, and the lead weights would cause it to sink around the fish. Then the fishermen would pull on a cord, drawing the nets around the fish. Nets had to be kept in good condition, so they were washed to remove weeds and then the holes were mended.

Luke 5:3

Stepping into one of the boats, Jesus asked Simon, its owner, to push it out into the water. So he sat in the boat and taught the crowds from there.

Jesus climbed into Peter's boat and asked him to push it out into the water so He could sit and teach the people gathered on shore.

Luke 5:4

When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Now go out where it is deeper, and let down your nets to catch some fish."

When Jesus finished teaching, He told Simon Peter to launch his boat into the deep water and let down his nets to catch fish.

Luke 5:5

"Master," Simon replied, "we worked hard all last night and didn't catch a thing. But if you say so, I'll let the nets down again."

What a strange thing Jesus asked Simon to do! Any experienced fisherman knew that the best fishing was done at night in the shallow water! Simon had just been fishing all night and hadn't caught a single fish! But, he reluctantly obeyed Jesus.

Simon had to simply trust and obey Jesus' word. He needed to commit himself to the Lord Jesus. Commitment means not just giving part of yourself, but giving your all. Peter started to question Jesus' word. He didn't trust Him at first. But Peter put his own understanding aside and followed Jesus' advice.

You can commit your life to God by faith, too. To commit your life to God is to give yourself completely to Him, having faith in His Word. The Bible says trust God with all your heart, rather than depending on your own understanding (Proverbs 3:5-6). For Simon to commit himself to do what the Lord Jesus said took a lot of faith. Peter put aside his own way of doing things, and obeyed Jesus. And, boy, was he ever glad he did!

Luke 5:6

And this time their nets were so full of fish they began to tear!

So many fish were caught that the net began to break.

Luke 5:7

A shout for help brought their partners in the other boat, and soon both boats were filled with fish and on the verge of sinking.

As the fishermen struggled with the heavy nets, they were amazed at what was happening! Do you think they were glad that they had decided to follow Jesus' advice? Even though His directions seemed unreasonable, now they were rewarded greatly for their faith in Him.

Having faith in God means believing Him; taking Him at His word. Sometimes it means doing something that may even seem unreasonable like giving up friends who are not good for you. Although you may not understand what God is doing, remember that God loves you and will only do what is best.

The Bible says that when you commit your life to God by faith, you bring Him pleasure (Philippians 2:13), and He will bless you (Psalm 37:5-6). God blessed the fishermen for their faith and commitment, giving them more fish than they could handle.

Luke 5:8

When Simon Peter realized what had happened, he fell to his knees before Jesus and said, "Oh, Lord, please leave me—I'm such a sinful man."

This miracle was all Simon needed to know that Jesus really was the Messiah, the Savior of God. Seeing Jesus as Lord, who is perfect, Simon recognized his own life was totally sinful by comparison. Like Peter, we must recognize our own sinfulness; we must realize that we can't save ourselves.

The Bible says, "There is none righteous, no, not one." (Romans 3:10). We are born with a desire to sin. [Teacher, discuss sinful things children might think, say, or do.] God hates sin and warns that sin must be punished by separation from Him forever. But in God's great love for you, He made a way for your sin to be forgiven by sending His Son, Jesus, to die, taking the punishment for sin. Jesus gave His blood on the cross, willingly taking your place and mine (Revelation 1:5b); then He arose from the dead. Only the Lord Jesus could take sin's punishment. Even before Jesus died on the cross, Simon knew that He was special. Seeing this miracle of fish convinced Simon that Jesus truly was Lord, making him aware of his own sin.

Luke 5:9-10

For he was awestruck by the number of fish they had caught, as were the others with him. (10) His partners, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were also amazed. Jesus replied to Simon, "Don't be afraid! From now on you'll be fishing for people!"

Jesus told Peter and Andrew to leave their fishing business and become "fishers of men," to help others find God. Jesus was calling them away from the way they made a living to help make other people's lives worth living. We all need to fish for souls. If we share the good news of what Jesus has done for us with others, we will be able to draw them to Jesus just like a fisherman pulls fish into his net.

Luke 5:11

And as soon as they landed, they left everything and followed Jesus.

If we know that we need help, and if we know that Jesus is the only one who can help us, we will be ready to leave everything and follow him and we will want to tell everyone we know about him, too. We will desperately want to make sure that every man, woman, boy and girl gets an opportunity to come to know Jesus, too.

If we practice Jesus' teaching and share the good news of what Jesus did for us on the cross with others, we will be able to draw those around us to Christ like a fisherman who pulls fish into his boat with nets.

Closing Prayer

Lord, help us to really understand that following You requires surrendering everything in our lives to You! Break down the hardness in our hearts and overflow into our lives as never before. Cleanse and fill us up to overflowing with only Yourself. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Fishing Lure Memory Verse Cards: Have kids make simple fishing lures with feathers and string or wire. Hook or tape the lure to a card with the memory verse printed on it. Encourage children to use these lures as reminders to tell others about Jesus.

Fish-Shaped Tracks: Cut fish-shaped pieces of construction paper. Have students assemble booklets using several "fish." On each page have students write a verse that will help someone know how to become a Christian. (Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, John 3:16, Romans 10:9) Encourage students to "go fishing" and give their salvation booklet to an unsaved friend or neighbor.

Game Center

Review questions follow the descriptions of the following two game ideas:

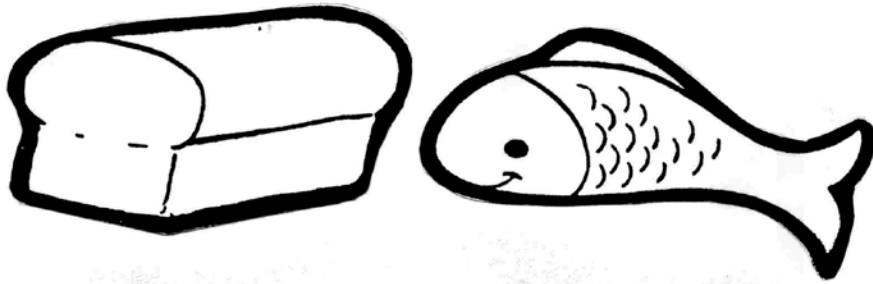
1. Fishers of Men Game

1. Cut out pictures of men, women and children from magazines.
2. Glue a small paper clip to the back of each.
3. Write a number on the back to correspond with the number of the question.
4. Tie a magnet to a piece of string; tie the string to a twig or small branch.
5. Put the questions in a bucket or similar size object (not metal).
6. Each child comes up one at a time and "fishes". If more than one "fish" is caught, they decide which one they want and throw the others back in the bucket.
7. Ask question that corresponds with the number on the back of the "fish".
8. Give prizes or team points for right answers.

2. Fish and Bread Tic-Tac-Toe

1. Cut out strips of paper for the lines of tic-tac-toe (or use yarn).
2. Give one team "fish" pieces; the other team the "bread" pieces.
3. When a team correctly answers a question, they can place their marker in a square.

4. The team that gets three in a row across, diagonally or vertically is the winner.



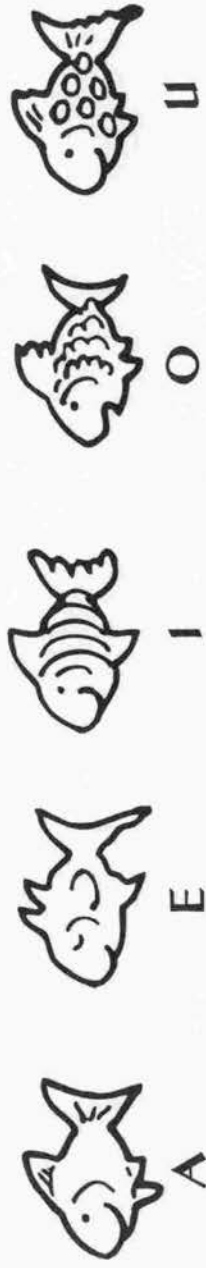
Review Questions:

1. What did Peter, James, John, and Andrew do before Jesus called them to follow Him? (They were all fishermen.)
2. What did Peter, James, John, and Andrew leave behind to follow Jesus? (Their jobs-everything)
3. What did Jesus mean when he said he would make them fishers of men? (That instead of trying to get fish, they would be trying to reach people for Jesus.)
4. Why did Jesus want His disciples to be fishers of men? (So that others will come to know Jesus.)
5. How can we be fishers of men? (By leading godly lives and telling others the gospel, bring a friend to Sunday school, tell someone about what Jesus did for you, etc.)
6. What character qualities in a person's life might be like "bait?" (Kindness, sincerity, love, long suffering, etc.)
7. How is telling others about Jesus similar to fishing? (If we share the good news of what Jesus has done for us with others, we will be able to draw them to Jesus just like a fisherman pulls fish into his net.)
8. Fishing flies are created to be attractive to fish. How can you make the good news about Jesus attractive to your friends? (If you live a godly life it will be attractive to others; people will want the peace and joy that you have.)
9. What did Peter learn about Jesus the day He said to cast the fishing net out? (Jesus is trustworthy and He is all-knowing, plus He's a miracle maker!)
10. Why is sharing Jesus with others sometimes hard to do? (People can misunderstand you or reject what you're saying.)
11. What does it mean to follow Jesus? (It means we believe in Him, love Him and try to obey Him in everything we do. We do what He says and trust Him to help us live the way He wants us to, even when it's hard.)
12. How can we learn ways to follow Jesus? (Learn about what God's word says, talk with other Christians, ask questions, ask God for help.)
13. What can you do to show that you believe in Jesus (Be kind to others, show respect to others, spend time learning about Jesus, talk to God.)
14. What would you say to someone who asked you about how he could follow Jesus?

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Something Looks Fishy!

In Matthew 4:19 Jesus told His followers to do something, but it looks like the message got lost at the bottom of the sea. Using the fish code, complete each of the words to find out what this message is! Check your answer by reading Matthew 4:19.



"C _ M _ F _ LL _ W _ M _ , "

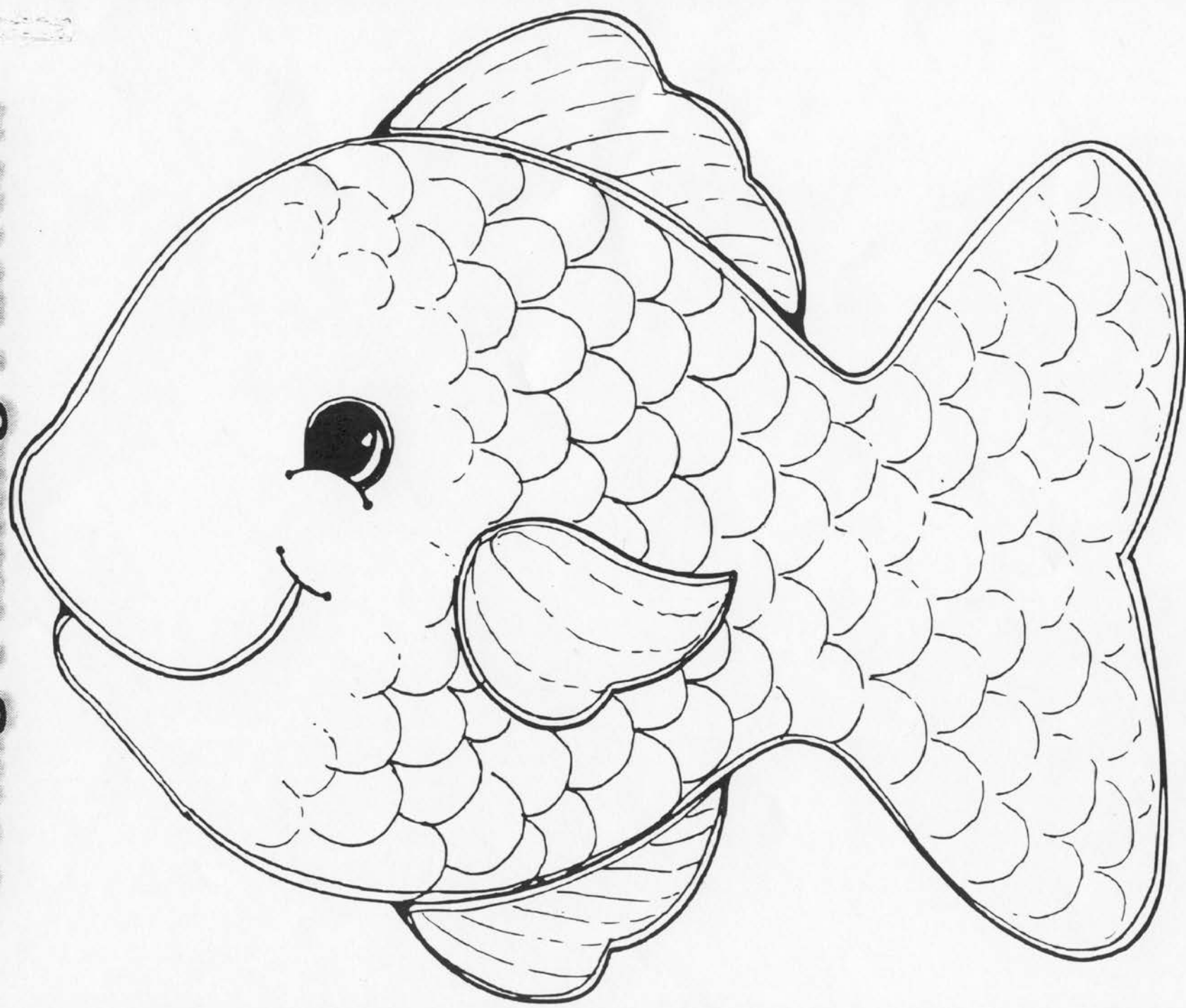
J _ S _ S _ S _ D, " _ ND

_ W _ LL _ M _ K _ Y _

F _ SH _ RS _ F _ M _ N."



Going Fishing Pattern



Jesus Heals a Paralyzed Man

(Mark 2:1-12)

Introduction

How many of you have a really good friend? What is it that you like most about your friend? [Teacher, discuss the importance of having friends.] If you were looking for a friend, what quality would you look for in that person? [Help the children discover words such as honest, fun, caring, interesting, etc.] Why are these qualities important?

There are times when everyone needs a good friend. The man in our story today needed some good friends to help him with a very difficult problem.

Opening Prayer

Father, we want to listen very carefully this morning so that we might learn how to be a better friend. And then give us a desire in our hearts to choose good friends. Most of all we want our friendship with You to deepen and strengthen. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. (John 15:12).

Lesson

One day, Jesus returned to His home town of Capernaum which is on the Sea of Galilee. Many people crowded into a house to hear Jesus preach.

Mark 2:1-3

When Jesus returned to Capernaum several days later, the news spread quickly that he was back home. (2) Soon the house where he was staying was so packed with visitors that there was no more room, even

outside the door. While he was preaching God's word to them, (3) four men arrived carrying a paralyzed man on a mat.

Do you know what it means to be paralyzed? [Teacher, discuss with children.] What kind of a life do you think a paralytic has? What kinds of problems do you supposed this man had?

He could not get up and walk, like other people. He was dependent on his friends. His friends knew he was miserable and they wanted to take him to Jesus to be healed. But they couldn't get near Jesus because of the great crowd in the house where He was speaking.

Mark 2:4

They couldn't bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, so they dug a hole through the roof above his head. Then they lowered the man on his mat, right down in front of Jesus.

Did the friends of the paralyzed man turn around and go home when they saw how crowded it was? No! They knew their friend needed Jesus.

How disappointed these four men must have been when there seemed to be no way to get their friend to Jesus. It would have been easy to give up—the situation looked impossible. But even though everything looked impossible, these four men kept looking for a way to get their friend to the Lord Jesus. And because they really loved their friend, they were willing to do whatever it took to get their friend to Jesus! They knew that only Jesus could give their friend what he needed!

Houses in Jesus' day commonly had tile roofs. These four men were sure Jesus would help if they could only reach Him. So, they lifted him up on the roof of the house, cot and all, peeled back the tile roof and lowered him in on ropes down in front of Jesus!

Perhaps you have a friend who needs the Lord Jesus in a special way. Do you know someone right now who is sick and needs Jesus to either heal him or give him extra courage and joy through his suffering? Maybe someone you care about is having a hard time at home or school? [Teacher, this may be due to loss of a family

member through death or divorce, possibility of moving away, or failing grades.] Do you know anyone who is discouraged or upset? Do you know anyone who needs God's peace to quiet their inside hurts and fears? Perhaps someone you love is not a Christian and they need to trust the Lord Jesus as their Savior from sin.

Do you know someone that needs Jesus? If you are a real friend, you will do whatever it takes to help, even if it takes extra time and effort.

When Jesus saw the man, He said something that surprised everyone.

Mark 2:5

Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "My child, your sins are forgiven."

Jesus didn't lay hands on the man and pray for his healing, He said, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." Why do you think that was what Jesus did first? (Because a spiritual healing is of greater need and importance than the physical healing.)

Who's faith did Jesus see, that of the four men or that of the paralytic? Why do you think that when Jesus saw the faith of the four men, He forgave the sins of the paralytic? [Teacher, here's something for you to think about: on the basis of whose faith was the man healed? Does a healing only happen when someone has faith?]

Now there were some Jewish religious leaders in the crowd listening.

Mark 2:6-7

But some of the teachers of religious law who were sitting there thought to themselves, (7) "What is he saying? This is blasphemy! Only God can forgive sins!"

Why did it anger the religious leaders, when Jesus said that the man's sins were forgiven? They were shocked that Jesus would tell this man that his sins were forgiven because they knew that only God could forgive sins and they didn't believe Jesus was God. They accused

Jesus of blasphemy—having powers that only belong to God (Isaiah 43:25). Only God has the right to forgive sins!

Jesus knew what these men were thinking.

Mark 2:8

Jesus knew immediately what they were thinking, so he asked them, "Why do you question this in your hearts?"

How did Jesus know what the religious leaders were thinking? (Jesus is God and has supernatural powers.)

Jesus knew their thoughts and challenged their disbelief by asking a difficult question.

Mark 2:9

Is it easier to say to the paralyzed man 'Your sins are forgiven,' or 'Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk'?

What would your answer be if you had been there that day when Jesus asked, "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk'?" [Teacher, let the children discuss this before suggesting that it's easier to say, "Your sins are forgiven you" because it's harder for others to prove or disprove.]

Mark 2:10-11

So I will prove to you that the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins." Then Jesus turned to the paralyzed man and said, (11) "Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home!"

Jesus wanted to prove to them that He is God in a human body.

Mark 2:12

And the man jumped up, grabbed his mat, and walked out through the stunned onlookers. They were all amazed and praised God, exclaiming, "We've never seen anything like this before!"

Instantly he leaped to his feet, perfectly well. How happy he must have been! He picked up his mat and walked toward the door. Everyone was amazed! They said they'd never seen anything like this! They knew that only God could have done this miracle!

Jesus was willing and glad to forgive the man and to heal him.

Can you imagine how glad those four men must have been to have taken the extra effort to help their friend? They were part of a miracle! What a difference they had made in the life of their friend!

We can bring our friends to Jesus just as the four men in our story worked hard to bring their friend to the Lord.

As you see the needs of your friends you must realize that you cannot give them courage, peace, joy, or forgiveness, but you can introduce them to Jesus—the only One who can give them all those things!

If you know the Lord Jesus as your Savior, God can use you to make a difference in someone else's life. When you have a friend who needs Jesus in a special way, God can give you His kind of love.

Will you show God's love to a friend in need this week? You never know what miracles God will do!

Closing Prayer

Father, if any of us here today has a friend that needs You for any reason, I pray that that we might be willing to do whatever it takes to make a difference in that person's life, even if it means going out of our way and doing extra things or giving up our time, our money, or our energy. Help us to be the kind of friend this paralytic man had. We always want to encourage others to know and trust You, Lord Jesus. You're the only One that can help in time of need. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Recipe for a Friend

Recipe for Friendship





1. Mix all these together with a pinch of tenderness
2. Very lightly beat in a bowl of loyalty
3. Sprinkle with cheerfulness
4. Bake for a lifetime and serve repeatedly

- 1 cup happiness
- 1 handful of kindness
- 2 spoonfuls of gentleness
- 1 scoop of sharing
- 1 teaspoon of helpfulness
- 3 tablespoons of laughter
- 1 gallon of smiles



Teacher, Be sure to have the children design and write their own recipe cards rather than copy the above example. Give children 3" x 5" cards and invite them to create a recipe for a great friend. Challenge them to think of "ingredients" they would include. List how much (one cup, three teaspoons, a sprinkle) of each quality they would add. Consider whether Jesus qualifies as a great friend, according to their recipes.

Game Center

Teddy Bear Relay

Props: A watch that can be used as a timer; 1 small hand towel to use as “stretchers” and 1 teddy bear to be carried on the towel for each team.

Set Up: Create an obstacle course with chairs and tables (these represent the crowd of people in the house). Place some chairs or tables in a circle to represent the “house” with the hole in the roof – the teams will have to lower the bear on its towel into the “house”.

Play: Each team will form pairs with the kids on their team. Each pair of children will have to complete the obstacle course, stepping over or around the obstacles. Time them to see which team can complete the course the fastest. **The course must be completed without the teddy bear falling off the “stretcher”.** If the bear falls off, the pair must return to the start while the clock keeps running.

When they get to the “house”, they lower the teddy bear into the house. The bear is healed, so they pick it and the towel “stretcher” up and run back to the start/finish line. They hand the bear and towel off to the next pair.

Or, use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. Where was Jesus when people were crowding in to hear Him teach? (In a house in Capernaum.)
2. Why couldn't the man get up and walk like other people? (He was paralyzed.)
3. Why was the house so full of people? (People heard that Jesus was there.)

4. Why didn't the friends of the paralyzed man turn around and go home when they saw how crowded it was? (They knew their friend needed to see Jesus.)
5. What did the four men do to get their friend to Jesus? (They lifted him up on the roof of the house, cut and all, peeled back the tile roof and lowered him in on ropes to Jesus!)
6. How can God use you to make a difference in someone else's life? How can you show God's love to a friend who needs Jesus? (The best kind of friend will always encourage others to know and trust the Lord Jesus, the only One who can really help them in time of need.)
7. What did Jesus do first – heal the man or forgive him of his sins? (Jesus forgave the man's sins.)
8. Why did Jesus forgive the man's sins first? (Because a spiritual healing is of greater need and importance than the physical healing.)
9. In verse 5, who's faith did Jesus see, that of the four men or that of the paralytic? (Four men for sure, maybe all 5 of them.)
10. How did Jesus know what the Jewish religious leaders were thinking? (Jesus is God and has supernatural abilities.)
11. Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, “Your sins are forgiven you,” or to say, “Arise, take up your bed and walk”? (It's easier to say, “Your sins are forgiven you” because it's harder for others to prove or disprove.)
12. Who else besides Jesus can forgive people of their sins? (No one else! Jesus is the creator of the universe; He came to earth to take the punishment for all sin; He alone has the right to forgive sins.)
13. How could you be a better friend to others? To Jesus?

The Beatitudes (Part 1)

(Matthew 5:1-6)

Introduction

What makes you happy? Share one-word answers. [Teacher, write the children's responses on the board.] Why do these things make you happy? How long does the happiness usually last? Most of these things only last a short time, like candy or a new toy.

What happens when you swallow the candy? Is there kind of a letdown? Do you want another one? Candy doesn't keep us happy forever, does it? But there is Someone who does.

God gives lasting happiness. Not just laughter and pleasure when everything is going right, but peace and hope that brings joy to you even when times are hard.

God's idea about happiness is often very different from our own. We tend to care more about what happens on the outside. God cares more about what happens on the inside.

The key to happiness is who we are on the inside; not where we are, who we are with, what we can do, or what we look like. True happiness comes from having a godly character, not from having toys and candy. God blesses those who live to honor Him.

Today we're going to learn about a kind of happiness called "joy" that is felt deep down inside your heart. When you have this type of joy, no one can take it away; it lasts forever.

Opening Prayer

Father, we know that You are much more concerned about what is going on inside our hearts than how we look or who our friends are. Teach us today, to live to honor You, Lord, in everything that we think or say or do. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

*Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
(Psalm 32:1)*

Lesson

- Who knows what an attitude is? An attitude is a way we show people how we think or feel about something.
- Can you give me an example of a good attitude? (loving, kind, and honest, etc.)
- Can you give me an example of a bad attitude? (Selfish, hateful, stingy, mean, etc.)
- What makes us have a bad attitude?
- What makes us have a good attitude?
- Do you think God knows about our attitudes?
- What do you think makes God happy?
- Does it make you happy to please God?

There is a special kind of happiness that comes when we know that God is pleased with us. So, Jesus took His disciples up on a hillside and taught them about the 8 kinds of attitudes that please God. We call these the beatitudes, or the "Be-attitudes."

The first four beatitudes describe the kind of attitudes that make our relationship with God happier. The other four beatitudes describe the kind of attitudes that make our friendships with others happier.

Open your Bibles to Matthew chapter 5.

Matthew 5:1-2

One day as he saw the crowds gathering, Jesus went up on the mountainside and sat down. His disciples gathered around him, (2) and he began to teach them.

First Beatitude—Poor in Spirit

[Teacher, write the attitudes on the board as you go through the verses.]

Matthew 5:3

*“God blesses those who are **poor** and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.*

If you look down through verses 3 through 10, you'll see that each beatitude starts with the words “God *blesses*”. So, this verse is saying that God will bless you if you are poor. Now Jesus was not talking about how much money you have or don't have. He was talking about being “poor” in a spiritual way.

- What does it mean to be poor? (To be poor is to be needy. You don't have something you need.)
- What does it mean to be poor in spirit? (It means you know you need Jesus—you are lost without Him.)

God is holy and pure. He cannot have anything that is not holy and pure in His presence. Because you are a sinner, you cannot come into His presence. When you realize that you are separated from God because of your sin, you understand you are “poor in spirit”. It is at this point you are ready to ask Jesus to forgive your sins. When you do that, the Scripture says you become a child of God. You become “born again”.

What is the blessing God promises when you realize that you are “poor in spirit” and ask Jesus to forgive your sins? The scripture says, *“for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.”*

Once you realize your need for God, and come to Him and ask Him to forgive your sins, you receive the right to go to Heaven when you die.

So, the first kind of attitude that pleases God, is knowing in your heart that you are *poor in spirit*. That is the beginning of your walk with God.

Second Beatitude—Being truly sorry for our sins

- What makes you sad? (Not getting something you really want?)
- Have you ever felt a deep pain in your heart when something really sad happened?
- What do you think makes God sad? (It hurts God when we are naughty.)

Let's look at the next beatitude...

Matthew 5:4

*God blesses those who **mourn**, for they will be comforted.*

The word “*mourn*” means to be extremely sad over something; to grieve, like how you would feel if someone you love died. What Jesus is saying is that it really pleases God when you grieve over your sin.

This is the second attitude that we need to have in order to receive blessings from God. It pleases Him when we are truly sorry for hurting Him.

What is the blessing God promises if you mourn over your sin? The scripture says, *“for they will be comforted.”*

If we are truly sorry for our sins, God will comfort us. The Bible tells us, “If we confess our sin, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1John 1:9)

Even though our sin separates us from God, He wants us to be close to Him. That's why He's so willing to forgive us. He's just waiting for us to come running to Him whenever we know we've done something naughty. Whenever we sin, we must ask God to cleanse us from within—cleanse our hearts and spirits—and give us new thoughts and desires.

So, the second kind of attitude that pleases God is being truly sorry for our sins. If you are truly sorry when you sin, God promises to

forgive you. Isn't it a comfort to know that He still loves us and has forgiven us?

Third Beatitude—Being humble

- Do you ever get angry when you don't get your way?
- Do you ever want to be first or get the best for yourself?
- How about when there's a great big gooey chocolate cake? Do you ever want the biggest piece?
- How about if you were punched in the nose, would you want to hit back? What do you think God would want you to do?

Let's look at the next beatitude...

Matthew 5:5

*God blesses those who are **humble**, for they will inherit the whole earth.*

- What do you think it means to be humble?

The dictionary defines *humble* as having a modest opinion of yourself; not thinking you are more important than other people. A humble person is gentle and patient; not demanding their own way.

This is the third attitude that we need to have in order to receive blessings from God. Jesus is saying, "God blesses those who are humble or who have gentle patient spirits."

Have you ever been around someone who is a "know-it-all?" They seem cocky, don't they? I don't like to be around someone who is always thinking of themselves and trying to impress people, do you?

Have you ever met a humble person? What was he like?

You have to choose to be humble, and this takes great strength of character. To be humble means to stop putting ourselves before others; to stop demanding our own way. Letting your friend be first.

What is the promised blessing in this beatitude? The scripture says, "*for they shall inherit the whole earth*".

This is total appreciation for your life here on earth. We could read this verse like this, "*Happy are the humble for they shall appreciate the world around them.*"

You see, when we humble out and begin to take our eyes off of ourselves, we start enjoying everyone and everything around us. That's when we get the most out of life. And, we look forward to being with Jesus in the life to come.

So, the third kind of attitude that pleases God is being humble. To be truly happy we must become humble and stop trying to be the center of attention.

Fourth Beatitude—Wanting to do what is right and good

Have you ever been so hungry that you felt you could not wait until time for dinner? Or so thirsty that you felt you must have a cold drink right now? Some people have those same cravings for the things of this world. Some people think money will satisfy. Others think they need pleasure.

But, have you ever noticed that even if you eat to the point that you hurt, you always get hungry again? And, you never seem to have enough money or time to do fun things. That's the problem with earthly things; they never really satisfy you permanently.

Matthew 5:6

God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.

Let's try to understand what Jesus is telling us here. We know what it is to be hungry and thirsty for food, but what does it mean to be hungry and thirsty for justice?

Just as your body needs food and water, the inner you (your soul and spirit) needs something to satisfy it, too. Jesus says the only thing that can satisfy your inner hunger and thirst is justice; that is, doing right in God's eyes. Jesus is saying that you will be truly happy when you hunger and thirst for what is right and good; that is, if you really earnestly desire to do the proper thing.

You could say the verse this way, *"Happy are those who long to be just and good for they shall be completely satisfied."*

What is the blessing God promises if you *hunger and thirst for justice*? The scripture says, *"for they will be satisfied."*

Jesus is saying that if you long to be good, you'll be filled with the knowledge of God's love for you and you'll be happy and completely satisfied deep down in your heart and soul.

Do you really want to do what is right and good? What's the best way to know what the right thing to do is? If you hunger and thirst after justice, you will read God's Word and pray. You'll enjoy being with other Christians in church and Sunday school.

How can you tell if you're really hungry and thirsty for justice?

Have you ever been tempted to cheat on a test or to lie about something? Did the Holy Spirit speak to your heart about that being a wrong thing to do? If you knew in your heart and soul that what you were thinking about doing was a sin against a holy God, then you can be sure that you are seeking to please God.

And, as you seek God and do right, you will be blessed with true happiness because you know you are in the center of God's will.

This week we talked about the first four Beatitudes, the one's that make our relationship with God happier. Next week we will learn about the next four beatitudes, the kind of attitudes that make our friendships with other people happier.

Closing Prayer

Father, we want to be pleasing in Your sight. We want to have Godly attitudes so that everything we think or say or do makes You happy. When we know we are pleasing to You we will have true joy deep down in our hearts that no one can ever take away. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

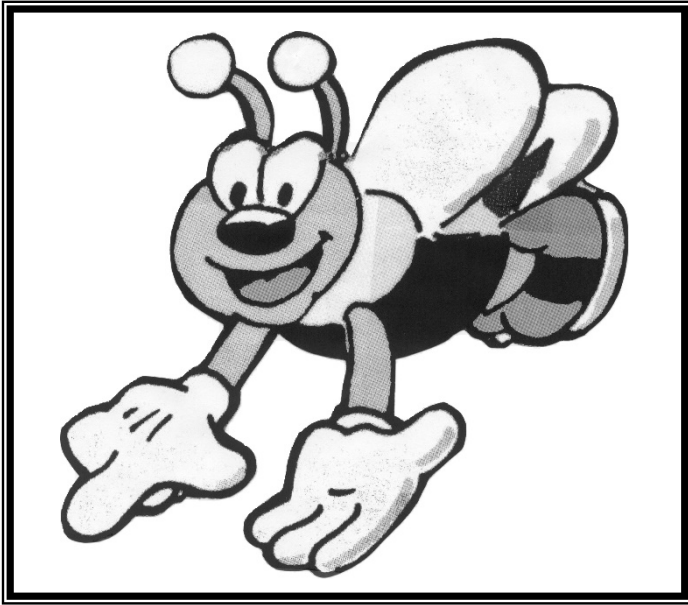
Activities

- Circle the Answers and Match the Attitude word puzzles
- Review with Beatitude Matching Cards. Make flash cards for the beatitudes and their meanings, stick to sticky board as you go through the lesson to facilitate learning.

Game Center

Choose one of the following games:

- **Beatitude Bingo.** (See below for directions and pattern.)
- **Beatitude Concentration.** Using the following graphic, make 2 flash cards for each Beatitude. If a child answers a review question correctly, he has the opportunity to turn over 2 cards, if they match, the child wins points for his team.

**Review Questions:**

1. Where was Jesus when he taught the Sermon on the Mount? (On a hillside next to the Sea of Galilee.)
2. What is an attitude? (It's a way we show people how we think or feel about something.)
3. What is a beatitude? (They are Godly attitudes or beautiful attitudes, attitudes that should be in all of us.)
4. What does the word "blessed" mean? (Happy)
5. What is the first attitude that is pleasing to God? (Knowing that we are poor in spirit.)
6. What is the meaning of "poor in Spirit"? (Knowing that we are in need of Jesus our Savior.)
7. What is the blessing God promises if you know you are poor in spirit? (The kingdom of God. You become a child of God and get the right to go to heaven.)
8. What is the second attitude that is pleasing to God? (Mourning over our spiritual neediness.)
9. Why does it please God if we "mourn"? (It pleases God if when we are extremely sad about our sin.)
10. What is the blessing God promises if you mourn over your sin? (Comfort.)
11. What is the third attitude that is pleasing to God? (Being gentle or humble.)
12. What does it mean to be meek or gentle? (Putting others first, not demanding our way; not trying to be the center of attention.)
13. What is the blessing God promises if you are meek? (The earth; appreciation for your life here on earth: your health, friends, family, fresh air and sunshine, etc.)
14. What is the fourth attitude that is pleasing to God? (To hunger and thirst for justice.)
15. What does it mean to hunger and thirst for justice? (To have an earnest desire to please God in all that we think, say or do.)
16. What is the blessing God promises if you hunger and thirst for justice? (Complete satisfaction in life; you'll be filled with the knowledge of God's love for you.)

- **Beatitude Bingo.** Call out the words, one-by-one. If a child has that word he places a marker over it. The first child to get a row of markers in any direction is the winner.

Make Bingo cards using the card pattern and the following words:

Beatitude	Blessed	Called Sons of God
Comforted	Compassion	Earth
Grieve	Happy	Hunger & Thirst
Inherit the earth	Jesus	Kingdom of Heaven
Meek	Merciful	Mourn
Obtain Mercy	Peacemakers	Persecuted
Poor in Spirit	Pure in heart	Rejoice
Reward in Heaven	Righteousness	Shall be Filled
Shall See God		

Beatitude BINGO

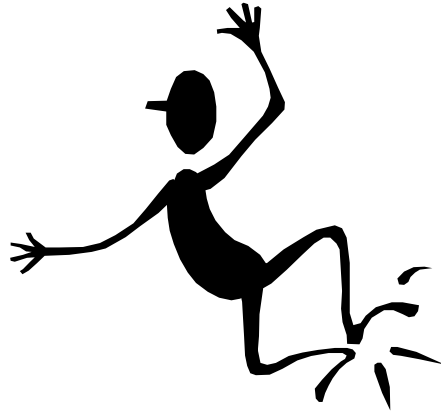
The following card is an example. Use the blank on the next page to create your own Bingo cards.

Poor in Spirit	Kingdom of Heaven	Mourn	Comforted	Meek
Inherit the Earth	Hunger and Thirst	Shall be Filled	Merciful	Obtain Mercy
Pure in Heart	Shall See God	FREE	Peacemakers	Called Sons of God
Persecuted	Blessed	Beatitude	Rejoice	Reward in Heaven
Jesus	Righteousness	Happy	Compassion	Grieve

Enter words at random into the spaces to create unique Bingo cards for each player. Copy each card onto a different colored card stock and laminate them for future use.

		FREE		

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit <https://www.FreeChildrensMinistryLessons.com>]



Circle the correct answers:

1. Blessed are the (rich, poor, happy) in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of (Satan, God, Heaven). (Matt 5:3)
2. (Sad, sleepy, happy) are those who mourn, for they shall be (filled, obtain mercy, comforted). (Matt 5:4)
3. Blessed are the (weak, strong, meek), for they shall inherit (the earth, money, a house). (Matt 5:5).

4. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for (righteousness, food, money), for they shall be (rich, happy, filled). (Matt 5:6)

Fill in the blank:

1. To know we are "poor in spirit" is to realize we ____ ____ ____ ____ Jesus.
2. God will comfort us if we are truly ____ ____ ____ ____ for our sins.

Match the Attitude to the Meaning

Poor in spirit

Earnestly desire to do what
is right

Mourn

Personal humility

Meek

Grieve over our sins

Hunger & Thirst for
Righteousness

Know that we need Jesus

Match the Attitude to the Blessing

Poor in spirit

Filled (or satisfied)

Mourn

Kingdom of Heaven

Meek

Inherit the earth

Hunger & Thirst for
Righteousness

Comfort

The Beatitudes (Part 2)

(Matthew 5:7-12)

Introduction

Who can remember what we learned about last time? We've been studying *The Beatitudes*. Who can remember what *beatitude* is? A *beatitude* is a beautiful attitude that brings us blessings from God.

Jesus came to teach us how to live our lives in a way that pleases God. Jesus knew that when we know that God is pleased with us, it gives us joy deep in our hearts. So, He took His disciples up on a hillside and taught them about the kinds of attitudes that please God. We call these the beatitudes, or the "Be-Attitudes" – attitudes that ought to be in our hearts.

Last week we learned the first four beatitudes. These are the kind of attitudes that make our relationship with God happier. Today we are going to learn about the other four beatitudes. These are the attitudes that make our friendships with others happier.

Opening Prayer

Thank You, Jesus for Your amazing words that teach us how to live for You. Help each of us to learn and understand the important lessons You taught about heart attitudes. We want to shine for You every day. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

Lesson

Open your bibles to Matthew chapter 5. Look at verses 3 through 11 and notice that each verse starts with the same words: "*God blesses those...*"

If you want blessings from God, then pay attention. Jesus is about to tell you what you need to do to get blessed by Him.

[Teacher, review the first four beatitudes...]

Fifth Beatitude—Mercy

Matthew 5:7

God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

The word "*mercy*" means "*compassion*". If you are merciful, you are full of love and compassion towards someone who doesn't deserve it.

People who are *merciful* forgive others and show them kindness even if they are wrong. The merciful unselfishly reach out to help others in need, not expecting anything in return. They don't look down on others or condemn them. The merciful don't keep track of wrong things others do to them.

Here's an example: Have you ever done anything embarrassing in front of people? Has anyone ever made you feel dumb because they laughed at you when you made a mistake? Was that merciful? (No!) What would be the merciful thing for someone to do? (They would have compassion on you and try to comfort you. Maybe they would say, "That's OK; I do that all the time, too!")

To show mercy also means to not punish someone when he deserves it.

For example: What kind of punishment do you get when you do something naughty? Have you ever done something really bad that you know you deserved punishment but your mom or dad let you get off without punishment? We call that ***mercy*** — ***not getting what you deserve***. [Teacher, write that on the board.] Has anyone ever been merciful to you?

Do you know anyone who deserves to be punished, but instead gets mercy? (We do!) The Lord Jesus took the punishment for your sin and mine when He died on the cross. Don't you think we should show mercy to others because He has been merciful to us?

Have you ever been merciful? Can you think of ways you can be merciful? Being merciful may mean giving some of your allowance to someone who can't pay it back, being a friend to someone whom others laugh at, or being patient with your baby brother when he breaks one of your toys. Jesus will help you to be merciful to others less fortunate than you and to those who hurt or disappoint you.

What is the promise to you if you are merciful to someone? The verse says, "*they will be shown mercy.*" If you show mercy to someone, don't be surprised when they are merciful back to you!

Next time someone does something wrong to you and it's "pay back" time, remember what the Lord has done for you. It will help you to be a little more understanding and forgiving. As you allow God to control your thoughts and attitudes, He will bless you big time.

So, the first attitude that makes your friendships better is mercy.

Sixth Beatitude—Having a pure heart

Matthew 5:8

God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God.

What do you think it means to have a pure heart? (Not holding bad feelings about someone, not holding a grudge in your heart against someone, having right motives, being without deceit.) God wants us to be innocent of all wrong doing.

If someone has sinned against you, Jesus says we need to forgive them, even if they don't deserve it because if you hold unforgiveness in your heart, it can give you a headache or make you sick to your stomach or it can make you cranky. If you don't do something about the grudge you are holding, it can make you bitter and angry. You'll suddenly snap at people for no reason at all and it's hard to sleep at night. You'll toss and turn.

Another way to have an impure heart is by harboring secret sin. When you don't confess your sin and get forgiveness, it can make you just

as bitter and angry and cranky as having unforgiveness towards someone else.

So, the second attitude that makes your friendships better is having a pure heart.

What is the blessing God promises if we stay pure in heart? The verse says, "*for they will see God.*"

When your heart is pure, you can come into His presence in prayer and you will be able to "see" God working in your everyday life.

God desires us to have clean hearts. In fact, it's impossible for us to come into Heaven without clean hearts. God is perfect; He cannot tolerate sin in His presence. But there's a big problem. We are sinners by nature. (Romans 3:23, "*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*")

Not a day goes by that we don't do something wrong. Jesus said that if you've ever been angry at someone, it's as if you murdered him in your heart.

So, how can you clean your heart?

God knows that we cannot make our own hearts clean (Proverbs 20:9; 1 John 1:7). Remember God's bar of soap:

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Seventh Beatitude—Being a peacemaker

Matthew 5:9

God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God.

What do you think it means to "work for peace"?

Let's talk about some ways you can be a peacemaker.

One way you can be a peacemaker is by keeping peace at home by obeying your parents. Have you ever noticed that when you don't obey, your parents get mad, raise their voices, and you end up getting punished? It's better to obey and let peace reign in your home!

You can also be a peacemaker among your friends by being truthful and kind and by letting others have their way. God wants us to love others. No one will want to pick a fight with you if you are loving towards them just like God is with you.

What about if someone tries to start a fight? You need to stay calm and look for ways to come to agreement on things; look for ways to compromise. Sometimes being a peacemaker means you won't get your way. God's kind of love puts other people first.

What is the blessing God promises us if we are peacemakers? The verse says, *"they will be called the children of God."*

If we allow God to use us as a peacemaker, we will be showing others that we have godly attitudes. We'll be different; we'll be attractive to others. People will know we are Christians because we aren't behaving like everyone else.

So, the third attitude that makes your friendships better is being a peacemaker.

Eighth Beatitude—Standing for truth, no matter what!

Matthew 5:10-12

God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs. (11) "God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. (12) Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way.

The word "persecute" means *to treat harshly or cruelly*.

What do you think this beatitude is saying? [Teacher, let the children respond.]

Has anyone ever laughed at you because you wanted to do the "right" thing or to be good or honest? Has anyone tried to make you feel weird for not wanting to laugh at a dirty joke or join in a mean trick? Have you ever been made fun of because you are a Christian?

The Bible tells us in 2 Timothy 3:12, *"Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution."* That is, they will be treated harshly or cruelly. This is a promise! You can expect it to happen sometime in your life.

Can you be happy when someone makes fun of you for being good?

How would you react if someone made fun of you for being a Christian? [Teacher, allow the children to discuss this issue.]

Jesus is our example to live by. He never did a wrong thing. He never had a bad thought. He was always kind and loving towards people. He did all kinds of good things for people. He healed the lame and made the blind to see. But the Jews hated Him. They got hold of Him and whipped Him and pushed a crown of thorns down on His head. They put a purple robe on Him and made fun of Him. Then they forced Him to carry a heavy wooden cross up a mountain where they hung Him by nails.

Why did the Jews do that? (They were jealous of Him. They were afraid that Jesus would take their power away in the government.) What was Jesus' reaction to the persecution He received? He was merciful. He asked the Father to forgive them; He said they didn't know what they were doing. He showed love and compassion right up to the end.

What is the blessing that God promises those who are persecuted for being a Christian? (*Yours is the kingdom of heaven; a great reward awaits you in heaven.*)

When people laugh at you or even try to hurt you for doing right, think of the happy days to come in Heaven. God wants us to make a stand for righteousness. He doesn't want us to be afraid of ridicule for being godly. Troubles may last for a while here on earth, but Heaven will be forever and ever!

The fourth attitude that makes your friendships better is making a stand for righteousness sake, even if it means you get persecuted.

God expects us to live our lives with the attitudes that we have been learning from the Beatitudes. He wants us to be humble and to seek to live right. We need to make right choices even when our friends are tempting us not to. We need to ask God to give us the desire in our heart to live godly lives and the strength to make godly choices in our behavior. [Teacher, review verse for today.]

Closing Prayer

Father, we want to live our lives in such a way that it brings You all the honor You deserve. We also want our lives to look attractive to others so that they, too, will want to come to know You and love You in the way that we do. Please control our thoughts and feelings. Give us the power we need to make right choices even when we are tempted not to. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Activities

- Circle the Answers and Match the Attitude word puzzles
- Review with Beatitude Matching Cards. Make flash cards for the beatitudes and their meanings, stick to sticky board as you go through the lesson to facilitate learning.

Game Center

Choose one of the following games:

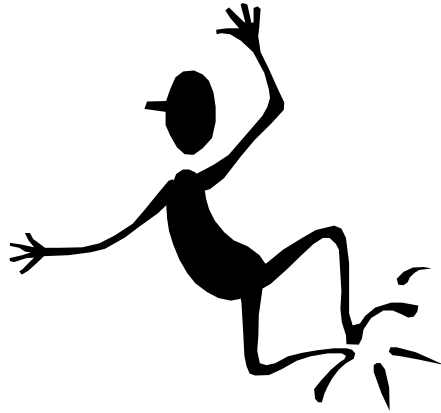
- **Beatitude Bingo.** (See Lesson #15 for directions and pattern.)
- **Beatitude Concentration** (See Lesson #15 for directions and pattern. Use the following review questions.)

Review Questions:

1. What is a beatitude? (They are Godly attitudes or beautiful attitudes - types of attitudes that should be in all of us.)
2. The first four Beatitudes teach us four attitudes that make our relationships with God happier. What do the last four attitudes teach us? (Four attitudes that make our relationships with others happier.)
3. What is at least one attitude that makes your relationships with God happier? (Poor in Spirit, mourn, meek, hunger and thirst for righteousness.)
4. What is the first attitude that makes our friendships better? (Mercy)
5. What does it mean to be merciful? (to be full of love and compassion towards someone, especially when they don't deserve it.)
6. What is the blessing God promises if you are merciful? (If you show mercy to someone; they'll be merciful back to you.)
7. Can you think of ways you can be merciful? (Being merciful may mean giving some of your allowance to a poor family, being a friend to someone whom others laugh at, or being patient with your brother or sister.)

8. What is the second attitude that makes our friendships better?
(Purity of heart.)
9. What does it mean to have a pure heart? (To be blameless.)
10. What is the blessing God promises if you stay pure in heart?
(You'll get to come into the presence of God the moment we die.)
11. How do you keep your heart pure as you live day-by-day?
(Confess your sin to God and He'll forgive you.)
12. What's the third attitude that makes our friendships better?
(Peacemaker.)
13. How can you be a Peacemaker? (To be truthful and kind and by letting others have their way.)
14. What is the blessing God promises if you are a peacemaker?
(You'll be called a 'son of God,' that is, a Christian.)
15. What are some ways you can be a peacemaker? (Obey parents, be truthful and kind to others.)
16. What is the fourth attitude that makes our friendships better?
(“Blessed are the persecuted for righteousness sake”)
17. What does it mean to be persecuted for righteousness sake? (To be treated harshly for making a stand for righteousness.)
18. What is the blessing God promises if you are willing to do right even if it means you'll be persecuted? (You will be rewarded greatly in heaven.)
19. Can you be happy when someone makes fun of you for being good? (Yes, but we'll need to ask God for help.)

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Circle the correct answers:

1. Blessed are the (merciful, mean, unforgiving) for they shall obtain (money, mercy, food). (Matt 5:7)
2. (Sad, Sleepy, Happy) are the pure in heart, for they shall (see, talk to, be) God. (Matt 5:8)
3. Blessed are the (peacemakers, policemen, tap dancers), for they shall be called (great, Christians, sons of God). (Matt 5:9).
4. Blessed are those who a persecuted for (righteousness, food, Pete's) sake, for theirs is the (prize, kingdom of heaven, trophy). (Matt 5:10-12)

Fill in the blank:

1. To be merciful is to be ____ ____ ____ ____.
2. To keep our hearts pure, we must ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ our sins.

Match the Attitude to the Meaning

Mercy

Blameless

Pure in Heart

Tortured

Peacemaker

One who soothes anger

Persecuted

Give kindness when it's not
deserved

Match the Attitude to the Blessing

Mercy

Be called sons of God

Pure in Heart

Be shown mercy

Peacemaker

Grieve over our sins

Persecuted

Inherit heaven

Jesus Calms the Storm

(Mark 4:35-41)

Introduction

Have you ever been afraid? What makes you afraid? [Teacher, discuss being in the dark, big dogs, parents fighting, being lost, storms, etc. Let each child have a chance to tell about a scary situation they've been in.]

How many of you have ever been in a really bad storm? What makes a bad storm so scary? (Lightening can start fires, wind can blow things down, rain can cause floods.)

We don't have to stay afraid or let our fears get control of us. In our Bible story we're going to hear about what Jesus' disciples did when they were afraid. Maybe we'll get some ideas about what to do when we're afraid.

Opening Prayer

Father, give us ears to hear Your voice this morning so that we might learn what to do when we're afraid. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. (Isaiah 26:3)

Lesson

In the early days of Jesus' ministry, He lived around the Sea of Galilee.

One time, after teaching all day, Jesus told His disciples to sail over to the other side of the lake...

Mark 4:35

As evening came, Jesus said to his disciples, "Let's cross to the other side of the lake."

They left the crowd, got into the boat and started off to the other side of the lake.

Mark 4:36

So they took Jesus in the boat and started out, leaving the crowds behind (although other boats followed).

The Sea of Galilee is actually a very large lake. It is surrounded by hills and storms blow into the lake almost without warning. Many of Jesus' disciples were fishermen on the Sea of Galilee. Some of them had probably experienced getting caught in a storm. Because a small fishing boat could easily sink in the wild waves, no one wanted to be out on the Sea of Galilee during a storm. And, as they were crossing the Sea of Galilee a great storm came up.

Mark 4:37

But soon a fierce storm came up. High waves were breaking into the boat, and it began to fill with water.

How do you think the disciples felt when they saw the waves crashing around them? The disciples were afraid when they saw the huge waves! This storm had these experienced fishermen fearing for their lives.

Many times you and I are afraid, especially when we have problems. Almost every day we go through hard things, and sometimes we become afraid. But remember that Jesus, God the Son, has the power to give you peace when you are afraid. Peace is quietness on the inside that only the Lord Jesus can give.

God's Word says, "*You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.*" (Isaiah 26:3) How can the Lord Jesus give you peace? [Teacher, allow the children to respond.]

He can give you peace when you remember He is with you and has the power to take care of you. He is God the Son who controls everything. He loves you and wants what is best for you. That's why

you can trust Him. You don't have to be afraid in the midst of the storms of life.

But the disciples were afraid as they saw the huge waves coming in over the sides of the boat. As the waves threatened to swamp the ship, Jesus slept soundly in the back of the boat!

Mark 4:38

Jesus was sleeping at the back of the boat with his head on a cushion. The disciples woke him up, shouting, "Teacher, don't you care that we're going to drown?"

How could Jesus sleep in such a storm? (Either He was completely exhausted, or He had complete faith that God would take care of Him.)

The disciples woke Jesus, crying, "Don't you care if we drown?" Jesus cares for us so much He came from heaven to die on a cross, giving His life blood so you and I could have our sins forgiven. He took the punishment we deserved for sin. He loves you and me more than we can imagine. Yes, Jesus cared about His disciples very much!

Mark 4:39

When Jesus woke up, he rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Silence! Be still!" Suddenly the wind stopped, and there was a great calm.

How could He do that? (Jesus is God the Son. He can do anything.) How would you have felt if you had been in the boat when Jesus stopped the terrible storm?

Jesus rebuked the disciples for their lack of faith.

Mark 4:40

Then he asked them, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

Jesus was more disappointed than He was angry. He had hoped they would have trusted Him more. But their fear showed Him their lack of

faith in Him. When they saw what Jesus had done, the disciples felt the terror of being in the presence of God.

Mark 4:41

The disciples were absolutely terrified. "Who is this man?" they asked each other. "Even the wind and waves obey him!"

Now the disciples were more afraid of Jesus than they were of the storm.

The disciples had been with the Lord Jesus for some time now. They had seen Jesus' power over sickness time after time, but this time Jesus stopped a terrible storm with just a few words! But they still didn't realize He was God in a human body. He is the mighty One, the creator of the universe. He has all power and all wisdom and all knowledge. And He loves you with His everlasting love.

He can be with you every minute of every day. In fact, the Lord Jesus promises, "*I am with you always*" (Matthew 28:20). You don't have to be afraid because you can trust Him to take care of you. And He has all power to protect you in any type of situation. You don't have to worry or be afraid. When you are afraid, you can tell Him how you feel and ask Him to take care of the problem. He will help you be calm and quiet on the inside. Isn't it wonderful to know that He can do anything! The wind and sea became completely calm because of Jesus' power.

This week if you are afraid, remember our memory verse. Say it out loud and think about what it means. Will you remember Jesus is so powerful He can take care of everything - even the problem that's causing you to be afraid? Will you talk to Him about it and ask Him to give you His peace - quietness on the inside? Will you trust the Lord to see you through the storms of life?

Closing Prayer

Dear Jesus, we know that You can do anything. Thank You for using Your power to help us. We know we can trust You for help when we are scared. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Make paper boats. (There are many patterns and instructions available on the internet.)

Game Center

Storms in Life

Draw some big waves on the white board. These are problems or things you're afraid of. Ask the kids to name a "storm" in their life -- something they are afraid of or a problem that is worrying them. (For example, someone who has been making them upset, an illness or health problem, or someone they love is having problems at school or home.) On each wave, write a way in which Jesus can help you. *(Jesus loves us, hears our prayers, gives us courage, helps us to know how to handle our problems, gives us people to talk to, gives us activities and objects that comfort us).*

Drama

Assign parts of the story to different students. Create a boat area and put on costumes. Have some students be waves and the storm (waving cloth, blowing with fans, sprinkling water).

Do a dry-run. Walk the students through the basic story outline, discussing scenes, setting, how to say their lines. Then see if the group can do the drama without your help. Then interview the characters asking them such as, "Why they were acting like that, etc."

Or, use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. What is the name of the lake where Jesus lived? (The Sea of Galilee.)

2. What happened while Jesus and His disciples were sailing over to the other side of the lake? (A great windstorm arose and the waves were coming into the boat.)
3. What was Jesus doing while the waves were threatening to swamp the ship? (He was sleeping soundly in the back of the boat.)
4. How could Jesus sleep in such a storm? (Either He was completely exhausted, or He had complete faith that the Father would take care of them.)
5. Why were the disciples afraid if Jesus was calm? (They knew that storms are dangerous and they didn't have faith in Jesus.)
6. When the disciples found Jesus asleep on a pillow, what did they say to Jesus? (*"Don't you care if we drown?"*)
7. How did Jesus calm the storm? (He spoke and said, *"Peace be still."*)
8. How would you have felt if you had been in the boat when Jesus stopped the terrible storm?
9. Why was Jesus disappointed that the disciples were so afraid of the storm? (It showed their lack of faith in Him.)
10. What did the disciples fear even more than the storm? (When they saw that Jesus could stop a storm just by speaking a few words, they realized He had power even over the forces of nature. They wondered what power He did have and where He got it from.)
11. What is peace? (Quietness on the inside; in our hearts.)
12. What do you do when you are afraid? Who do you talk with? (We are all afraid at times, but remember that Jesus is always with us.)

13. How can the Lord Jesus give you peace when you are in the middle of the storms of life? (Remember that He is with you and is powerful enough to control everything in life.)
14. What can you do to depend on God's help during hard times? How has God helped you or your family in the past? How do you need God's help today?

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Peace in the Bible

PEACE is a word used in a variety of ways in both testaments. In Old Testament days, it was the usual word of greeting. It is also used throughout the Bible to indicate a spirit of tranquility or freedom from inward or outward disturbance.

The most frequent use in both testaments is to show spiritual tranquility which all can enjoy through faith in Jesus Christ.

Look up the following Bible verses concerning PEACE and fill in the missing words.

1. Luke 10:5—When you enter a house, first say, "PEACE to this _____."
2. John 14:27—Jesus said, "PEACE I _____ with you; my PEACE I give you."
3. Luke 2:13-14—Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on _____ PEACE to men on whom his favor rests."
4. Isaiah 9:6—For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, _____ of PEACE."
5. Psalm 29:11—The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord _____ his people with PEACE.
6. Proverbs 3:13, 17—Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding. Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her _____ are PEACE.
7. Philippians 4:7—And the PEACE of _____, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
8. Numbers 6:26—The _____ turn his face toward you and give you PEACE.
9. Isaiah 48:22—There is no PEACE," says the Lord, "for the _____."

Jesus Raises Jairus' Daughter

(Mark 5:21-43)

Introduction

Do you know what “faith” is? What does the word “*faith*” mean? (Trust or confidence.)

- If you planted a seed in the ground and you gave it water and sunshine, what would you expect to happen? If you didn't have confidence that it would sprout, you wouldn't plant the seed?
- Would you believe me if I told you that if you fell backward into my arms I would catch you and not let you hit the floor? [Teacher, have several volunteers prove their faith by doing it.] Its one thing to say you have faith, but quite another to prove it.
- If you are in your room alone at night and get scared, who do you call for? (Mom or dad.) How do you know they will come?

The part of you that knows your mom or dad will take care of you is called *faith*. You know that your mom and dad love you and will take care of you. They'll make sure no harm comes to you; they see to it that you have food and when you're sick they care for you, don't they?

God wants us to have faith in Him, just like we do our parents. We can believe that God loves us and will always be there for us. Faith helps us believe that God has the power and the desire to help us.

Maybe a situation you're facing at school seems impossible or perhaps you have family problems. [Teacher, discuss situations in which children need to trust God.] The Lord may not always work things out in the way you would like Him to; but whatever happens, remember that He loves you and He is carrying out His special plan for you (Romans 8:28). Will you have faith in Jesus' power and accept His solution to your problem?

A man in our Bible story proved he had great faith in the most powerful Person in the universe.

Opening Prayer

Father, sometimes we face impossible situations in life. Things look really hard and hopeless. Teach us this morning that you are dependable – that we can always count on You to carry us through the tough times we go through. Deepen our faith in You, this morning. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen

Memory Verse

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6)

Lesson

One day Jesus sailed across the Sea of Galilee and a large crowd gathered around Him by the lake.

Mark 5:21

Jesus got into the boat again and went back to the other side of the lake, where a large crowd gathered around him on the shore.

As Jesus and His friends left their boat and stepped ashore, they noticed a great crowd of people were there to welcome Him. Some were pushing to get nearer to Jesus. Among those that came to Jesus was a rabbi named Jairus.

Mark 5:22-23

Then a leader of the local synagogue, whose name was Jairus, arrived. When he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet, (23) pleading fervently with him. “My little daughter is dying,” he said. “Please come and lay your hands on her; heal her so she can live.”

Jairus came to Jesus, believing Jesus could save his daughter's life. Do you have that much faith in Jesus' power? To have faith in Jesus means to be convinced that He is God and that He can do anything. It means to rely on Him, believing all that He says in His Word.

Jairus came to Jesus, believing the Lord could heal his daughter.

Mark 5:24

Jesus went with him, and all the people followed, crowding around him.

As Jesus was trying to get to Jairus' home, it was hard to get through the crowd. Everyone wanted to be near Jesus and crowded around Him. Then, something happened to delay Him...

Mark 5:25-26

A woman in the crowd had suffered for twelve years with constant bleeding. (26) She had suffered a great deal from many doctors, and over the years she had spent everything she had to pay them, but she had gotten no better. In fact, she had gotten worse.

This woman had an incurable disease. She had been bleeding constantly for twelve years. She had spent all of her money seeking help, but she got no better; in fact she got worse and worse.

Mark 5:27-28

She had heard about Jesus, so she came up behind him through the crowd and touched his robe. (28) For she thought to herself, "If I can just touch his robe, I will be healed."

It took a lot of courage for her to reach out and touch Jesus' garment. In the Jewish culture of Jesus' day if you touched blood, you were considered "unclean" and anyone you touched would also become "unclean." Being "unclean" would make you a social outcast. No one would want you to come near them. But this woman was desperate and she knew her only hope was Jesus. She had faith that He would help her.

Mark 5:29-30

Immediately the bleeding stopped, and she could feel in her body that she had been healed of her terrible condition. (30) Jesus realized at once that healing power had gone out from him, so he turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my robe?"

Do you think that Jesus really didn't know who touched him? [Teacher, let the children respond.] Jesus is God and knows everything! He knew she had touched him, but he stopped and asked who did it in order to teach us all an important lesson. True faith involves action. We don't have to be ashamed to have faith in Jesus Christ. We need to have the courage to publicly proclaim our faith. Faith that isn't put into action is not faith at all. Jesus wanted this woman to come forth and testify that the miracle had happened so that others may believe, too.

Mark 5:31

His disciples said to him, "Look at this crowd pressing around you. How can you ask, 'Who touched me?'"

They were walking through a big crowd of people; the disciples didn't really understand yet that Jesus is the all-knowing God. They couldn't imagine how He could have known who touched Him in that big crowd.

Mark 5:32-33

But he kept on looking around to see who had done it. (33) Then the frightened woman, trembling at the realization of what had happened to her, came and fell to her knees in front of him and told him what she had done.

The woman must have been frightened. She might have wondered if Jesus was angry with her, but she knew that a miracle had happened so she knelt before Him and told the whole truth.

Mark 5:34

And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. Your suffering is over."

Meanwhile, Jairus must have been wishing that Jesus would hurry. And while Jesus was still talking to the woman, messengers arrived from Jairus' home with bad news.

Mark 5:35

While he was still speaking to her, messengers arrived from the home of Jairus, the leader of the synagogue. They told him, "Your daughter is dead. There's no use troubling the Teacher now."

Poor Jairus. He had tried so hard to have Jesus come in time to heal his daughter. How do you suppose Jairus felt? He must have thought, *"If only Jesus hadn't stopped to talk to that woman!"* It must have been hard for him to wait patiently, knowing that his little girl was so desperately ill.

Mark 5:36

But Jesus overheard them and said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid. Just have faith."

Jairus had believed that Jesus could heal his daughter; that's why he went to get Jesus. Now he learned that she died! He had just watched the Lord's power in healing the woman with the flow of blood. Could Jesus actually bring a dead person back to life? Jesus wanted Jairus to believe that He could. He is God. He has all power. Although it looked as if all hope for Jairus' daughter was gone, Jesus calmly told Jairus to keep on believing in His power.

Mark 5:37-39

Then Jesus stopped the crowd and wouldn't let anyone go with him except Peter, James, and John (the brother of James). (38) When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw much commotion and weeping and wailing. (39) He went inside and asked, "Why all this commotion and weeping? The child isn't dead; she's only asleep."

Loud weeping and wailing was customary at a person's death. Jesus asked the crowd, *"What's all this confusion and noise about?"* They thought he didn't know she was dead and laughed at Him.

Mark 5:40-41

The crowd laughed at him. But he made them all leave, and he took the girl's father and mother and his three disciples into the room where the

girl was lying. (41) Holding her hand, he said to her, "Talitha koum," which means "Little girl, get up!"

Alone in the room with the three disciples and the child's parents, Jesus took the girl by the hand and told her to get up.

Mark 5:42

And the girl, who was twelve years old, immediately stood up and walked around! They were overwhelmed and totally amazed.

Jairus had come to Jesus, believing that the Lord could heal his little girl. Instead, Jesus was commanding her to come back to life! Only Jesus, God the Son, could do that. He was showing His power over death.

We can have faith in Jesus' great power, too. Believe with all your heart that Jesus has the power to take care of any problem you might have. It may be a problem at home or at school. Maybe someone is very sick in your family. The Bible says we are to *"live by faith"* (Romans 1:17). Whatever your problem, put your trust in the Lord Jesus. Don't be discouraged by what is happening around you. The Lord is in control, and His power is just the same today as it was when Jairus lived.

Will you put your faith in Jesus this week when you face a situation at home or school that seems impossible? Talk to God in prayer and tell Him what your problems are. Ask Him for extra strength to believe His Word. He will give you faith and help you in your time of need.

Closing Prayer

Father, we all find ourselves in deep trouble at times in our lives. Thank You that You are always in control. Thank You that Your power is the same today as it was when Jairus lived. Help us to always remember that You love us and that You have a plan and a purpose for our lives and that You will see us through every problem we face. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Let the children plant a seed in a cup; talk about how we have faith that the seed will spout.

Game Center

Obstacle Course

Allow the children to construct an obstacle course with the chairs and tables in the room. Pair them up and allow them to blindfold one another and lead their partner through the course. Talk about how it takes faith to believe their "guide" will lead them safely to through the course.

Or, use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. What was the name of the Rabbi that came to Jesus through the crowd by the lakeside? (Jairus.)
2. Why did Jairus come to Jesus? (His daughter was dying and he wanted Jesus to lay hands on her and heal her.)
3. What is it that you must have in order to please God? (Faith.)
4. What does it mean to have faith in Jesus? (To be convinced that He is God and that He can do anything.)
5. What made it hard for Jesus to get to Jairus' house? (A great crowd thronged around Him.)
6. Who touched Jesus in the crowd? (A woman with an incurable disease.)
7. Why did it take a lot of courage for her to reach out and touch Jesus' garment? (Her flow of blood made her a social outcast.)
8. They were walking through a big crowd of people; How could Jesus tell that someone touched Him on purpose? (He's God!)
9. Why did Jesus ask, "*Who touched My clothes?*" If He is God and knows all things, didn't He know who it was? (He wanted the woman to make a public statement of faith in Him.)
10. What bad news did Jairus receive while Jesus was busy talking to the woman in the crowd? (His daughter died.)
11. What do you think Jairus was thinking when he found out that his daughter had died while Jesus was taking time to heal the woman with the flow of blood? (He might have been angry or at least disappointed.)
12. How did Jesus heal the little girl? (He said to her, "*Little girl, get up.*" He commanded her to come back to life.)
13. Why was it good that Jesus didn't get to Jairus' house before his daughter died? (So that He could show His power over death as well as power over healing!)
14. What should you do if you find yourself in the middle of a troublesome time? (Have faith in Jesus; trust in the Lord. Remember He has everything under control.)

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit <https://www.FreeChildrensMinistryLessons.com>]

Jesus Feeds 5,000

(Mark 6:30-44)

Introduction

[Discuss different kinds of needs people may have. Help the children discover such things as: not enough food, no winter coat, no toys, a crippling handicap, no friends, worries or fears, struggles with schoolwork. Write their ideas on the board.] Do you know someone who is poor...lonely...mean...worried? What is their greatest need? What could you do to help these people? You might say, "I'm just a kid! What can I do?"

A little boy in our lesson today was used in a mighty way to help a lot of hungry people.

Opening Prayer

Father, there are so many people in the world today that have such great needs. Help us not to be stingy or greedy. I pray that You will make us keenly aware of other people's needs and show us ways that we can help them. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

He who gives to the poor will not lack, but he who hides his eyes will have many curses. (Proverbs 28:27)

Lesson

By now Jesus' disciples were going out on their own to teach people the things they were learning from Jesus. We pick up the story today as they were returning to Jesus. They wanted to tell Him all that they were doing among the people.

Mark 6:30

The apostles returned to Jesus from their ministry tour and told him all they had done and taught.

Doing God's work is very important, but sometimes it can be very tiring. Many times missionaries don't get to sleep in comfortable places and often don't get to eat well, either. Jesus and His disciples were exhausted after intense ministry. They wanted to be alone to rest away from the crowds...

Mark 6:31-32

Then Jesus said, "Let's go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile." He said this because there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles didn't even have time to eat. (32) So they left by boat for a quiet place, where they could be alone.

Jesus and his disciples did not find it easy to get the rest they needed!

Mark 6:33

But many people recognized them and saw them leaving, and people from many towns ran ahead along the shore and got there ahead of them.

As Jesus and His disciples sailed across the lake, many could see His boat coming in. Thousands of people ran to meet Jesus. Maybe they had heard about or seen the miracles He had done. When Jesus saw the crowd He wasn't angry, He was moved with compassion.

Mark 6:34

But many people recognized them and saw them leaving, and people from many towns ran ahead along the shore and got there ahead of them.

As the Lord Jesus looked across the crowd, He knew the needs of each one. He knew they needed someone to love them, they needed peace and joy in their lives, and most of all they needed salvation from their sins. Jesus could meet their needs. He came to earth to show people a better way to live – God's way. And to take the punishment of sin – the wrong things we all do that cause worry,

sadness, and separation from Him. Jesus knew he could meet the needs of each one in that giant crowd and He can meet every one of your needs, too.

The disciples loved Jesus and knew how tired He was. They were all hungry, too. So after Jesus had been teaching and ministering to the people for a long time, the disciples tried to encourage Jesus to send the crowd away to buy food.

Mark 6:35-36

Late in the afternoon his disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. (36) Send the crowds away so they can go to the nearby farms and villages and buy something to eat."

The disciples were still confused, still unbelieving. They did not realize that Jesus could miraculously provide for them. They were so busy ministering to people they hadn't fully recognized that Jesus was the all-powerful God, the Creator of the universe, who could take care of every problem! Jesus can satisfy all of our needs, even hunger!

Mark 6:37

But Jesus said, "You feed them." "With what?" they asked. "We'd have to work for months to earn enough money to buy food for all these people!"

How do you think the disciples felt when Jesus told them to feed all those people? [Teacher, let the children respond.] Have you ever seen people in great need? Have you seen homeless people on the side of the road with signs that say, "*Will work for food?*" Perhaps you've felt bad when you've seen the needs of others and wondered what you could do.

When Jesus asked the disciples to provide food for over 5,000 people, they asked in amazement if they should go and spend eight month's wages on bread! They probably thought it was hopeless.

Jesus wanted to use the disciples in this impossible situation to meet the needs of others. But, what could they do? Jesus asked them to search for food among the crowd.

Mark 6:38

"How much bread do you have?" he asked. "Go and find out." They came back and reported, "We have five loaves of bread and two fish."

They returned to Jesus with a little boy who had five loaves and two fish. Then, Jesus helped the disciples organize the crowd into groups.

Mark 6:39-40

Then Jesus told the disciples to have the people sit down in groups on the green grass. (40) So they sat down in groups of fifty or a hundred.

Then Jesus thanked God the Father for the food.

Mark 6:41

Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven, and blessed them. Then, breaking the loaves into pieces, he kept giving the bread to the disciples so they could distribute it to the people. He also divided the fish for everyone to share.

Maybe the little boy who shared his lunch wondered how the Lord Jesus could use so little to feed so many. But he was willing to give the little bit he had.

Jesus can use you to meet the needs of others, too. Why would it be important to let Jesus use you to bless others? When you are sharing with someone else, no matter who it is, it's like sharing it with Jesus! You get the biggest blessing! It's not how much you have to give, but how willing you are to give it. As you share the little bit you have with others, Jesus will use you in a mighty way! The little boy must have watched in amazement as Jesus commanded the disciples to pass out his little bit of lunch to that huge crowd.

Mark 6:42

They all ate as much as they wanted,

The disciples did everything they could by gathering the available food and organizing the people into groups. Then, in answer to prayer, God did the impossible. When you are facing a seemingly impossible task, do what you can and ask God to do the rest. He may see fit to make the impossible happen!

Mark 6:43

and afterward, the disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftover bread and fish.

The disciples gathered twelve baskets full of leftovers (one for each disciple!)

Mark 6:44

and afterward, the disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftover bread and fish..

There were probably 15,000 or 20,000 people in all, counting the women and children.

Why didn't Jesus simply make food appear by His power? [Teacher, let the children respond.] He wanted the little boy and the disciples to be part of the miracle. He wanted them to share the joy of meeting the needs of so many people. Isn't it exciting to know that God can use you to meet the needs of others? You may be saying, "I'm just a child. How could I be used by God?" Will you let God use your two hands, five fingers, two eyes, two ears, two lips, two feet to do His work in special ways this week? As you share the little bit you have with someone else, God can multiply it in ways you can't imagine. If you don't have food or clothes to share, give a hug or some kind words. Sometime people just need a friend to talk to and play with. Let's ask Jesus to help us see the needs of others.

Closing Prayer

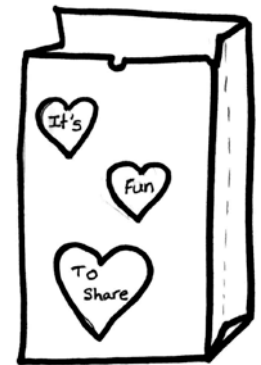
Father, we want to be Your arms and hands. We want to be used by you to be a blessing to others. Help us see the needs of others. Then give us the strength and ability to help meet those needs. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

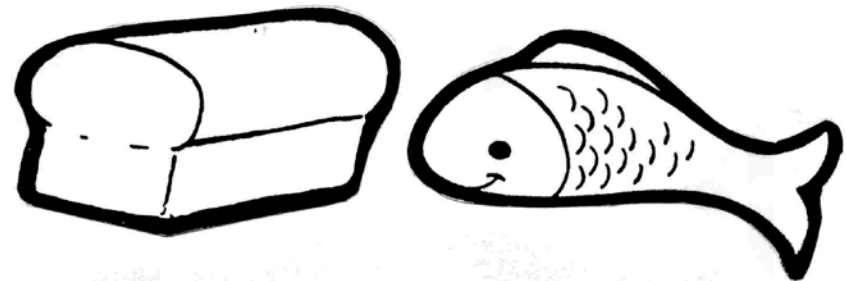
It's Fun To Share Lunch Sacks

Have each child decorate a lunch bag with hearts, ribbons, and so forth. Write on the hearts "It's fun to share." In each sack put 2 cheese fish crackers and 5 soda crackers. Let each child give their sack to someone special.



Take Home Paper

Using the patterns below, draw five loaves and two fishes on take-home papers. Encourage children to record in one loaf or fish each day a way Jesus used them to meet a need.



Game Center**Fish and Bread Tic-Tack-Toe**

1. Cut out strips of paper for the lines of tic-tac-toe (or use yarn).
2. Give one team "fish" pieces; the other team "bread" pieces.
3. When a team correctly answers a question, they can place their marker in a square.
4. The team that gets three in a row across, diagonally or vertically is the winner.

12-Basket Bean Bag Toss

Set out 12 baskets of various shapes and sizes. Number them. Challenge children to toss a bean bag into a basket. Give them the number of Gold Fish snack crackers per the number of the basket.

Or, use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. Why were Jesus and His disciples so tired? (They had spent a lot of time ministering to others and probably hadn't eaten or slept well.)
2. Where were Jesus and His disciples going when they were met by thousands of people? (They wanted to be alone to rest away from the crowds.)
3. Why did the disciples tell Jesus to send the crowds away? (Jesus had been teaching a long time and everyone was tired and hungry.)
4. What did Jesus tell the disciples to do about the hungry crowd? (He told them, "*You give them something to eat.*")

5. How do you think the disciples felt when Jesus told them to feed all those people? (Overwhelmed with the impossible task.)
6. How much money would it have taken to feed all those people? (About 8 month's wages.)
7. How did Jesus tell His disciples to meet the needs of the people? (Go and see how much food was among the people.)
8. Who was the only one who offered to share his food? (A little boy had 5 loaves and 2 fish!)
9. What did Jesus do before He broke the loaves? (He thanked God the Father for the food.)
10. Why is it important to let Jesus use you to meet the needs of others? (You get to be used by the Lord to bless others!)
11. Did people get enough to eat, or only enough to tide them over until they could get home? (They were all filled!)
12. How much leftovers were there? (12 baskets full.)
13. Why didn't Jesus simply make food appear by His power? (He wanted the disciples and the little boy to be part of the miracle; to share in the joy of meeting the needs of so many.)
14. What are some ways you can be used by God to be a blessing to others?

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit
<https://www.FreeChildrensMinistryLessons.com>]

Jesus Walks on Water

(Matthew 14:22-33)

Introduction

In what area of your life do you face the most fears and doubts? Do you ever look at things happening around you and become afraid? [Teacher, discuss difficult situations children may face, such as illness, parents fighting, having to move and change schools, etc.]

Sometimes we get so involved in thinking about our problems that we forget that God can help us. Or, sometimes we look for help in the wrong places. Too often we look to ourselves. We think, “*I can get myself out of this problem.*” That’s never a good idea since Jesus says, “*Without Me you can do nothing*” (John 15:5).

God knows how frightening your troubles can be, and He has the power to solve every one of our problems. He wants you to think about Him in times of trouble. Today we are going to learn how important it is for us to look to Jesus when we are in troubled times and remember that He is with you and can help you.

Opening Prayer

Father, it’s one thing to say that we know You are always with us and that You will always take care of us no matter what happens. But when we are in the middle of a fearsome time, it’s hard for us to not be afraid. This morning, Lord, we want to learn to trust You, even when the situation around us looks hopeless. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear. (Psalm 46:1-2a)

Lesson

The miracle of feeding of the 5,000 happened on the shore of the Sea of Galilee and all the people were caught up in the excitement. So Jesus strongly urged his disciples to go across the Lake to a quiet place where they could rest.

Matthew 14:22-23

Immediately after this, Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat and cross to the other side of the lake, while he sent the people home. (23) After sending them home, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. Night fell while he was there alone.

Seeking time alone with the Father was very important for Jesus. Every day He made a point of getting away to pray and listen to the Father speak to His heart. If Jesus needed to spend time in prayer to the Father, how much more do we need to? Spending time with God in prayer equips us to meet life’s challenges and struggles.

As soon as the boat load of disciples sailed away, Jesus went up on the mountain to pray. But, when the disciples were about four miles out to sea, a fierce storm arose.

Matthew 14:24

Meanwhile, the disciples were in trouble far away from land, for a strong wind had risen, and they were fighting heavy waves.

Sudden storms on the Sea of Galilee were common during certain seasons. The storm was so violent, that in spite of their experience, these skilled fishermen were in danger of going under in their small boat.

Matthew 14:25

About three o’clock in the morning Jesus came toward them, walking on the water.

Although praying on a mountain several miles away, Jesus saw the disciples struggling against the storm and He knew their fear.

How amazing that Jesus could walk on water! Can you imagine Him coming toward the boat on top of the waves as they rolled and tossed in the fierce wind? Jesus is God and has power to do anything. He even has power to forgive your sins. He could even walk on top of a raging, stormy sea!

Matthew 14:26

When the disciples saw him walking on the water, they were terrified. In their fear, they cried out, "It's a ghost!"

The disciples must have been greatly troubled when they saw a figure moving toward them until Jesus spoke.

Matthew 14:27

But Jesus spoke to them at once. "Don't be afraid," he said. "Take courage. I am here!"

Then Peter does an interesting thing...

Matthew 14:28

Then Peter called to him, "Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water."

Peter reacted to Jesus in total faith; he saw Jesus walking on the water and asked Jesus to let him walk on the water, too.

Matthew 14:29

"Yes, come," Jesus said. So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus.

Looking at the waves tossing around him, Peter began to be afraid.

Matthew 14:30

But when he saw the strong wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink. "Save me, Lord!" he shouted.

When Peter looked away from the Lord Jesus and focused on the waves crashing all about him, he became frightened. If Peter had kept looking to the Lord Jesus for help, the crashing waves would not have started to pull him under! There's an important lesson here for us. When you find yourself facing trouble, talk to the Lord Jesus about it. Ask God to help you think about Him instead of the problem.

When Peter took his eyes off of the Lord, he began to sink. And he cried out to the Lord for help. He said, "*Lord, save me!*"

Matthew 14:31

Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. "You have so little faith," Jesus said. "Why did you doubt me?"

Jesus didn't make the storm stop; He simply reached out and caught hold of Peter and calmed his fears. God may not make your problem go away, either. There may be things He wants you to learn from your difficulty. But He promises to be with you and to help you go through the problem. He can help you not to be worried. The Lord heard Peter's cry for help and saved him from drowning.

Matthew 14:32-33

When they climbed back into the boat, the wind stopped. (33) Then the disciples worshiped him. "You really are the Son of God!" they exclaimed.

Once he looked to Jesus, Peter found himself safe again in the boat and then the wind stopped.

The Bible says we can expect to have troubles in our lives (John 16:33). At times those problems may seem to crash all around you, like waves in a storm. If you keep your mind focused on the difficulty, you become discouraged and want to give up. It's not easy to keep going through the hard times in your life. But as you look to God for help, that is, as you get in the boat with Jesus, He will calm the storms of your life. We need to stay in the boat with Jesus, too.

Closing Prayer

Thank You, Father, that You are with us always. Help us to think about You and Your great power instead of worrying about our own problems. Help me to trust You to take care of my problems. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Game Center

Act out the story

This lesson is a great one for the children to reenact. Bring in some dress up clothes. Build a "boat" with your chairs and tables. Let the children be creative! Some of the kids can be the "storm" blowing in.

Or, use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. What did Jesus do as soon as the boat load of disciples sailed away? (He went up on a hill to pray.)
2. Why is it important for us to spend a quiet time every day praying to God? (It equips us to meet life's challenges and struggles.)
3. When the disciples were about four miles out to sea, what happened? (A fierce storm arose.)
4. What would you have thought if you saw someone coming to you walking on the water in the middle of a raging, stormy sea? How did the disciples react? (They thought it was a ghost!)
5. What unusual thing did Peter do when Jesus came walking on the water? (He asked the Lord to command him to come out walking on the water, too.)

6. What happened to Peter as he was walking on the water? (He looked at the waves tossing around him and began to be afraid.)
7. What did Jesus do as soon as Peter cried out for help? (He reached out His hand and caught hold of Peter, calming his fears.)
8. What important lesson do we learn from Peter's experience? (When we find ourselves facing trouble, ask God to help us think about Him instead of our problem.)
9. When did Jesus stop the storm? (As soon as Peter got in the boat with Jesus.)
10. Why didn't Jesus stop the storm as soon as Peter cried out for help? (Jesus wanted Peter to learn an important lesson from the fearsome experience.)
11. Are troubles in life a sign that we've been bad? (No! The Bible says we can expect troubles in our lives. God uses them to make us into the kinds of people He wants us to be.)
12. What important lesson did you learn this morning? (If we keep our mind focused on our difficulties, we become discouraged and want to give up. But as we look to God for help, He will calm the storms of our lives.)

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit <https://www.FreeChildrensMinistryLessons.com>]

Jesus Walks on Water

(Matthew 14:22-33)

Splash! Splash! Help! A mighty storm rocked the disciples' boat. And where was Jesus?

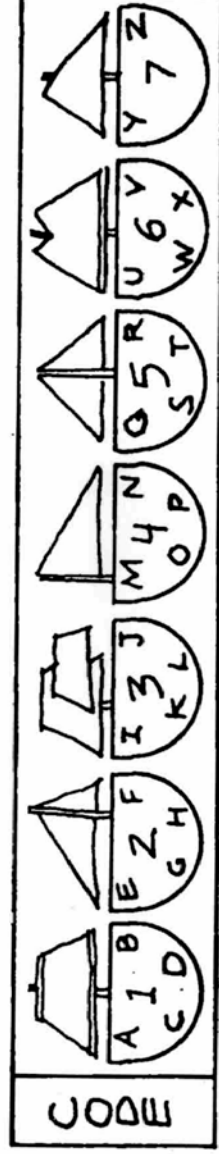
Suddenly, Jesus came out to the disciples. He was walking on the water. He walked right up to the boat. "It's a ghost!" yelled the scared disciples.

Boldly, Peter called out, “Lord, if it’s You, tell me to come to You on the water.”

Jesus said, "Come."

Peter walked on the water too. But the waves splashed him. The wind howled around him. In his fear, he started to sink. Jesus rescued Peter and took him back to the boat.

To see what the disciples said after Jesus and Peter climbed in the boat, complete the puzzle below. Match the numbers in the boats, then put the letter on the blank that matches the corner that's been darkened. The first word has been done for you.



4	2	9	2	5	4	2	5
4	2	9	2	5	4	2	5

6 2 5 2 3 4 5 2 1 4 1 5

6 4 5 2 3 4 2 1 3 2 4

5	1	7	3	4	2	5	5	5	6	3	7
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7 4 9 1 5 2 2 5 2 5 4 4

Matthew 14:33 (NIV)

Rich Young Ruler

(Mark 10:17-27)

Introduction

If you had lots of money and could get anything you wanted, what would you buy? Can you think of something that you could never buy, even if you had all the money in the world? What are some gifts God gives to people who trust him? (Help to do what's right, courage, peace, love, forgiveness.) How much money does it take to buy love or forgiveness? Why might someone think that money is the most valuable thing to have? Why is the gift of forgiveness more important than money?

The Bible tells of a young man who had lots of money and owned many things, but he wanted something that all his money couldn't buy.

Opening Prayer

Father, we come before You this morning, expecting to learn. I pray that none of us will leave this room without coming into a deeper understanding of Your ways, dear Lord. Help us to hear Your voice with the ears of our hearts. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. (James 2:10)

Lesson

In the later part of Jesus' ministry, he went out into the region of Perea, east of Jericho, on the other side of the Jordan River. [Teacher, point this out on the map.]

One day a young man ran to Jesus and knelt before Him and asked a very important question.

Mark 10:17

As Jesus was starting out on his way to Jerusalem, a man came running up to him, knelt down, and asked, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Because this young man ran to get to Jesus and knelt before Him without shame, we know this young man had an earnest desire to learn. But note that he thought he had to do some "good" works (good deeds) to receive eternal life.

Instead of answering his question, Jesus asked the young man why he called Him "good" since only God Himself is good.

Mark 10:18

"Why do you call me good?" Jesus asked. "Only God is truly good."

The term *good* refers to perfection. Jesus was reacting to being called "*perfect*" by someone who had no awareness of His divine nature. Jesus was testing this man; He knew that the man had no idea Who he was speaking to—the creator of the universe!

Mark 10:19

But to answer your question, you know the commandments: 'You must not murder. You must not commit adultery. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely. You must not cheat anyone. Honor your father and mother.'"

Jesus reviewed the commandments for the young man. He listed the laws given by God to Moses regarding our relationships with others.

Mark 10:20

"Teacher," the man replied, "I've obeyed all these commandments since I was young."

The young man said he had kept all these commands. This fellow was probably a good person who tried to keep all of God's commandments. Yet he still sensed that something was missing.

The truth is that no one, except the perfect Lord Jesus, ever kept all of God's commandments.

God gave us His commandments to show us how sinful we are. Sin is breaking God's rules, and all of us do that. [Teacher, ask the children to give examples of commandments they sometimes break.] No one had to teach you to do wrong things. You were born wanting to do things your own way.

The Bible says the punishment for your sin is to be separated from God forever. Even the few commandments you might be able to keep are not enough to earn you eternal life with God (James 2:10, *For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all*). He says that the very best things that you do are worthless because of the sinfulness inside you (Isaiah 64:6, *All our righteousness are like filthy rags*.) The young man talking to Jesus had worked hard at trying to keep God's commandments. Yet even he knew it just wasn't enough. Jesus wanted him to face that. But instead of admitting he had sinned, he wanted Jesus to give him something else he could do to earn eternal life.

Mark 10:21

Looking at the man, Jesus felt genuine love for him. "There is still one thing you haven't done," he told him. "Go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

Jesus saw that this young man was sincere, but that he was also trying to get to God his own way. Even though Jesus knew all about the sinfulness in the young man's heart, He still loved him. Jesus, God the Son, knows all about you, too. He knows about the sinfulness born in your heart, but still He loves you. Imagine that the One who created all things, the holy God Himself, knows and loves you! You are precious to Him (Psalm 139:17, *How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!*) Because He loves you, the Lord wants you to spend all eternity with Him. But believing on Jesus is the only way to receive eternal life. How Jesus longed for this young man to believe on Him!

Jesus had told this young man to sell everything and give the money to the poor, and follow Him. The man couldn't bring himself to do it.

Mark 10:22

At this the man's face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

Jesus was trying to show this rich man that his love for money made him a sinner – he was not obeying God's commandments after all. Which commandment wasn't he keeping? [Teacher, let the children look at the poster of the 10 Commandments and tell which one they think it was: "*Do not covet*"; also, "*Do not have any idols*." The man obviously idolized his money.]

The young man was depending on his wealth, not on God's provision. So he showed that he lacked real faith in God. Unwilling to give up his great riches, the young man would not admit his sin; he sadly walked away from Jesus.

Jesus then turned to his disciples...

Mark 10:23

Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God!"

Jesus tells his disciples that it's hard for people who trust in riches to realize their need for God. Most people of Jesus' day thought that earthy riches were a sign of God's blessing on their lives. Jesus wanted to show His disciples that wealth could actually be a stumbling block to getting God's blessings.

Mark 10:24-25

This amazed them. But Jesus said again, "Dear children, it is very hard to enter the Kingdom of God. (25) In fact, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God!"

Jesus used a word picture to illustrate His point. [Teacher, show the children a needle and thread.]

The rich young man was seeking eternal life through all of the good things he was doing. But deep in his heart, he valued his riches more than his relationship with God. It wasn't that having riches is wrong. But his riches had blinded him to his real need: he had to admit he was a sinner before he could have eternal life. Eternal life does not depend on what a person does, but rather on his willingness to believe God.

Not long after this discussion, Jesus died on a cross, giving His life's blood as payment for sin. Since He was the perfect, sinless Son of God, He was not paying for His own sin, but for yours and mine. The Lord Jesus willingly suffered and died so that you and I would never have to pay for our own sin.

Admitting your sin and believing on Jesus is the only way you can receive eternal life. Don't fool yourself into thinking that you can get to heaven by doing good works. The rich young man wanted eternal life, but he allowed the importance of his riches to keep him from admitting his need. He kept trying to earn eternal life through his good works. Jesus explained that the young man's efforts would do him no good.

Mark 10:26

The disciples were astounded. "Then who in the world can be saved?" they asked.

The disciples were amazed to think that wealth wasn't a sign of God's special blessing on a person. They were thinking, "*If a rich man can't get to heaven, who can?*"

Mark 10:27

Jesus looked at them intently and said, "Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But not with God. Everything is possible with God."

Jesus was telling the disciples that no one can earn eternal life by his good deeds; each of us must admit our sinfulness and turn to Jesus for salvation. Jesus is the only One who has the power to forgive your sins and give you eternal life.

If you know that you have sinned and you believe that the Lord Jesus died on the cross to pay for your sins, you can know that you have eternal life today. (1John 5:13 says, *These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.*)

Closing Prayer

Thank you, Jesus that we can have confidence in what You did for us on the cross. You paid for our sins completely! And You proved that You are God by rising again from the dead and ascending into heaven where you are right now. We look forward to seeing You face-to-face one day soon. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Game Center

Choose one of the following game ideas:

It's not always easy to find your way to heaven:

Line up four adult-sized folding chairs side-by-side with the seats all facing the same direction. This will create a tunnel, which represents the eye of the needle, between the legs of the chairs.

Have children line up and take turns crawling through the eye of the needle. They'll probably end up on their bellies, wiggling through the chairs. Make sure the second child doesn't start through the tunnel until the first child is all the way through. If you have more than eight children, set up two tunnels for them to crawl through.

For extra fun, turn this game into a relay race. Make two tunnels, and have children form two teams. The winning team is the first one

whose members have all crawled through the eye of the needle. If you have too small a class for two teams, time the children individually. The child with the best time wins.

Bean Bag Toss Game:

Cut shapes out of a box and label them "Who," "What," "When," "Where," and "Why." Set box with cut-out shapes on top, 3 to 5 feet from throw line. Give each child two tries to get the bean bag through a shape. The child draws a question written on a corresponding shape. If the child does not know the answer, he or she may ask another child for help.

Use the following questions:

1. Who asked Jesus a question? (Vr. 17 a rich young ruler.)
2. Who did Jesus say is "good"? (Vr. 18) only God.)
3. Who did Jesus tell the rich, young ruler to give to? (Vr. 21 to the poor.)
4. What did the ruler ask Jesus? (Vr. 17 what must I do to inherit eternal life?)
5. What did Jesus ask the rich, young ruler to sell? (Vr. 21 all your possessions.)
6. What did Jesus say was easier for a camel to go through? (Vr 25 eye of a needle.)
7. When did the rich, young ruler keep all the commandments? (Vr. 20 since he was young.)
8. When did Jesus say the rich, young ruler would have treasure in heaven? (Vr. 21 when he sold all his possessions and gave all the money to the poor.)

9. When did the ruler become very sad? (Vr. 22 when Jesus told him to give all his money to the poor.)
10. Where do you find the commandments Jesus quoted in Vr. 19? (In the Bible, in Exodus 20.)
11. Where did Jesus say the rich, young ruler would have treasure? (Vr. 21 in heaven.)
12. Where is it hard for a rich man to enter? (Vr. 25 kingdom of God.)
13. Why did the rich, young ruler ask Jesus a question? (Vr. 17 he wanted to know how to get eternal life.)
14. Why did the rich, young ruler become very sad when Jesus told him to sell everything? (Vr. 22 he had many possessions.)
15. Why do you think Jesus said it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God? (Because you are depending on your material wealth instead of God.)

Or, use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. One day a young man ran to Jesus, knelt before Him and asked him a question. What was that question? (*"What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"*)
2. How did this young man think a person got to heaven? (By doing good works, like keeping the commandments.)
3. Had the rich young man kept all of God's commandments perfectly? Which one had the man not kept? (*"Do not covet"* and also, *"Do not have any idols."* The man obviously idolized his money.)
4. What is the only way to receive eternal life? (By believing on what Jesus did for us all on the cross.)

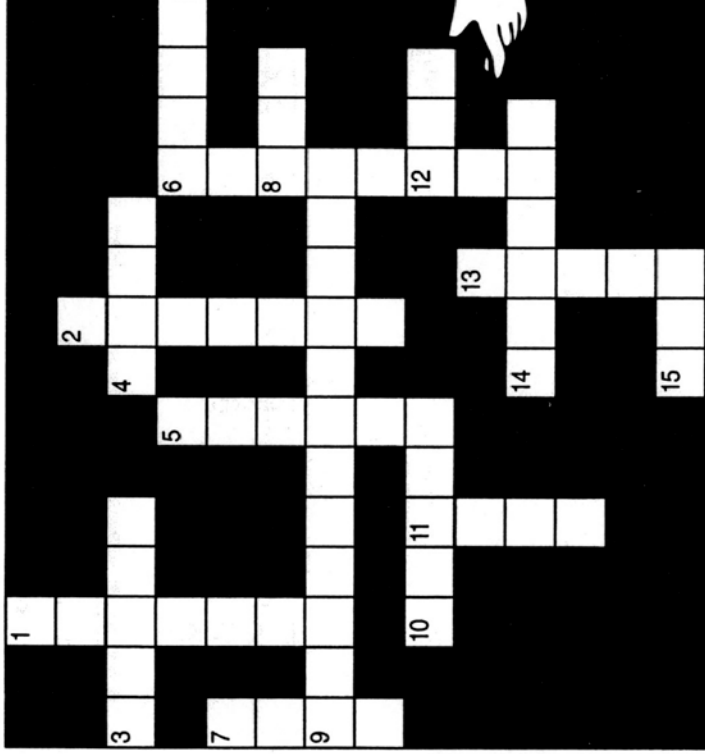
5. What did Jesus tell this young man to do? (*"Sell whatever you have and give to the poor."*)
6. What did Jesus mean by telling the rich young man to sell everything and give all the money away to the poor? (To get rid of his love of money and his trust in riches because it was blocking his receipt of all that God has for him.)
7. Does Jesus expect you or your parents to sell everything and give all the money away to the poor? (No, but He wants us to be willing to do anything God asked, even that.)
8. Why do you think it's hard for rich people to get into heaven? (They depend on their money and not on God's provision.)
9. Is it wrong to have money? Why or why not? (No, it's not wrong to have money; it's wrong to depend on your money.)
10. Why do you think Jesus used the image of a camel going through the eye of a needle to illustrate his point? (Because it's nearly impossible for someone who is banking on his riches to receive eternal life from God.)
11. What other kinds of things could make it hard for us to reach heaven? (Good looks, power, prestige, connections, knowledge, possessions...)
12. What is the most important thing in life? (Our relationship with Jesus.)

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit
<https://www.FreeChildrensMinistryLessons.com>]

The Rich Young Ruler

Complete the puzzle on the story found in Luke 18:18-27 about the rich, young ruler with the words in the box.

kingdom	rich	ruler	teacher	life	God	commandments
sad	possible	murder	honor	boy	saved	sell poor heaven



A certain 10A _____ asked him, "Good 2D _____, what must I do to inherit eternal 11D _____?"

"Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good except 15A _____ alone. You know the 9A _____: 'Do not commit adultery, do not 5D _____, do not steal, do not give false testimony, 3A _____ your father and mother.'"

"All these I have kept since I was a 12A _____," he said.

When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "You still lack one thing. 4A _____ everything you have and give to the 6A _____, and you will have treasure in 14A _____. Then come, follow me."

When he heard this, he became very 8A _____, because he was a man of great wealth. Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard is it for the 7D _____ to enter the 1D _____ of God!"

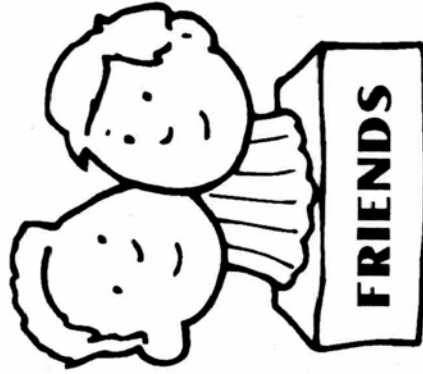
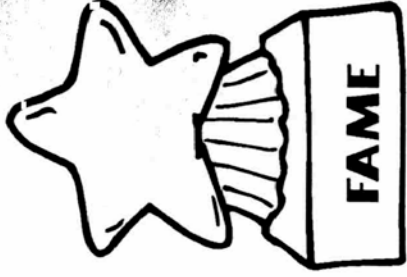
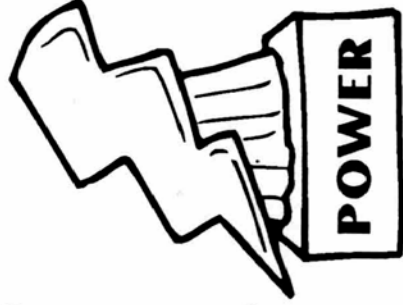
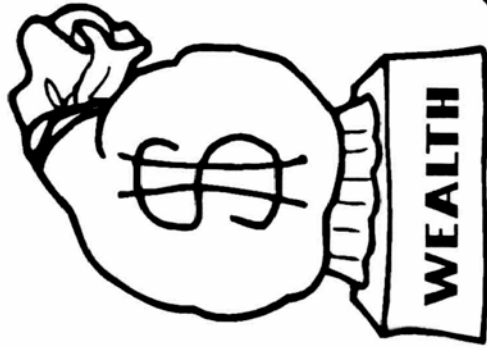
Those who heard this asked, "Who then can be 13D _____?"

Jesus replied, "What is impossible with men is 6D _____ with God."

Giving God First Place

An idol doesn't have to be a scary looking statue. Any person or thing that we put before God in our lives is an idol. Which drawing below represents the rich, young ruler's idol?

Use the code to see which idol he put first in his life.



A		C	E	H	L	M	N	T	W	F
1	9	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	

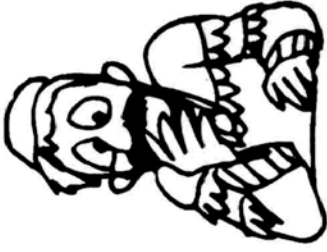
E x L	N ÷ H	T - N	A + H	W - A	N ÷ E
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Who Said It?

Draw a line from each quote to the person or people who said it. If you need help, read the story of the rich, young ruler in Luke 18:18-27.



Jesus



The Young Ruler



The Crowd

1.
What must I do to
inherit eternal life?

3.
You know the
commandments: do not
commit adultery, do not
murder, do not steal,
do not give false testimony,
honor your father
and mother.

5.
Sell everything
you have and give
to the poor.

9.
What is impossible
with men is possible
with God.

8.
Who then can
be saved?

7.
How hard it is for
the rich to enter the
kingdom of God!

2.
Why do you call
me good?

4.
All these things
I have kept since
I was a boy.

6.
Come follow
me.

Blind Bartimaeus

(Mark 10:46-52)

Introduction

[Teacher, ask children to close their eyes. After discussing what they see (darkness), have them open their eyes.] Have you ever thought what it would be like not to be able to see — to be in darkness all the time?

Today our Bible lesson is about a man named Bartimaeus. He could not see anything. To him the world was always darker than the darkest night, for he was blind! There was no hope that Bartimaeus would ever see, until one day...

Opening Prayer

Father, open the eyes of our hearts this morning, I pray, so that we might see Your wonderful ways. We want to fall more in love with You, dear Lord, so that nothing else matters to us as much as You do. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Memory Verse

Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law. (Psalm 119:18)

Lesson

In the later years of His ministry, Jesus and his disciples spent a lot of time down in the area called Judea. One day they were leaving the city of Jericho to go up to Jerusalem, when they met a blind man named Bartimaeus.

Mark 10:46

Then they reached Jericho, and as Jesus and his disciples left town, a large crowd followed him. A blind beggar named Bartimaeus (son of Timaeus) was sitting beside the road.

Because Bartimaeus was blind, he wasn't able to have a job. Everyday Bartimaeus had to sit along the side of a road and beg for food, much like the homeless people we see along the side of the road today.

Bartimaeus was in total darkness because he could not see with his eyes. But he had a much greater problem. Bartimaeus had darkness in his heart because of sin. You and I are also born with sinful hearts. God says that living in sin is like being in darkness because we are apart from Him and cannot find our way to Him; sin has blinded us from seeing the truth about ourselves and about God. (1 Corinthians 2:14, *The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*)

What is sin? Sin is anything that does not please God. God's Word says that the wrong things people do cause them to love darkness rather than light (John 3:19, *And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*).

Have you ever noticed that when people do things they know are wrong, they try to hide them, or do them secretly. Have you ever tried to hide one of your sins? For example, have you ever hidden something you broke so no one will find out? Or, have you ever said it wasn't you that did something naughty, when it really was? You were trying to hide one of your sins.

God says that all sin must be punished; the punishment is to be forever separated from God in a place of darkness. Without the Lord Jesus you are in the darkness of sin. It is a much greater problem than being in darkness like blind Bartimaeus.

Mark 10:47

When Bartimaeus heard that Jesus of Nazareth was nearby, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

The Jews had been waiting for the coming Messiah and they knew that he would be from the family line of David. So, by calling out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me," it is evident that Bartimaeus recognized Jesus as the promised Messiah. No doubt Bartimaeus had heard reports that Jesus restored sight and desperately wanted to be healed.

Mark 10:48-49

"Be quiet!" many of the people yelled at him. But he only shouted louder, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" (49) When Jesus heard him, he stopped and said, "Tell him to come here." So they called the blind man. "Cheer up," they said. "Come on, he's calling you!"

Jesus knew Bartimaeus was there, in that great crowd of people, needing His help. And Jesus knows what you need, too.

He made each one of us. He knows all about you — the color of your eyes and if you're short or tall. He also knows about your sinful heart; nothing is hidden from Him because Jesus is God. He loves you just as much as He loved Bartimaeus.

At first the crowd tried to make Bartimaeus be quiet, but he called out all the louder! Then, when Jesus called for Bartimaeus, the crowd encouraged him by telling him to be brave and get up and go to Jesus.

Mark 10:50

Bartimaeus threw aside his coat, jumped up, and came to Jesus.

Bartimaeus jumped up, threw his cloak aside, and came to Jesus. Even though he was blind, Bartimaeus went right to Jesus.

Mark 10:51

"What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked. "My Rabbi," the blind man said, "I want to see!"

Jesus was the only One who had the power to give Bartimaeus his eyesight. But more than that He was the only One who could take away the darkness of sin in Bartimaeus's heart.

Just a few days after passing through Jericho, the Lord Jesus would die on the cross, taking the punishment for the sins of the whole world. You and I know today that Jesus died for our sins, giving His precious blood. Jesus didn't deserve to die because He had no sin at all. The Bible says that by dying, the Lord "*delivered us from the power of darkness...through His blood*" (Colossians 1:13, 14). Jesus died and was buried, but He came alive again. He lives today to take the darkness of sin from your heart. All you must do is to call on Him to forgive you. Jesus wanted to take away the darkness of sin from Bartimaeus's heart; He was the only One with the power to give Bartimaeus his eyesight.

Bartimaeus called Jesus "Rabbi." That means "*My Great One*" or "*My Lord, my Master*." That shows that Bartimaeus had faith. He was confident in Jesus' ability to heal his blindness and give him the gift of sight.

Mark 10:52

And Jesus said to him, "Go, for your faith has healed you." Instantly the man could see, and he followed Jesus down the road.

The Lord saw the faith in the heart of Bartimaeus. Because he believed, Bartimaeus was not only healed from physical darkness; he was delivered from spiritual darkness as well. He was saved. Bartimaeus was saved both from his blindness and from the darkness of sin.

Closing Prayer

Thank You, Jesus, for taking away the darkness of our sin. We praise you for giving our eyes spiritual light so that we may see the path to eternal life with You in Heaven. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Game Center

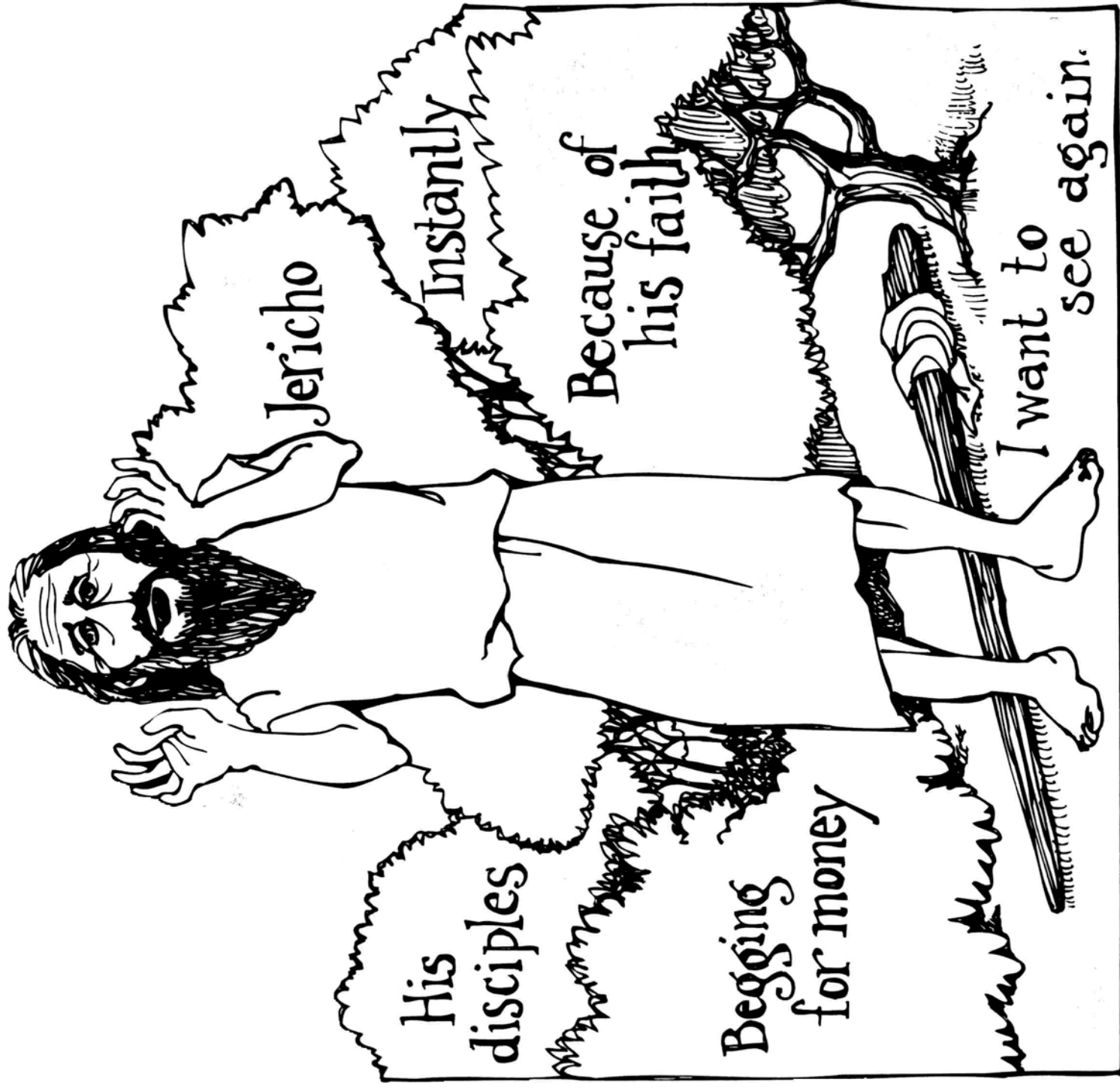
Use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. Who did Jesus and His disciples meet along the road from Jericho to Jerusalem? (Bartimaeus.)
2. What was wrong with Bartimaeus? (He was blind)
3. In what two ways was Bartimaeus in total darkness? (He was physically blind and He was spiritually blind.)
4. What was Bartimaeus' greater problem: the fact that he could not see with his eyes or the fact that he had darkness in his heart because of sin? (Darkness in his heart was a much greater problem.)
5. Why does God say that living in sin is like being in darkness? (Because when we are in sin, we are separated from Jesus, the Light of the World. Jesus gives us spiritual insight to the things of God.)
6. What does the Bible mean when it says the wrong things people do cause them to love darkness rather than light? (Sinners want to hide their wrong doings.)
7. Why did Bartimaeus call Jesus, the Son of David? (The Israelites knew that the Messiah would be from the family line of David.)
8. How did he learn about Jesus if he couldn't see him? (By listening.)
9. Did he believe that Jesus could help him to see? (Yes)
10. How did Jesus know that Bartimaeus needed help? (Bartimaeus asked for help)
11. In what two ways did Jesus heal Bartimaeus? (Physically and spiritually.)
12. What did Bartimaeus do after Jesus healed him? (He followed Jesus on the road to Jerusalem.)

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit
<https://www.FreeChildrensMinistryLessons.com>]

Who? What? Where? When?

When you want something very much, do you keep asking and asking? That's what Bartimaeus did. And he finally got what he wanted. Write the correct question for each of these answers from Bartimaeus' story. If you need help, read Mark 10:46-52.



The Good Shepherd

(John 10:1-18, 27)

Introduction

When Jesus lived on earth, many of His countrymen kept sheep. Those who looked after the sheep were called *shepherds*.

Ask: What do you know about shepherds? [Let the children respond.]

Being a shepherd is a lot of hard work. Sheep do not just take care of themselves. They need a shepherd to provide food, water, care, guidance, protection, and comfort to them.

Some shepherds took very good care of their sheep because they owned them. Their animals ate well; they grazed and slept in safety.

Other shepherds were nothing but hired hands who did not take good care of their sheep because they did not own them. When danger came, those shepherds would run away and leave the sheep unprotected.

The Bible tells us Jesus calls Himself the “Good Shepherd”, and He speaks of us who have made Him our Lord as His “sheep”.

As our Good Shepherd, Jesus makes a promise that He will provide us with everything we need (Psalm 23). As a shepherd protects his sheep from wolves, Jesus protects us from our enemy, the Devil, who is seeking to devour us (1 Peter 5:8). The Lord loves His “sheep.”

Opening Prayer

Father, teach us today what it means that You are the shepherd of our souls. We want to learn to recognize Your voice so that we can follow You and obey Your commands. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8)

Lesson

Let’s talk about sheep and how we are like them. [As you discuss the characteristics of sheep, write these talking points on the white board.]

Sheep are dirty and can’t get clean on their own

Sheep aren’t the cleanest of animals. They are smelly and dirty. Every time they lay down, they get grass and burs and dirt caught up in their wool. Then, there are types of bugs that like to live in their wool, especially around their eyes. They can’t clean themselves; if someone doesn’t get rid of these bugs, sheep can go blind.

Sheep need a shepherd to keep them clean.

Ask: In what way are we dirty and can’t clean ourselves?

We, too, are full of dirty sin. We need Jesus, the Good Shepherd, to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). And, we can be assured that we can come to Him over and over again and He will keep on cleaning us!

Sheep are dumb and don’t think for themselves

Sheep don’t think for themselves. They just dumbly follow other sheep without thinking where they are going. They will even follow another sheep right over the edge of a cliff without another thought.

Sheep need a shepherd to help them make right choices.

Ask: In what way can people be like sheep, and not think for themselves?

We, too, can make wrong choices instead of trusting and following Jesus.

Some people follow the crowd without even thinking! What others say or do might seem right or fun, but sometimes people are so eager to fit in with the crowd, and be liked by others, that they do or say things without even thinking about it.

Whenever you make a decision about something to say, or do, or believe, ask Jesus to help you decide if it’s right!

Sheep are directionless and can easily get lost

Sheep are directionally challenged. If they wander from the flock, they can easily get lost unless the shepherd comes to find them. **Sheep need a shepherd to lead them and guide them.**

Ask: In what ways do we tend to wander away from the flock?

We, too, can easily get lost. When we stop going to church and spending time with other Christians, it's hard for us to live like Jesus wants us to.

Ask: What does our Good Shepherd do with us when we start to wander away from Him? He comes after us and carries us back to the fold. And, as we continue to put our trust in Him, He will direct our paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6) And He will keep us from getting separated from the flock.

Sheep are defenseless

If the shepherd doesn't come after the lost sheep, he can be easily attacked by lions or bears or wolves. And, sheep have no way to defend themselves or run away.

Sheep need a shepherd to defend them from predators.

When we are separated from the flock; that is, when we stop coming to Sunday school and keeping company with other believers, we can be easily attacked by the enemy of our souls. There is nothing we can do to protect ourselves. Without our Good Shepherd we will die. The wolves, or temptations and sin, come in and threaten to kill us.

But, praise God, Jesus, our Good Shepherd, defeated our enemy when He went to the cross (Col 2:15). He paid for our sins with His life so that we may have eternal life with God.

Sheep need a good shepherd

Did you know that if a sheep falls down and ends up on its back, cast down, it can't get up again on its own? It will just lay there, flailing its

little legs, until either someone helps them up, or they die. **Sheep need a shepherd to set them right and keep watch over them.**

When we get into a place in life where we feel like we are flat on our backs, either through our own sins or through tough times, we can't save ourselves. We are totally dependent on Jesus, our Good Shepherd, to save us, to lead us, and to keep us clean.

Jesus lays down his life for the sheep

Turn with me to the book of John, chapter 10.

John 10:11

*"I am **the good shepherd**. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep.*

When Jesus said, "*I am the Good Shepherd*," He wasn't talking about herding sheep! Jesus was saying that just as a shepherd cares for his sheep, He cares for us!

Verse 11 says, "*The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.*" In fact, this is so important that Jesus tells us 5 times in this passage that He laid down His life for His sheep. (Look ahead at verse 17-18.)

John 10:17-18

"The Father loves me because I sacrifice my life so I may take it back again. (18) No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded."

Notice that Jesus was in complete control of both His death and His resurrection! His life wasn't taken from Him; He purposely gave up His life for the sake of the sheep.

A good shepherd is willing to do anything to save his sheep from danger — even if he has to give up his own life. Since Jesus, your Good Shepherd, gave His life on the cross to pay for your sin, you can surely trust Him to stay with you throughout your life, protecting you

and supplying all your needs. He died so we would not have to; He died so that we can live eternally with Him in heaven.

John 10:12-13

*A hired hand will run when he sees a **wolf** coming. He will abandon the sheep because they don't belong to him and he isn't their shepherd. And so, the wolf attacks them and scatters the flock. (13) The hired hand runs away because he's working only for the money and doesn't really care about the sheep.*

In verse 12-13, Jesus goes on to say that someone who has just been hired to watch over the sheep, won't take good care of the sheep. When he sees danger coming, he doesn't stick around to fight off the wolves that come to kill and eat the sheep. He abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flocks and scatters them. The hired hand is not committed to the flock. The sheep do not belong to him. He has no personal interest in the flock. They are only working for the money.

But Jesus, our Good Shepherd, does own us. He loves us so much, He paid for us with His blood on the cross. He gave His life to save us from the wolves! As a shepherd protects his sheep from wolves, Jesus protects us from our enemy, the Devil, who is seeking to devour us. (See verse for today.)

Ask: Who or what are the wolves in our life? (Temptations to sin.)

Jesus knows his sheep

John 10:14-15

"I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me, (15) just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep.

Verse 14 says, the Good Shepherd knows His own sheep, and they know Him. Look back at verse 3-5:

John 10:3-5

The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep recognize his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. (4) After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice. (5) They won't follow a stranger; they will run from him because they don't know his voice."

At nighttime, many different shepherds would herd their sheep into a sheep pen to bed them down in safety. In the morning, each shepherd would call his sheep by name and they would come to their shepherd who would lead them out to pasture for the day.

Wow! As big and awesome a God as He is, our Good Shepherd, knows us all personally by name as if you were His only one. What a wonderful thing this is. He knows us each so well, He knows how many hairs are on your head!

Look ahead at verse 27:

John 10:27

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

Even in the pitch black of night, they will hear their shepherd's voice and come to him.

Jesus says that as His sheep, we can know and recognize His voice as our Shepherd. How is that possible? [Hold up the Bible.] We become familiar with His voice as we read His Word. And as we become familiar with it, we'll follow Him as a sheep follows its shepherd!

Jesus has other sheep

John 10:16

I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock with one shepherd.

Finally, in verse 16, Jesus tells us that He has other sheep that will be brought together as one flock. The Pharisees, who were listening to Jesus, thought that the Jews were the only ones in the whole world that were going to go to heaven. But Jesus came to die for the sins of the whole world (John 3:16). God had chosen the Jewish people to be His messengers of the Good News. But they had missed the point. Jesus wants everyone be to a sheep in His sheepfold.

One more thing about sheep. Each shepherd has his own distinctive earmark which he cuts into an ear of each of his sheep. That way, even at a distance it is easy to tell which sheep belong to him.

Jesus doesn't want to put an earmark on your ear, but He does want to put His mark on your heart. All the wonderful benefits of the Good Shepherd, can only be yours if you become part of His flock.

Once you become one of Jesus' sheep, you can truly say, "*The Lord is MY shepherd!*"

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for being our Good Shepherd and for laying Your life down for us. We can rest safely, knowing that You are protecting us from anything that could harm us or lead us away from You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Game Center

"Sheep Hear My Voice" Game

- Pair everyone up.
- Blindfold one person from each pair. These are the "sheep". Have them stand in the middle of the room.
- Scatter up the others and have them stand at the edge of the room. These are the "shepherds".

- Ask all the sheep to spin around 3 times on the spot in the middle of the room.
- On "Go", the shepherd is to stay put at the edge of the room and call out to their respective sheep by name and say, "*I am the Good Shepherd, come to me*". Once their sheep hears their voice, the shepherd is to give his sheep instructions on how to find him.
- The first pair of shepherd and sheep to reunite wins.
- Switch roles and repeat.

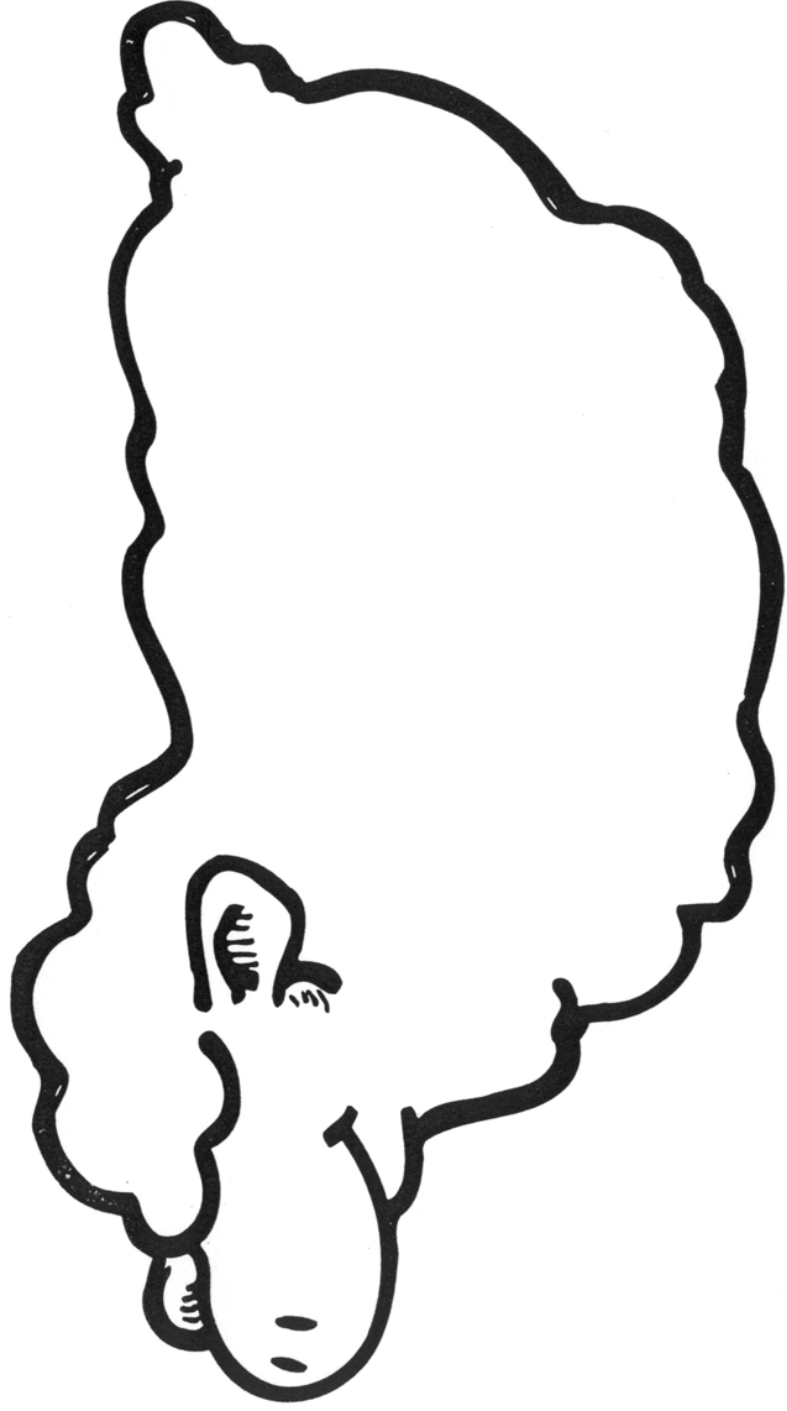
Or, use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. When Jesus said, "*I am the good shepherd*" what does that tell you about God? (He protects us from our enemy — the Devil; He watches over us, and provides for our spiritual needs.)
2. What types of jobs does a shepherd do for the sheep? (Provides food, water, care, guidance, protection and watching over, ownership, management, and comfort to those in their care.)
3. How is Jesus like a Good Shepherd? (He was willing to even lay down His life for us so that we could be found spiritually.)
4. In what way do you get dirty and can't clean yourself? (Sin makes us spiritually "dirty." We need our Good Shepherd to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9.)
5. In what way do people, like sheep, not think for themselves? (We can dumbly follow the crowd and make wrong choices without thinking about what we are doing.)
6. What causes people to wander away from God's sheepfold? (We can get distracted by the things of this world and stop following Jesus.)
7. What can happen to us if we wander away from God's fold? (We can be easily attacked by the enemy of our souls.)

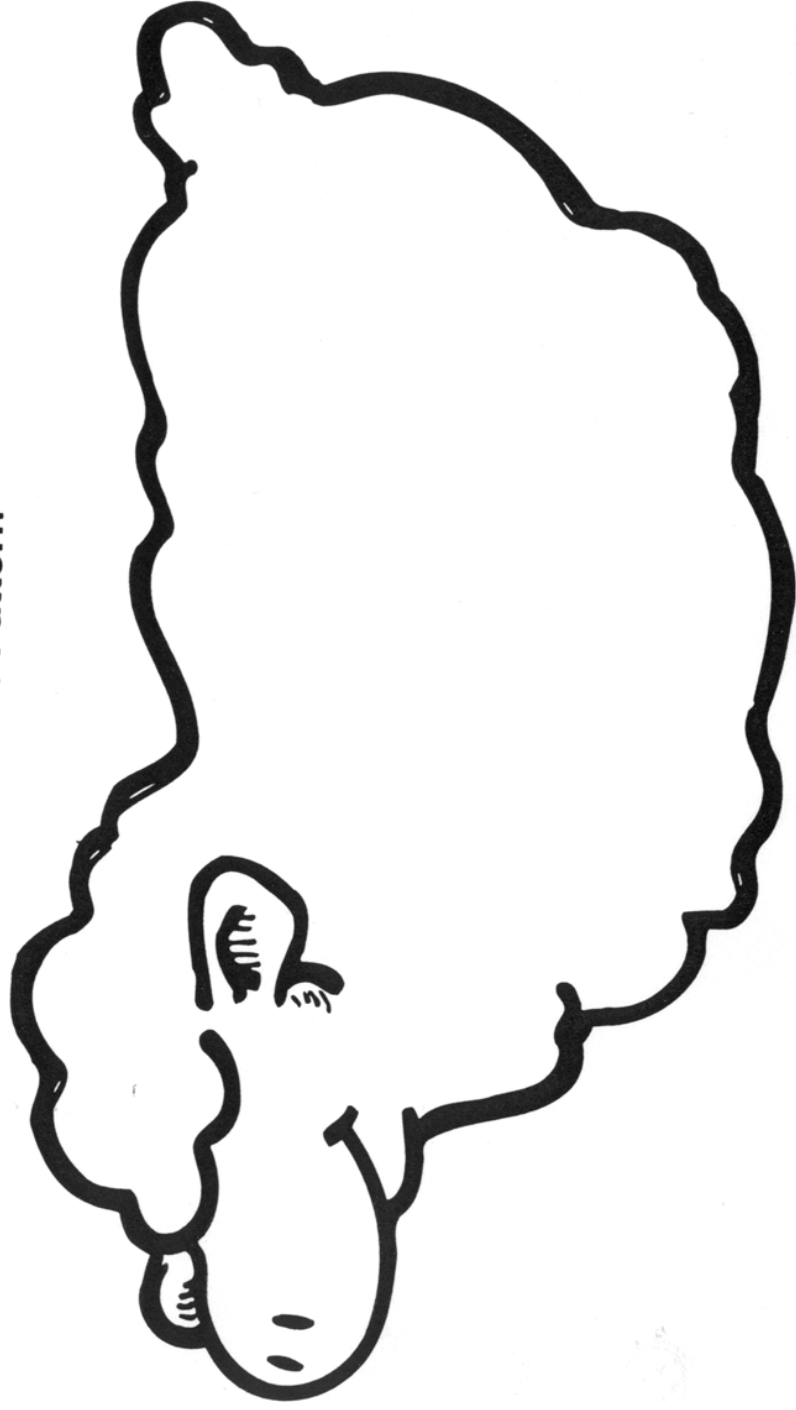
8. How can we keep ourselves from wandering away from our Good Shepherd? (Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. Proverbs 3:5-6)
9. What does it mean that a sheep is cast down? (He has fallen on his back and can't get up.)
10. Why is a shepherd who owns the sheep a better shepherd than one that is simply hired to look after them? (A hired hand will not protect the sheep with his own life.)
11. In what way did our Good Shepherd purchase us? (He laid down His life for ours. He gave His life on the cross to pay for our sins.)
12. When Jesus said He had other sheep in verse 16, who was He referring to? (The Gentiles.)
13. Why is it important to learn to recognize the Good Shepherd's voice? (So that we can follow Him and stay where we can be fed and cared for.)
14. How can you get familiar with the Good Shepherd's voice? (Read His word and talk to Him regularly.)

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Lamb Pattern



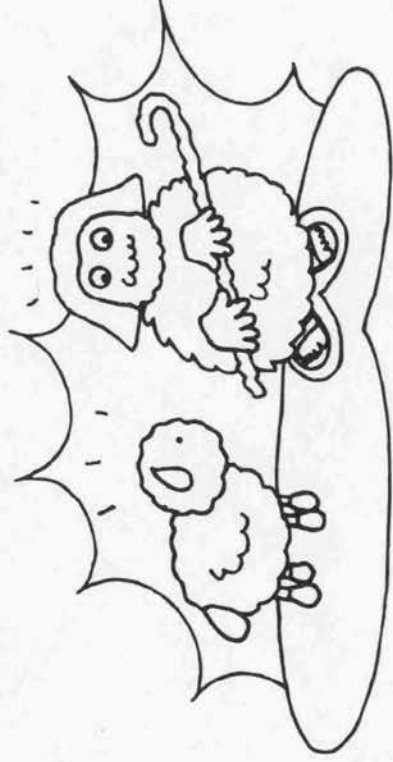
Lamb Pattern



Lamb and Shepherd Craft

Materials Needed:

2 cotton balls
2 cotton swabs
poster board or thin cardboard
pipe cleaner or chenille stem
1" pink pompon
1½" pompon
5mm wiggle eyes (2)
2" colored tissue paper square
scissors
tacky glue
black fine-tip marker or colored pencils (for coloring the shepherd's feet and hands)



Directions for the lamb:

1. Cut two ears and one tail from poster board, using the pattern on this page.
2. The cotton-wrapped ends of the swabs form the legs of the lamb. Cut them off about $\frac{1}{8}$ " above the cotton. (Each cotton swab will make two legs.)
3. Pull a cotton ball gently into two equal pieces. (Each piece makes the head for a lamb.) Gently roll the piece round again.
4. Glue the head to one end of a whole cotton ball "body."
5. Use a marker to make dots for eyes.
6. Glue the swab legs to the lamb. (The cotton ends make the lamb's feet and the bare end is glued to the body.)
7. Glue the ears and tail to the lamb.



Patterns for the lamb's ear
and tail and the
shepherd's hands

Directions for the shepherd:

1. Glue the pink pompon (the head) to a colored pompon (the body) and set them aside to dry.
2. Cut feet and hands from poster board, using the patterns on this page, and color them.
3. Glue the head and body to the feet and let it dry.
4. Bend a pipe cleaner into a shepherd's crook.
5. Glue the shepherd's eyes to the head.
6. Glue the shepherd's crook to the front of the body. Glue the hands over the crook.
7. Put glue on the head and mold the tissue paper square on the head to look like a head covering.



Feet pattern for base of
shepherd figure

Zacchaeus Meets Christ

(Luke 19:1-10)

Introduction

Today we will learn about Zacchaeus. What do you already know about him? Yes, most of us know that he was a wee little man, don't we!

How many of you have been to a parade? What was it like? (Noisy, crowded.) Did you have a good place to watch it? Perhaps others wouldn't let you in and you struggled to find just the right place to stand. If they didn't, you'll understand just how Zacchaeus felt.

Opening Prayer

Father, today we will learn that when Zacchaeus heard you were coming to his town, he went to a lot of trouble to see who you were. As we study Your word this morning, give us that same desire to see You for who You really are. We want to get to know You better so we can love you more. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. (Psalm 51:10)

Lesson

A man named Zacchaeus lived in the city of Jericho. He was a tax collector. Zacchaeus didn't contribute anything to his fellow Jews who were oppressed by the Roman government. Instead, he worked for the Romans, taking tax money from the Jews! Zacchaeus was a sell-out.

Tax collectors were Jewish people who had agreed to work for the hated Romans by collecting money from the Jewish people to give to the Romans. To make matters worse, anything the tax collectors charged above the set tax amount, they got to keep for themselves as

payment for their services. Most tax collectors collected far more than what was fair from their fellow Jewish citizens. The Jewish people thought tax collectors were robbers and traitors! Zacchaeus probably did not have many friends. He was probably a very lonely guy.

Luke 19:1-2

Jesus entered Jericho and made his way through the town. (2) There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector in the region, and he had become very rich.

Zacchaeus was not just *any* tax collector, he was the *chief* tax collector. And, he was probably rich enough to buy just about anything he wanted. Yet, he knew he wanted something that money couldn't buy. **[Ask:** Do you know what that was?]

One day Zacchaeus heard that Jesus was coming to Jericho and he was excited to see the famous Miracle Worker in person!

Luke 19:3

He tried to get a look at Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowd.

It says Zacchaeus *was seeking to see who Jesus was*. Was this the messiah? But people were everywhere, all scrambling for a good spot to see Jesus as He came in through the city gates into Jericho. Poor Zacchaeus, he was too short to see over the heads of all the people.

Being too short to see wasn't Zacchaeus' only problem. If people had liked Zacchaeus, they could have made room for him. But, the Jews saw Zacchaeus as an awful sinner — someone who had grown rich by cheating his own people. So, they probably blocked him. And, Zacchaeus was so desperate to see Jesus, he tried to think of what he could do to see Jesus.

Luke 19:4

So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree beside the road, for Jesus was going to pass that way.

We, too, should have that same desire to see Jesus that we'll do whatever it takes to get close to Him.

Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus. And to Zacchaeus's amazement, Jesus also wanted to see him!

Luke 19:5

When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. "Zacchaeus!" he said. "Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today."

As He passed, Jesus purposely looked right at Zacchaeus, called him by name, and spoke kindly to him. [**Ask:** How did Jesus know his name? Jesus is God the Son. He knows everything.] He knew that Zacchaeus was a sinful tax collector. He also knew that Zacchaeus was suffering because he was doing wrong and because others disliked him. Zacchaeus may have thought that even God disliked him. But Jesus loved him no matter what he had done.

Others may not want to be your friend because of bad things you've done. But, Jesus loves you no matter what you have done or what other people think of you. God knows all about you (Psalm 139:1-3) because He made you (Psalm 139:14-16), and yet He loves you.

The Lord Jesus knew all about Zacchaeus and wanted Zacchaeus to know Him, too. That's why he stopped and spoke to him.

By saying that He wanted to spend time at Zacchaeus' home, Jesus let everyone know that He accepted Zacchaeus. Jesus, the most popular man in town, wanted to spend time with Zacchaeus, a man no one wanted to be around. The people of the town were shocked! Didn't Jesus *know* about this man? Didn't He know what an awful *sinner* Zacchaeus was? Zacchaeus must have been amazed, too!

Luke 19:6

Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy.

Zacchaeus might have been surprised, but he was obviously very pleased because he jumped down from the tree with joy.

Luke 19:7

But the people were displeased. "He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner," they grumbled.

The people grumbled because Jesus was being a friend to a man they viewed as a terrible sinner. No decent person would want to be caught talking with a tax collector, let alone be found in his house. [**Ask:** Is it wrong to be a friend to a sinner? No! It is only wrong, if we want to join in with their sinful ways. We should friend sinners so that we can introduce them to Jesus.]

The people had no time or concern for Zacchaeus, but Jesus did. Jesus saw Zacchaeus as a person of value, as someone who could be changed completely once he received God's forgiveness. It didn't matter to the Lord what Zacchaeus had done or what other people thought of him. Jesus reached out in love to Zacchaeus and He is reaching out to you, too. He wants to save you no matter what you have done wrong, no matter what others think of you. And He wanted to save Zacchaeus.

Luke 19:8

Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, "I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!"

Notice that Zacchaeus calls Jesus, *Lord*! Zacchaeus knew in his heart that he was a terrible sinner and saw that Jesus was extending grace to him. He recognized that Jesus was his Lord!

Luke 19:9-10

Jesus responded, "Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. (10) For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost."

Ask: was Zacchaeus saved because he gave half of his wealth to the poor and repaid the people he cheated four times as much as he swindled from them? No! Zacchaeus was saved by his faith in the

Lord Jesus Christ in spite of his sin and the rejection of the people. The Lord assured Zacchaeus (and all who were listening) that because Zacchaeus had truly repented (turned from his sin) he had been saved.

After Jesus' visit, Zacchaeus was a changed man. Zacchaeus was so grateful for Jesus' forgiveness that he wanted to repair the damage his sins had caused. His desire to make things right with people was his response to Jesus' forgiveness. Zacchaeus showed that his salvation was real by paying back what he had stolen. His actions proved that Jesus had changed him.

Even great Bible heroes sinned. When we sin, we can either run away from God (like the rich young ruler did) or we can turn around and repent (like Zacchaeus did). Repenting means we admit our mistake, say we're sorry, and ask God to help us change. When we repent, God forgives us and makes us clean.

What are some ways we can make up for our wrong doings? How might you show by your actions that you are God's child? [Teacher, help the children discover things like apologize to someone offended; or, do something nice for another person; or, fixing or replacing something that was broken or lost; or, paying back money or objects that were stolen.] When you and I do something mean to someone, we should remember Zacchaeus. Whether it is taking something that does not belong to us, or saying words we should not say, or doing something to hurt others, we can say, "*I'm sorry*" to the person we have hurt and make it right. The other person will be glad we did. And so will Jesus.

Closing Prayer

Father, when we are naughty and make wrong choices and sin, we always want to show that we are your children by our actions. Help us, Lord, not to be prideful, but always humble. Help us to admit our sins and to make things right with the person we sin against. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Game Center

"Bowling" Game: Give each student an index card and a pencil. Have each one write a brief description of a situation in which kids their age need to make wrong actions right. (For Example, "*I lied to Dad about where I was going after school.*") Tape an index card onto each of six empty plastic soda bottles, water bottles or toy plastic bowling pins. Using a rubber ball, have the students line up behind a line. Each player gets two tries to knock a pin over. Lead student to discuss a way to make the situation right. Replace each card after it has been discussed. Continue the game until each student has a turn.

Or, use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. Where did Zacchaeus live? (Jericho.)
2. What did Zacchaeus do for a living? (He was a tax collector.)
3. Why didn't the Jews like tax collectors? (They cheated; they took more money than was rightfully owed.)
4. What did Zacchaeus do to get a good look at Jesus? (He climbed up a tree.)
5. What did Jesus do when He came to the place where Zacchaeus was up in a tree? (He looked up, saw him, and said, "*Come down, I'm going to stay at your house.*")
6. How did the people react to Jesus going over to Zacchaeus' house to stay? (They grumbled because Jesus was being a friend to a man they viewed as a terrible sinner.)

7. Is it wrong to be a friend to a sinner? (No! It is only wrong, if we want to join in with their sinful ways. We should friend sinners so that we can introduce them to Jesus.)
8. Was Zacchaeus saved because he gave half his wealth to the poor and gave those he cheated four times as much as he had stolen from them? (No! Zacchaeus was saved by grace alone.)
9. How did Zacchaeus show that his salvation was real? (He paid back what he had stolen.)
10. Have you ever been wronged? What happened? What would have made the situation right or at least better?
11. What are some ways we can make up for our wrong doings? (Apologize to someone; do nice things for someone we've offended; return stolen things.)
12. What might keep someone from feeling like he or she wants to say, "*I'm sorry*" for a wrong they've done? (Pride, selfishness, fear, not wanting to admit they've done wrong.)
13. How should you respond when someone doesn't forgive you or want to be your friend? (Talk to God about our feelings. Ask parents or teachers for advice.)
14. If you have done something wrong to someone recently, how might you make the situation right again? (Say, "*I'm sorry*" to the person we have hurt and make it right.)

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<https://www.FreeChildrensMinistryLessons.com>]

Lazarus Comes Back to Life

(John 11:1-46)

Introduction

What was the worst day of your life? [Teacher, let the children discuss.] Have you ever felt like giving up? Perhaps you hoped for the best, but things didn't work out as planned. Maybe you've wondered, *"If God loved me so much, why would He let this happen?"*

When things go wrong in your life, you may wonder why God doesn't seem to do anything about it. Sometimes He waits until you think it's too late. You can feel as if there's no hope, and you may want to give up. You might even feel that the Lord can't do anything to help you. But no matter how bad it looks, if you know the Lord Jesus as your Savior, you know that God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.

The ladies in our Bible story today might have had those same thoughts of hopelessness as their sick brother was about to die!

Opening Prayer

Lord, Thank You that You do love us and have a wonderful plan for our lives. Teach us this morning that we can trust You even the worst day of our lives. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. (1 John 5:12)

Lesson

Jesus had many friends. Mary, Martha, and their brother Lazarus were some of Jesus' special friends. Jesus liked to go to their house because He loved them very much.

One day Lazarus became very sick.

John 11:1

A man named Lazarus was sick. He lived in Bethany with his sisters, Mary and Martha.

[Teacher, point out Bethany on the map, about 2 miles east of Jerusalem on the way to Jericho.] When Lazarus became sick, his sisters sent for Jesus.

John 11:3

So the two sisters sent a message to Jesus telling him, "Lord, your dear friend is very sick."

They believed that Jesus could make Lazarus well because they had seen His miracles. He had made the lame to walk and the blind to see.

John 11:4

But when Jesus heard about it he said, "Lazarus's sickness will not end in death. No, it happened for the glory of God so that the Son of God will receive glory from this."

Ask: How can an illness bring glory to God? [Let the children discuss.]

Jesus was explaining to His disciples that God had a purpose for Lazarus's illness. Any trial that you are facing can bring glory to God because He can bring good out of any bad situation. You should see your problems as opportunities for God to show His power and strength!

John 11:5-6

So although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, (6) he stayed where he was for the next two days.

Ask: Why didn't the Lord Jesus go to Lazarus right away? Was it that He didn't know how serious the situation was or that He couldn't do anything about it? [Teacher, let the children respond.]

Jesus knew that Lazarus was about to die. And He knew He had the power to heal him! But Jesus had a very special reason for staying where He was. He wanted to prove He is God Almighty!

Finally, it was time to return to Judea.

John 11:7

Finally, he said to his disciples, "Let's go back to Judea."

Jesus waited until Lazarus was good and dead before he went to him.

John 11:11-13

Then he said, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but now I will go and wake him up." (12) The disciples said, "Lord, if he is sleeping, he will soon get better!" (13) They thought Jesus meant Lazarus was simply sleeping, but Jesus meant Lazarus had died.

The disciples didn't think that Jesus knew Lazarus was dead, but the Lord corrected them.

John 11:14-15

So he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. (15) And for your sakes, I'm glad I wasn't there, for now you will really believe. Come, let's go see him."

Ask: Why do you think that Jesus was glad He wasn't there?

He wanted to make sure there was no doubt in anybody's mind that Lazarus was really dead.

John 11:17

When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he was told that Lazarus had already been in his grave for four days.

When Jesus arrived at the house where Mary and Martha lived, He found many mourners there trying to comfort them.

John 11:19

and many of the people had come to console Martha and Mary in their loss.

When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she sneaked out of the house to meet Jesus on His way there.

John 11:20-22

When Martha got word that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him. But Mary stayed in the house. (21) Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died. (22) But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask."

Martha wished that Jesus had arrived earlier so He could have healed her brother. She knew Jesus had the power to heal her brother; she wondered why He would let this happen. But Jesus wanted to take her faith to a whole new level.

John 11:23-27

*Jesus told her, "Your brother will rise again." (24) "Yes," Martha said, "he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day." (25) Jesus told her, "**I am the resurrection and the life.** Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. (26) Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?" (27) "Yes, Lord," she told him. "I have always believed you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God."*

Jesus wanted Martha to know that He was more than a great teacher and a healer. He wanted her to know that not only did He have the power to forgive our sins, but He has power over life and death because He is the creator of life.

When Jesus said, "**I am the resurrection and the life**", He was saying, "Anyone who believes in Me has eternal life." Jesus was telling Martha that He is the source of life, the resurrection; that resurrection is a person, not an event. Anyone that has a personal relationship with Him has eternal life.

When you put your faith in Jesus, you not only receive His blessings now, you are also guaranteed a forever life with Him in heaven after you die here on earth.

Death is not final; it has no power over a believer. We *will* have eternal life after our physical body dies.

Jesus said, *"Because I live, you also will live."* (John 14:19b)

John 11:28-30

Then she returned to Mary. She called Mary aside from the mourners and told her, "The Teacher is here and wants to see you." (29) So Mary immediately went to him. (30) Jesus had stayed outside the village, at the place where Martha met him.

Although Martha secretly called Mary to come out to meet Jesus, her friends followed closely behind.

John 11:31-32

When the people who were at the house consoling Mary saw her leave so hastily, they assumed she was going to Lazarus's grave to weep. So they followed her there. (32) When Mary arrived and saw Jesus, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died."

Mary's friends followed her and saw her meet Jesus and fall down on her knees and weep before him.

John 11:33-34

When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a deep anger welled up within him, and he was deeply troubled. (34) "Where have you put him?" he asked them. They told him, "Lord, come and see."

When Jesus saw Mary crying, He was moved to tears Himself and asked to be taken to Lazarus' tomb.

John 11:35-37

Then Jesus wept. (36) The people who were standing nearby said, "See how much he loved him!" (37) But some said, "This man healed a blind man. Couldn't he have kept Lazarus from dying?"

Ask: Why did cry if He knew He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead?

Jesus was deeply moved because of the sorrow that sickness and death brought to his friends. God never intended for mankind to experience sickness or death. But after Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, we have been dealing with both ever since. But, one day we will be resurrected, brought into eternal life with God in heaven and we will never have to deal with sickness or death again!!!

John 11:38-39

Jesus was still angry as he arrived at the tomb, a cave with a stone rolled across its entrance. (39) "Roll the stone aside," Jesus told them. But Martha, the dead man's sister, protested, "Lord, he has been dead for four days. The smell will be terrible."

Martha thought that it was too late to help Lazarus; it had been four days since her brother was buried! But Jesus wanted her to know that death has no power over Him because He is eternal life. And anyone that believes in Him has eternal life! He does more than give life; He is life because He is the creator of life, and therefore death has no power over Him.

With Christ, death is but "sleep". [See verse 11.] Death has no power over anyone who has put their trust in Him. We don't have to wait for the final resurrection at the end of time, we have resurrection life right now.

John 11:40

Jesus responded, "Didn't I tell you that you would see God's glory if you believe?"

"Trust Me, Martha," Jesus was saying, "and you will see God's power in a way you've never seen before!"

John 11:41-42

So they rolled the stone aside. Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, "Father, thank you for hearing me. (42) You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me."

Jesus didn't need to pray out loud, but He wanted the people to hear Him talking to God the Father.

John 11:43-44

Then Jesus shouted, "Lazarus, come out!" (44) And the dead man came out, his hands and feet bound in graveclothes, his face wrapped in a headcloth. Jesus told them, "Unwrap him and let him go!"

Notice that Jesus simply spoke life into the dead man just like He spoke creation into existence!

Only God can call the dead to life. This is a picture of us when we come to Him and confess our sins and become a follower of Jesus. He resurrects us from a life of sin and death to eternal life.

John 11:45-46

Many of the people who were with Mary believed in Jesus when they saw this happen. (46) But some went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

Even when they saw the power of Jesus, some refused to believe; they rejected Jesus and plotted his murder. They were so full of pride they preferred to reject God the Son rather than admit that they were wrong.

Closing Prayer

Jesus, You are the awesome God, full of power and might. You know all things and You can do all things. You have power over life and death. You simply spoke life into Lazarus because You are life! And we can have eternal life, too, right now by entering into a relationship

with You, our resurrected Savior. All we have to do is come to You and surrender our lives to You by confessing that You are the Savior of our souls. In Jesus name. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Game Center

Wrap the Mummy

To play, first form four teams. Have each team stand in a circle and pick one person to be Lazarus. Have Lazarus stand in the middle of the circle.

On "go," have each team use one roll of toilet paper to wrap Lazarus. The first team to finish wrapping up Lazarus with the entire roll wins in round one. Have each Lazarus stand still until all four Lazaruses are wrapped up.

Then call out, "*Lazarus, come forth!*" The first Lazarus to free him- or herself of all the toilet paper is the winner in round two.

Or use the following review questions in another game of your choice:

1. What were Lazarus' sister's names? (Mary and Martha.)
2. Why did Mary and Martha think that Jesus could help their brother? (They believed that Jesus could make Lazarus well because they had seen His miracles.)
3. When Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick and dying why didn't He hurry over to his house to heal him? (Jesus wanted to prove that He is God and has power over life and death as well as power to forgive sins.)

4. Why can the trials and the hard times that we go through bring glory to God? (God can bring good out of any bad situation.)
5. Why was Jesus “glad” that Lazarus was dead (verse 15)? (He wanted to show God’s power!)
6. What did Martha do as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming? (She went out to meet Him.)
7. What did Jesus mean when He told Martha that He “*is the resurrection and the life*”? (“*Because I live, you also will live.*”)
8. What is the shortest verse in the whole Bible? (John 11:35, “*Jesus wept.*”)
9. Why did Jesus weep? (When Jesus saw Mary crying, He was moved to tears.)
10. What was in front of the tomb? (A stone.)
11. What did Jesus do when they took away the stone from the tomb? (He lifted up His eyes and prayed to the Father.)
12. How many days had Lazarus been in the tomb? (4)
13. How did Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead? What did He do? (He spoke. Just like He spoke the creation into being, He spoke life into the dead man.)
14. Why did some of the people that saw Jesus perform this miracle not believe that He was God? (They were so full of pride, they rejected Jesus rather than admit they were wrong.)

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<https://www.FreeChildrensMinistryLessons.com>]

Life After Death

Read John 11:1–44 to find the word or words missing from each sentence.

1. A man named _____ became sick, and then died.
2. His two sisters, _____ and _____, were sad.
3. Jesus came to _____ where the sisters lived.
4. The _____ came too.
5. They all went to the _____ where the man was buried.
6. Jesus ordered the _____ across the entrance to be taken away.
7. Jesus called the man's name and told him to _____.
8. To everyone's amazement the _____ came out.
9. Jesus gave him _____ after death.

Unscramble the boxed letters to complete this statement Jesus made. It tells why He is able to give every believer life after death.

I am _____ and

_____. (Read John 11:25 to check your answer.)



The Transfiguration

(Matthew 17:1-9)

Introduction

If I were to ask you, “*Who is Jesus?*” What would you say? [Teacher, let the children respond.] When Jesus was on the earth, He claimed He was God the Son. Is there proof that what He said is true? Let’s be like detectives today as we listen to our Bible lesson. Listen for evidence that Jesus is God the Son.

Opening Prayer

Father, if there is anyone here this morning that isn’t sure that You are God the Son, convince them, by the power of Your Holy Spirit, that You are the Almighty One, the Creator of the universe. That You have all power and all wisdom and that You have the power to forgive them of their sins. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. (Rom 12:2a NLT)

Lesson

In our lesson today we will learn that the closer we get to the Lord Jesus, the better we understand who He is.

One day Peter, James and John, the disciples who were Jesus’ closest friends, went with the Lord to a private place and a very special thing happened.

Matthew 17:1-2

Six days later Jesus took Peter and the two brothers, James and John, and led them up a high mountain to be alone. (2) As the men watched, Jesus’ appearance was transformed so that his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as light.

Jesus took Peter, James and John to a high mountain and there was transformed or changed before them. His face was changed and His robe became white and glistening — bright as a flash of lightening. This gives us an idea of what we will look like after we die and go to heaven.

Ask: Why did Jesus take the disciples to a high mountain?

He wanted to be alone with them in a private place so they would not be distracted by other people. Jesus wanted to show them His glory so they would know that He was truly God and that it was important for them to listen to Him.

Ask: Do you make an effort to spend time alone with the Lord?

Ask: Why did Jesus take only Peter, James and John up the mountain?

They were His closest friends; He wanted them to be totally convinced that He was God.

The Bible tells us that the Lord Jesus “*being in the form of God*” came in the “*likeness of man*” (Philippians 2:6,7) He was both God and man. He had left His home in heaven to come to this earth and take on a human body. Although He did many miracles and some people recognized Him as the Messiah, the Christ (the sent One from God), most saw Jesus as just another man.

But now, the glory He had had forever with His Father in heaven was no longer hidden. Jesus’ true nature as God shone through His human body. His face and body were changed so that beams of light made His clothes white as light. When Jesus transformed Himself before their very eyes, they were getting a glimpse of His glory.

Suddenly two others appeared with Jesus.

Matthew 17:3

Suddenly, Moses and Elijah appeared and began talking with Jesus.

Moses and Elijah also appeared to them in their heavenly bodies.

[Teacher, Moses and Elijah represented the Law and the Prophets signifying that the whole Bible reveals Jesus (see Luke 24:25-27).]

Ask: What do you think they talked about? (Turn to Luke 9:30-31)

Luke 9:30-31

Suddenly, two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared and began talking with Jesus. (31) They were glorious to see. And they were speaking about his exodus from this world, which was about to be fulfilled in Jerusalem.

Luke tells us that they were talking about His coming death. They were probably encouraging Jesus to stay strong and faithful during His final week on earth, knowing how hard it would be for Him.

Ask: What does this tell you about Moses and Elijah? (Though they had died, they were still alive in heaven with God the Father!)

Death has no power over a believer. Jesus said *“I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even if he dies.”* (John 11:25) When you put your faith in God, He gives you eternal life.

Now Peter was so bewildered, he didn’t know what to say or do.

Matthew 17:4

Peter exclaimed, “Lord, it’s wonderful for us to be here! If you want, I’ll make three shelters as memorials—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”

No doubt, the disciples could hardly believe their eyes! Peter was probably very excited and, not knowing quite what to say or do, he suggested that he make tents for them to live in.

Ask: If you had been there that day, how would you have reacted?

Matthew 17:5

But even as he spoke, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy. Listen to him.”

While Peter was speaking, the shekinah glory of God came over the disciples and they heard a voice speaking from the cloud.

Ask: Who was speaking out of the cloud? (Yes, this was God the Father!)

This must have been terrifying for them!

Ask: What did God tell them to do? (God was telling them to stop talking and listen to Jesus.)

Matthew 17:6

The disciples were terrified and fell face down on the ground.

The awesome voice of God terrified the disciples and they fell on their faces! Hearing God’s voice from the heavens convinced the disciples that Jesus was truly God the Son!

Today we seldom hear the voice of God out loud, but we do have the Bible. It is the way God speaks to us. The Bible tells us everything we need to know for life and godliness.

God wants us to read His Word to find out how we are to live. As we read His word and obey it, our lives are transformed. We learn to live our lives in a way the pleases God.

Poor Peter, James and John, when they heard God’s voice they were so afraid they fell to the ground and hid their faces. And, as they were lying there, Jesus comforted them.

Matthew 17:7-8

Then Jesus came over and touched them. “Get up,” he said. “Don’t be afraid.” (8) And when they looked up, Moses and Elijah were gone, and they saw only Jesus.

When Jesus told the disciples to get up, they were suddenly alone with Him. This was a night they would never forget; there was no doubt in their minds that Jesus truly was the Christ, God the Son!

Matthew 17:9

As they went back down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, “Don’t tell anyone what you have seen until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.”

Jesus told them not to tell anyone what they had seen until after He had risen from the dead. [Teacher, see note at end of lesson.]

Ask: Do you think they obeyed Jesus?

It would have been hard not to want to tell others of the marvelous event they had just seen, but look at Luke 9:36

Luke 9:36

And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.

Because they knew that God Himself told them not to tell anyone, they were obedient. Wouldn’t you be?

But, later, after Jesus had been raised from the dead, Peter did talk about this experience. Turn to 2 Peter 1.

2 Peter 1:16-18

For we were not making up clever stories when we told you about the powerful coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We saw his majestic splendor with our own eyes (17) when he received honor and glory from God the Father. The voice from the majestic glory of God said to him, “This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.” (18) We ourselves heard that voice from heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain.

The disciples witnessed Christ’s glory on the mountain. They had a peek into the heavenlies of the wonderful things that await us and their faith was strengthened.

Ask: What wonderful things has God done for you in your life?

Just as Peter shared this experience, we, too, should be sharing our stories of how God has revealed His glory to us in our lives.

Closing Prayer

Father, today You have given us a glimpse of the heavenlies. Just as You were transformed in the very sight of Peter, James, and John, so You can transform our lives from sinners into saints when we place our hope in Your finished work on the cross. We look forward to the time when we can see You in glory. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

Note for teacher: Why did Jesus tell His disciples not to tell others what they had seen at the Transfiguration? Jesus’ primary purpose in allowing those disciples to see His glory was to strengthen their faith in His divine nature before they experienced the shock of the difficult days ahead. Keeping silent about His Transfiguration reduced sensational public acclaim which would only distract people from knowing Him and the redemptive work He came to do. He knew that if word spread about His supernatural power, many would come to Him for short-term solutions to their disease and miss the long-term solutions to their sin.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Have children draw pictures of what they think Jesus, Moses and Elijah looked like in their glorious bodies.

Game Center

Use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. Which disciples were Jesus’ closest friends? (Peter, James and John.)
2. What does it mean that Jesus was “transformed” before them? (His appearance changed.)

3. What was different about Jesus when his appearance changed? (His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.)
4. When Jesus was transformed, who were the other two men that the disciples saw in their glorified bodies? (Moses and Elijah.)
5. What were Moses and Elijah probably talking to Jesus about? (His death.)
6. What crazy thing did Peter say when he saw Jesus and Moses and Elijah in their glorified bodies? (Shall I make three shelters for you?)
7. What happened when the bright cloud overshadowed them? (Suddenly God's voice came out of the cloud, saying "*This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy. Listen to him!*")
8. What did the disciples do when they heard God's voice from the cloud? (They fell on their faces in fear.)
9. How did this change in Jesus change Peter's, James' and John's understanding of who He was? (Jesus' true nature as God shone through His human body. They realized that He was God the Son.)
10. How do you hear God's voice? (Through reading His Word, the Bible.)
11. As the disciples were lying on the ground in fear, what did Jesus do to comfort them? (He touched them and said, "*Get up. Don't be afraid.*")
12. What did Jesus tell them to do as they came down the mountain? (Not to tell anyone what happened until after He rose from the dead.)

13. Has your relationship with Jesus changed your life?

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit
<https://www.FreeChildrensMinistryLessons.com>]

Triumphal Entry

(Palm Sunday: Matthew 21:1-17)

Introduction

Do you spend time each day praying to Jesus and praising Him for Who He is? What are some creative ways you can praise the Lord? [Teacher, let the children respond.] Have you ever written Jesus a poem or drawn Him a picture or sang Him a song? He delights in whatever way you choose to honor Him.

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, You deserve our praises. You are an awesome God! You are greater than we can even imagine. You created the whole earth and everything in it. You hold all things together in order. You are full of kindness. Please open our hearts and minds this morning, Lord, so that we might know You more fully than we have ever known You before. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

*Let my mouth be filled with Your praise and with Your glory all the day.
(Psalm 71:8)*

Lesson

One week before Jesus' death on the cross, He and his disciples were walking from Jericho into Jerusalem. They were coming to celebrate Passover.

The Passover was a special time each year when the Jews remembered how God had protected them from death and set them free from slavery many years before. God had said that the first-born son in every family in Egypt would die, but He made a way for the Israelites to escape death. He told them to kill a lamb and paint their doorposts with the blood of the lamb. God passed over the houses that had lamb's blood on their doorways and didn't kill the first-born son. The blood protected the Israelites when the death angel passed

through Egypt. So, every year to this date, the Jews celebrate Passover. They have a great feast and celebration.

Jesus and His disciples were coming into Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. And, before this week ended, the Lord Jesus would give His blood on the cross to pay for all sin.

As they came near the city, Jesus stopped at a nearby village where He sent two of His men to borrow a donkey and its colt.

Matthew 21:1-5

As Jesus and the disciples approached Jerusalem, they came to the town of Bethphage on the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent two of them on ahead. (2) "Go into the village over there," he said. "As soon as you enter it, you will see a donkey tied there, with its colt beside it. Untie them and bring them to me. (3) If anyone asks what you are doing, just say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will immediately let you take them." (4) This took place to fulfill the prophecy that said, (5) "Tell the people of Jerusalem, 'Look, your King is coming to you. He is humble, riding on a donkey—riding on a donkey's colt.'"

This was the fulfillment of a prophecy that was spoken of more than 500 years before Jesus was born. (Zechariah 9:9)

Matthew 21:6-7

The two disciples did as Jesus commanded. (7) They brought the donkey and the colt to him and threw their garments over the colt, and he sat on it.

The two disciples found the donkey and brought it to Jesus, Then, the disciples laid their robes over the donkey like a saddle.

When Jesus rode the donkey into the city, many people treated him just like a king. They formed a big parade to honor Him. Children and adults cheered and sang songs. They waved and shouted. The people cut branches off of palm trees and waved them like flags to honor Him. But the people really didn't understand what Jesus had come to Jerusalem to do.

You see, people had heard about Him. Many of them had seen Jesus perform miracles. They heard that He had given a blind man sight. They had watched a lame man walk! People cheered because he had

turned water into wine and fed 5,000 people with only two small fish and five loaves.

The people wanted to make Him their earthly king. They thought it would be great to have a king who could feed them and cure their diseases.

Matthew 21:8-9

Most of the crowd spread their garments on the road ahead of him, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. (9) Jesus was in the center of the procession, and the people all around him were shouting, "Praise God for the Son of David! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the LORD! Praise God in highest heaven!"

The people lined the road, shouting, "Hosanna" which means, "God save us now"! And they waved palm branches and threw their cloaks in front of the colt as it passed before them like laying out a red carpet.

Many people thought that Jesus was coming to claim His throne and save them from Rome's persecution. The people went wild. They were sure their freedom was at hand.

They did not understand that He would become their Savior though suffering death; they expected Him to become their king and "save" them by freeing them from Rome and doing miracles to supply food and heal their sick. They praised Him simply for what He could do for them. They did not realize Jesus is God.

We should praise the Lord Jesus for all the good things He does for us, but we should also praise Him just for who He is. The Bible tells us that Jesus is Lord of all. He is worthy to receive glory and honor from us, for He created all things and by His will He keeps everything in order. (Rev 4:11) And one day we will see Jesus come as our King. He will come with thousands of shining angels to take us home to heaven.

While we wait for that glorious day, Jesus deserves all our praise. Admire Him for all He has made; thank Him for all He does for you,

but also praise and glorify Him just for who He is — Lord of all. Don't be like the crowds gathered along the road to Jerusalem who were shouting their praise to Jesus just because of the wonderful miracles He had done.

Matthew 21:10-11

The entire city of Jerusalem was in an uproar as he entered. "Who is this?" they asked. (11) And the crowds replied, "It's Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

Not everybody was glad to see Jesus coming into town. Early the next morning Jesus entered the temple where He caused quite an uproar.

Matthew 21:12-13

Jesus entered the Temple and began to drive out all the people buying and selling animals for sacrifice. He knocked over the tables of the money changers and the chairs of those selling doves. (13) He said to them, "The Scriptures declare, 'My Temple will be called a house of prayer,' but you have turned it into a den of thieves!"

Jews came to Jerusalem from all over the Roman world during this week-long celebration to remember the great exodus from Egypt. They couldn't bring the animals they needed to do their sacrifices. So they had to buy the animals once they got to the temple.

Money changers and sellers set up booths just outside the temple. The money changers weren't always honest; they took advantage of the foreigners who didn't know the language. The salesmen sold the animals at very high prices. Getting ripped off like this right at the doorway to God's house made people angry and interfered with their attitude towards worshiping the Lord. This made Jesus very angry, so He went into the temple and chased out all the merchants and moneychangers and turned over all the tables.

Ask: Is anger is a sin? Was it wrong for Jesus to get angry? [Discuss the difference between *unrighteous* indignation and righteous indignation.]

Matthew 21:14

The blind and the lame came to him in the Temple, and he healed them.

After driving out the greedy people from the temple, Jesus healed many sick, but that made the Scribes and the Pharisees angry. [Teacher, in the passage below, the Scribes and Pharisees give us an example of *unrighteous indignation*.]

Seeing these amazing miracles made the children shout their praise to Jesus, but that made Jewish religious leaders even more angry.

Matthew 21:15-16

The leading priests and the teachers of religious law saw these wonderful miracles and heard even the children in the Temple shouting, "Praise God for the Son of David." But the leaders were indignant. (16) They asked Jesus, "Do you hear what these children are saying?" "Yes," Jesus replied. "Haven't you ever read the Scriptures? For they say, 'You have taught children and infants to give you praise.'"

The Jewish religious leaders were angry that Jesus healed the blind and lame because they were jealous of His popularity. But even the young children called out their praise to Jesus and He was pleased to hear their praise.

The praise of these children was natural and right, for Jesus is God the Son. The Lord Jesus deserves all our praise. We should freely praise Him as we see His glory in the world around us and His power in our lives, but we should praise Him not just for what He does, but also for who He is — the Lord of all.

Ask: What are some characteristics of the Lord Jesus that should cause us to praise Him? [Teacher, write the children's ideas on the board. Encourage them to discover some of God's attributes listed below.]

God's Inner Qualities:

[Teacher, use the highlighted verse as a sword drill.]

- *All-knowing:* God knows everything, past, present, and future. He knows all about you, even what you are thinking. He knows your deepest needs and desires, and He knows how to meet them. (Job 37:16; **Ps 139:1-4**).
- *All-powerful:* God can do anything He wants to do. His power is greater than we can imagine. He always uses it for our good. (**Job 42:2**; Rev 19:6).
- *All-present:* God is always present everywhere. He is with you all the time. He sees everything you do and hears everything you say. (Ps 139:7-12; Prov 5:21; **Prov 15:3**; Acts 17:28).
- *All-wise:* He made and understands all things. His plans for us are perfect. (Ps 104:24; Is 40:28; **Rom 11:33**).
- *Faithful:* God always does what He says He will do. You can trust His Word completely. (Lam 3:22, 23; **1 Cor 10:13**; 1 Thes 5:24).
- *Holy:* He is completely pure and perfect. He never sins and He cannot tolerate sin. All that He does is right and good. (**1 Sam 2:2**; Ps 99:5; Is 43:15).
- *Merciful:* God cares about us more deeply than we could understand. He sent His Son to die so that He can justly choose not to give us the punishment our sin deserves. (**Num 14:18**; Ps 130:3; Eph 2:4).
- *Sovereign:* He rules over all things in heaven and earth, including our lives. There is no power or authority greater than His. (Ps 22:28; **Ps 47:2**; Is 44:6; Is 66:1-2; Dan 4:34-35).
- *Unchanging:* He is always the same — pure and good, faithful in His love and care — and nothing can change who or what He is (**Mal 3:6**; James 1:17).

God wants us to know what He is really like. Each day as you spend time with the Lord, begin with a few moments of praise to Him. You can say "thank-You" prayers to Jesus for who He is or maybe sing a song to Him. The Bible says our mouths should be filled with His praise. Speak your praise not just privately to Jesus, but to others as well. That is what happened in the temple in Jerusalem. The children shouted out their praise to the Lord Jesus, giving Him the glory He deserves.

Closing Prayer

Father, You want us to know You for who You really are. I pray that You will give each of us a desire in our hearts to spend time alone with You each and every day, thinking about Your special inner qualities that make You the wonderful Father that You are. You want me to know Your love and to show it to others. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

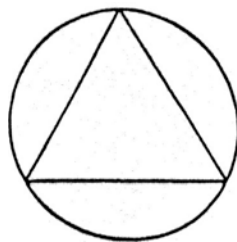
Have the children write Jesus a poem, drawn Him a picture, or sing Him a song. Or, have them make cards for some of His attributes. Then they can hold them up as you spend time praying and praising Him.

Game Center

What is God Like? Matching Game

Prepare 16 yellow circles similar to the one sketched to the right.

On the back of the circles write the following messages — one message per circle, but use each message twice:



- GOD IS POWERFUL!
- GOD IS ALIVE!
- GOD LOVES YOU!
- GOD HATES SIN!
- GOD IS PATIENT!
- GOD DOES NOT CHANGE!
- GOD CANNOT LIE!
- GOD KNOWS EVERYTHING!

Each time a child correctly answers a question he gets to turn over two circles. If the messages on the back match, remove the pieces. If the messages are different, turn them back over, and the children will try to remember where they are and make future matches. It won't be long before even young children will have all eight statements about God memorized.

Or, use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

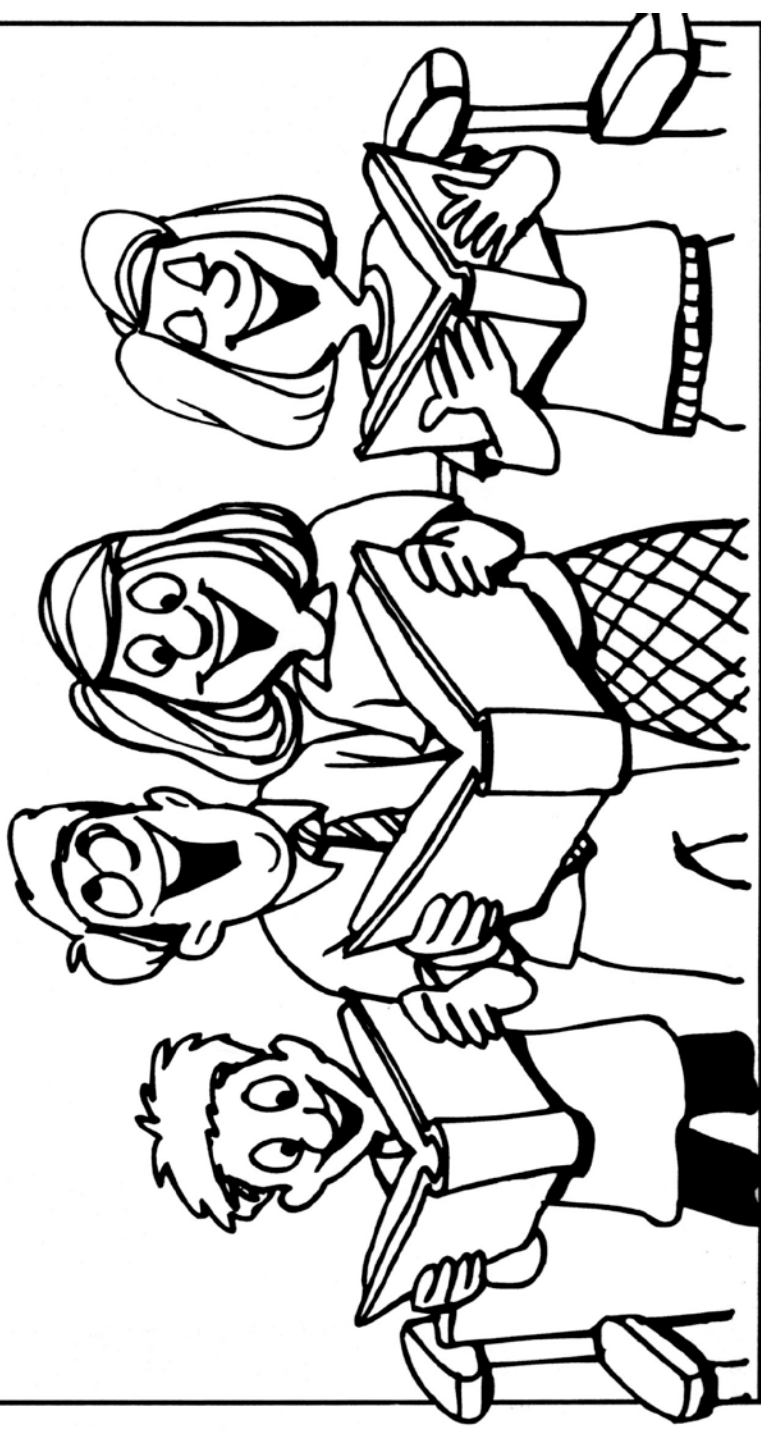
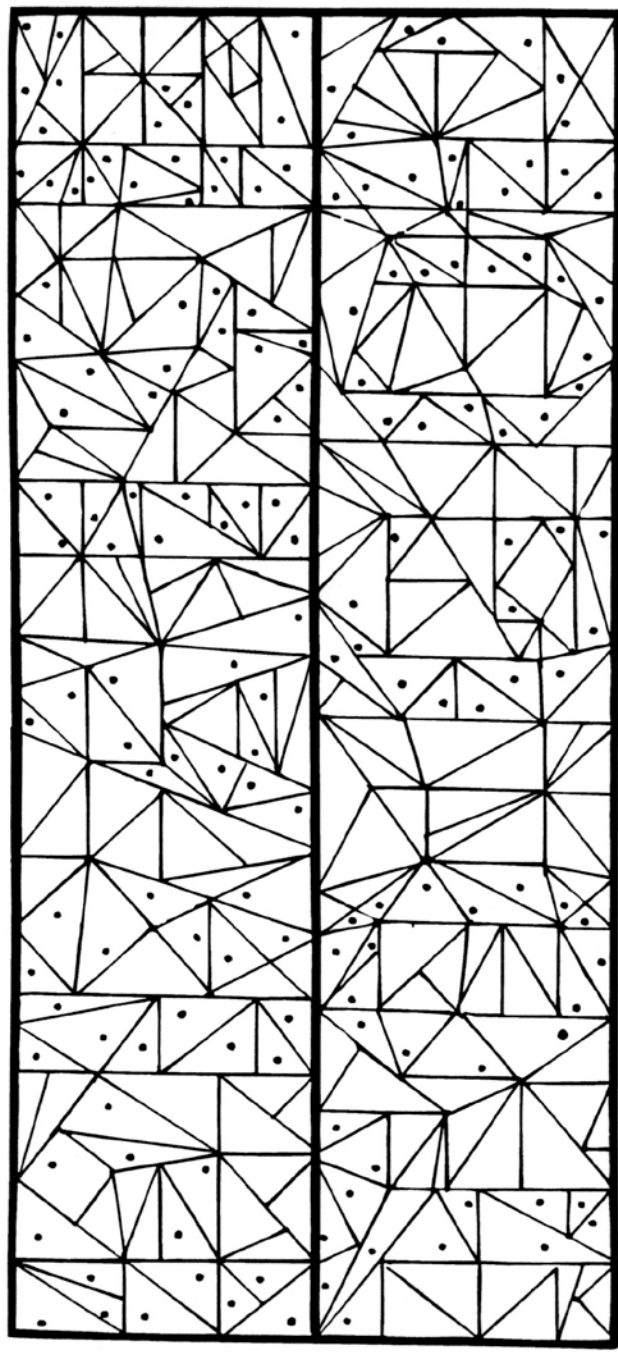
1. Where were Jesus and His disciples going the week before His death on the cross? (They were going to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover.)
2. What is the celebration of Passover about? (When God passed over the Israelite's homes that had lamb's blood painted on the door posts and didn't kill the first born son.)
3. Just before coming into Jerusalem, what did Jesus send two of His disciples off to do? (To go into the village, find a donkey and bring it to Jesus.)
4. When Jesus rode into the city on a donkey, what did the people do and why? (They thought he was going to be anointed as King, so they waved palm branches and laid down their clothes for Him to walk over and shouted, "Hosanna in the highest.")
5. Why did they hope He was going to be their king? (They were under the Roman rule at that time and they wanted to be free of the persecution.)
6. What does "Hosanna" mean? (It means, "Save us now.")

7. When Jesus went into the temple, what did He do to cause a commotion, and why? (He drove out the sellers and the moneychangers because they were dishonest.)
8. After driving out the greedy people from the temple, what miraculous thing did Jesus do that made the Scribes and the Pharisees angry? (He healed many sick.)
9. Who was it in the temple that sang out their praise to Jesus and made the chief priests and scribes indignant? (The children.)
10. Besides the fact that Jesus is good to us, why does He deserve all our praise? (He is God.)
11. What are some characteristics of the Lord Jesus that should cause us to praise Him? (All-knowing, all-powerful, all-present, all-wise, faithful, holy, merciful, sovereign, unchanging, etc.)
12. What are some creative ways you can praise the Lord? (Write a poem, draw a picture, sing a song, etc.)

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TRIANGLE TANGLE-

Using a pencil or crayon, shade in each triangle with a dot in it. Discover something we offer in church by singing and praying and listening. If you use bright colors to fill in all the other triangles, you will have a pretty "stained glass window" to hang in your room or give to someone.



Last Supper

(Luke 22:1-20; Mark 14:17-21)

Introduction

What was the most famous meal in the Bible and who ate it?

Mealtimes are great times for friends and family to talk. It's a time when each person around the table can find out special things about the others. But, if you were about to die and you knew this was the last time you would be with your very best friends, what would you want to tell them? How do you think Jesus felt at the Last Supper, knowing that the next day he would have to go through a horrible, painful death on the cross?

Opening Prayer

Father, I pray that You will help us all be especially sensitive to the Holy Spirit this morning so that we might not miss a single lesson You want to teach us. Help our minds to concentrate on You; give us wisdom and insight into Your ways. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Behold! The lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!" (John 1:29).

Lesson

On the day before Jesus died on the cross, Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus' disciples, played a dirty trick on Jesus.

Luke 22:1-2

*The Festival of Unleavened Bread, which is also called Passover, was approaching. (2) The leading priests and teachers of religious law were plotting how to kill Jesus, but **they were afraid of the people's reaction.***

The people had seen the mighty works that Jesus had done. He had healed the sick and made the blind to see and had fed 5,000 people with only two fish and five small loaves of bread. So, they followed after Him everywhere He went. They wanted to hear every word He said; they knew He had special powers from God. The rulers of the Jews were jealous of Jesus' popularity and they wanted to kill Him, but they knew they needed to do it secretly so the people didn't rise up against them. So, they plotted how to arrest Jesus in a secluded place.

Luke 22:3-6

*Then **Satan entered into Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve disciples, (4) and he went to the leading priests and captains of the Temple guard to discuss the best way to betray Jesus to them. (5) They were delighted, and they promised to give him money. (6) So he agreed and began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus so they could arrest him **when the crowds weren't around.*****

It says that Satan entered Judas and he went out and made a deal with the chief priests to take them to Jesus in an out-of-the-way place so they could arrest Him. If Judas had truly believed that Jesus was the Messiah, Satan could not have entered Him. If you are a true believer in Jesus, Satan cannot enter you.

Meanwhile, Jesus and His disciples were looking for a place to eat the Passover meal.

The Passover was a special time each year when the Jews remembered how God had protected them from death and set them free from slavery many years before. God had said that the first-born son in every family in Egypt would die, but He made a way for the Israelites to escape death. God told them to kill a lamb and paint its blood on the doorframes of their houses. God passed over the houses that had lamb's blood on their doorways and didn't kill the first-born son. The blood protected the Israelites when the death angel passed through Egypt. So, every year to this date, the Jews celebrate Passover by having a special lamb dinner.

Luke 22:7-8

Now the Festival of Unleavened Bread arrived, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed. (8) Jesus sent Peter and John ahead and said, "Go and prepare the Passover meal, so we can eat it together."

The Passover meal is very special. There are lots of things you have to prepare for the celebration: unleavened bread, bitter herbs, wine, saltwater, and other special foods. The disciples had to buy and prepare the lamb as well as.

So, Jesus sent Peter and John into the city to prepare the Passover meal.

Luke 22:9-13

*"Where do you want us to prepare it?" they asked him. (10) He replied, "As soon as you enter Jerusalem, **a man carrying a pitcher of water** will meet you. Follow him. At the house he enters, (11) say to the owner, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room where I can eat the Passover meal with my disciples?' (12) He will take you upstairs to a large room that is already set up. That is where you should prepare our meal." (13) They went off to the city and found everything just as Jesus had said, and they prepared the Passover meal there.*

Jesus told Peter and John to look for a man carrying water. Ordinarily women, not men, went to the well and brought home the water. This man carrying the pitcher of water would have stood out in the crowd. So, it was easy for Peter and John to find the man who would lead them to the house. The owner of the house took the disciples to an upstairs room where they prepared for the Passover feast.

Luke 22:14

When the time came, Jesus and the apostles sat down together at the table.

In Bible times, people did not sit at the table in chairs, like we do. They laid down on their left side and fed themselves with their right hand.

It was during this last supper Jesus had with His disciples that he established what we call the "Lord's Supper" or communion. We do it as a way to remember His death.

Luke 22:15-16

*Jesus said, "I have been very **eager** to eat this Passover meal with you **before my suffering begins**. (16) For I tell you now that I won't eat this meal again until its meaning is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God."*

Jesus was anxious to eat this Passover meal with His disciples because He had an important lesson He wanted to teach them. In fact, He planned to demonstrate this lesson as they ate their meal. He said He wanted to teach them this lesson before His suffering began and that the meaning of the lesson would not be clear to them until it was "*fulfilled in the Kingdom of God*" (After His death.)

At that, Jesus asked the disciples to eat broken bread and drink wine in remembrance of Him.

Luke 22:17-20

*Then he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. Then he said, "Take this and share it among yourselves. (18) For I will not drink wine again until the Kingdom of God has come." (19) He took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. **Do this in remembrance of me**." (20) After supper he took another cup of wine and said, "**This cup is the new covenant** between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you.*

Jesus said, "**This cup is the new covenant**". A covenant is an agreement or a deal.

Before Jesus came to earth as a man, God agreed to forgive people's sins if they brought animals for the priests to sacrifice. God wanted the people to know that without the shedding of blood there was no forgiveness of sins (Heb 9:22). But animal blood did not remove sins permanently. That's why Jesus came.

Jesus came to establish the New Covenant, the new deal. Only God can truly forgive sin. After He came and died on the cross, it was no longer necessary for the people to sacrifice animals. His death was the final, perfect sacrifice.

God said all sin must be punished (Eze 18:20). Jesus took the punishment that we deserve. He died in our place. Because He is God, His blood fully removes the sins of all who put their faith in Him. That's why when John the Baptist saw Jesus coming to be baptized, he said, "*Behold! The lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.*" (John 1:29).

Jesus shed His blood for us on the cross and now we may live in heaven with Him. By having the Lord's Supper together, we remember Jesus' death on the cross. As we eat the bread and drink the wine, we should quietly recall Jesus' death and express our thanks to God for His wonderful plan of salvation. This strengthens our faith.

While they were eating their last supper together, Jesus tells the disciples a shocking thing.

Mark 14:17-21

In the evening Jesus arrived with the Twelve. (18) As they were at the table eating, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, one of you eating with me here will betray me." (19) Greatly distressed, each one asked in turn, "Am I the one?" (20) He replied, "It is one of you twelve who is eating from this bowl with me. (21) For the Son of Man must die, as the Scriptures declared long ago. But how terrible it will be for the one who betrays him. It would be far better for that man if he had never been born!"

Judas, the very man who would betray Jesus, was at the table with the others. Judas had already determined to betray Jesus, but in cold-blooded hypocrisy he shared the fellowship of this meal.

This is shocking! Yet we can be guilty of this same sort of sin. You and I can say we are Christians and that Jesus is our Lord and Savior. We can go to church and look good among the other Christians. But,

if we live a two-faced life, acting as a true Christian at church, but acting like a non-Christian when we're not at church, we are dishonoring Jesus.

So, I ask you, do your thoughts, or words, or actions ever dishonor the Lord? Have you ever cheated in a game or said a bad word? Or, have you ever talked rudely to your mother, or been disobedient to your dad? Have you ever kept your faith in Jesus a secret when you're with your worldly friends?

You know that people will know by the way you live your life if you are truly a follower of Jesus.

Closing Prayer

Father, make our witness to our friends a bold one. Help us to walk our talk. Change our minds and hearts so that we are true followers in You. We never want to dishonor You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Learning Activities

Activity

Have communion together with your class. Read the passage from 1 Corinthians 11:23b – 26 as you take the elements.

Game Center

Use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

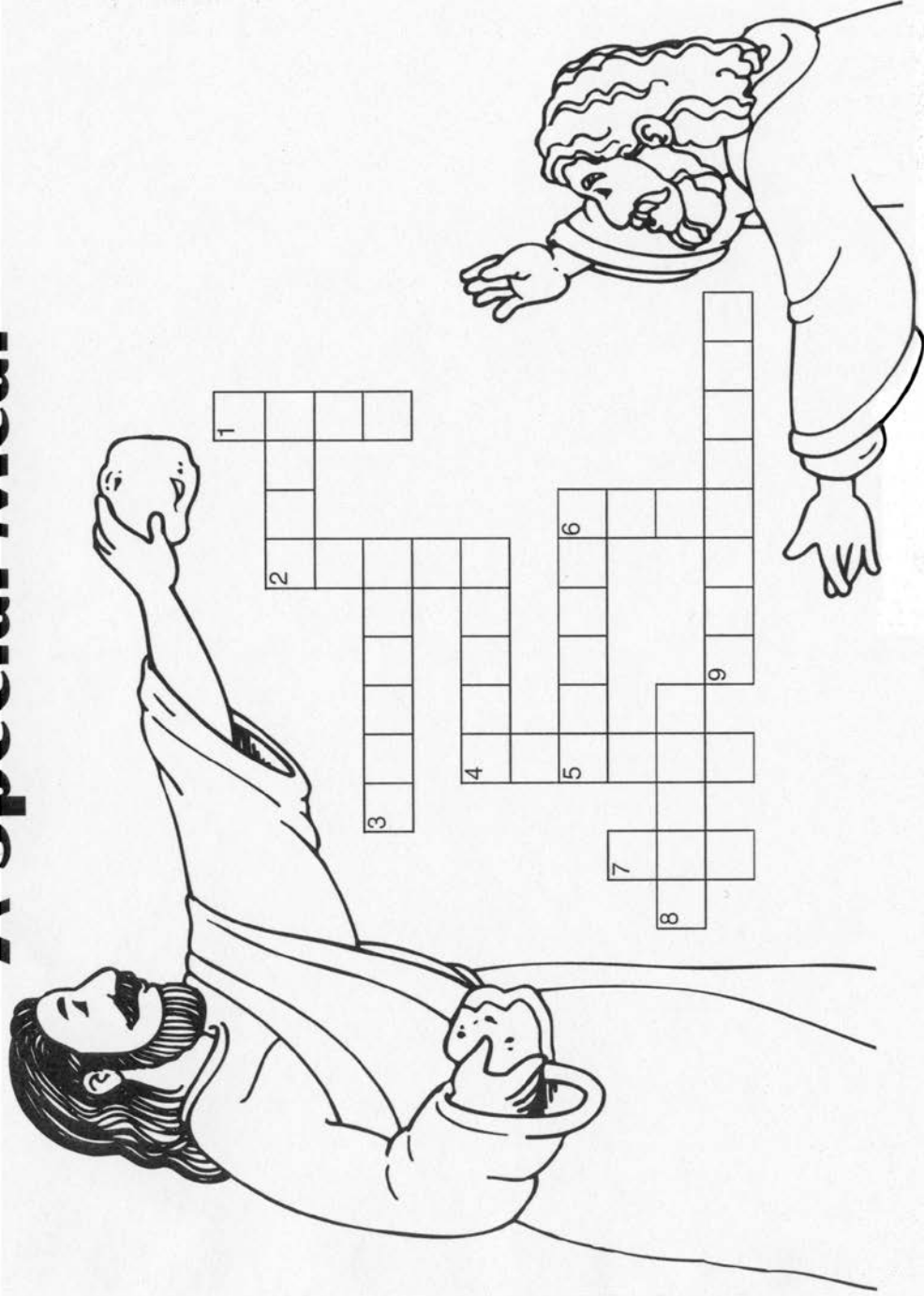
1. What dirty trick did Judas play on Jesus the night before His death? (He made a deal with the chief priests to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.)
2. When Jesus sent Peter and John off to find a place for them to have the Passover meal, what was the unusual way they found

the upper room? (They followed a man carrying a pitcher of water to a guest room.)

3. What did Jesus do during the Last Supper that we repeat. (Jesus instituted the “Lord’s Supper.” We do it in remembrance of what He did for us on the cross.)
4. How many disciples were at the Last Supper? (12)
5. What did Jesus do before they ate? (Gave thanks.)
6. What did Jesus call the bread that He served? (His body broken for us.)
7. What did Jesus call the wine that He served? (His blood, shed for us.)
8. In our memory verse, why did John say that Jesus was the “*lamb of God*”? (Because He took our place on the cross. We deserve to die, but His blood was shed for us so we don’t have to die an eternal death. We can now live forever in the presence of God.)
9. What shocking thing did Jesus tell His disciples while they were eating dinner? (That one of the 12 disciples was going to betray Him.)
10. Can you think of any way that you might betray the Lord Jesus? (By keeping our faith in Him a secret when we’re with our worldly friends.)

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A Special Meal



ACROSS

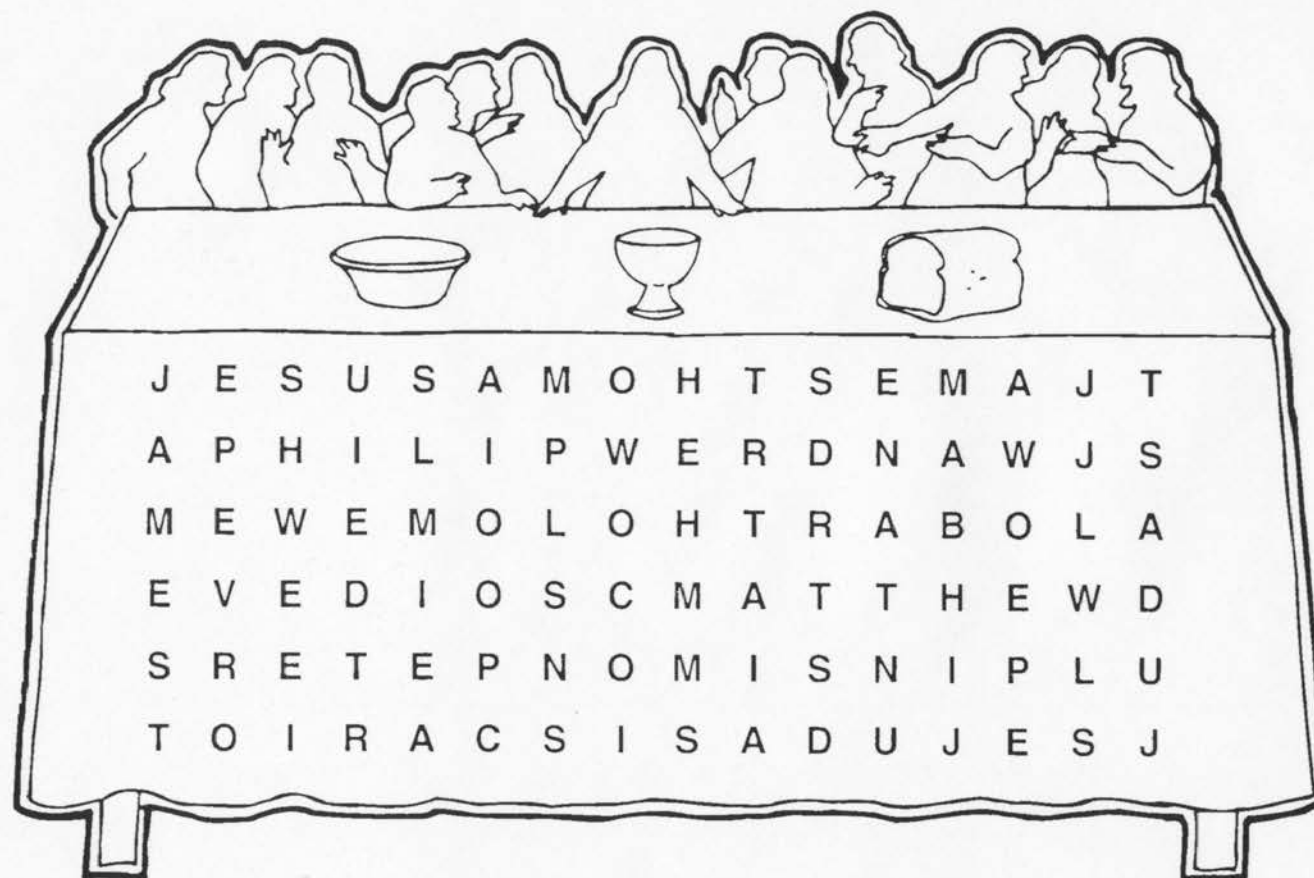
2. Jesus said, "Take and eat, this is my _____." (Matthew 26:26)
3. How many disciples were at the Last Supper? (Matthew 26:20)
4. What did Jesus call the wine that He served? (Matthew 26:27-28)
5. Before they ate, Jesus gave _____ for the bread. (Matthew 26:26)
8. What was the name of the man who pointed out Jesus to soldiers? (Matthew 26:49)
9. What Jewish feast did the Last Supper observe? (Matthew 26:18)

DOWN

1. What did Jesus and His disciples sing at the end of the meal? (Matthew 26:30)
2. What food did Jesus pass to His disciples? (Matthew 26:26)
4. One of the twelve planned to _____ Jesus with a kiss. (Matthew 26:23)
6. Jesus' blood was going to be shed so our _____ could be forgiven. (Matthew 26:28)
7. What did Jesus use to drink the wine? (Matthew 26:27)

Find and circle the following names in the puzzle to discover who was at the Last Supper. They are from Luke 6:12-13.

JESUS SIMON PETER ANDREW JAMES JOHN PHILIP BARTHOLOMEW
 MATTHEW THOMAS JAMES SIMON JUDAS JUDAS ISCARIOT



Who Was There?

Circle the 15 letters that were not used in the puzzle. If you do them in the right order and write them on the lines below, you will discover who the men with Jesus were.

Jesus Washes the Disciple's Feet

(John 13:1-17)

Introduction

Are there any jobs at home or in school that you don't like to do? [Teacher, make a list on the board, like: clean the toilette, change the cat litter box, etc.] Why don't you like to do these jobs? Are they things that have to be done? Who does them if you won't?

Sometimes we do nice things for others because we're told to do them or because we want others to like us or because by doing those things we might win a contest. Just before Jesus gave His life for us, He taught His disciples a very important lesson about how and why to serve others. He didn't just tell them how to serve; He showed them what He meant.

Opening Prayer

Dear Lord, we know that You want us to joyfully serve others, give us a heart to follow Jesus' example as we study Your word today. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

As we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith. (Galatians 6:10)

or,

He who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. (Matthew 22:11-12)

Lesson

Review....

For the past few Sunday's we've been learning about the last week of Jesus' life. One week before His death, Jesus came riding into

Jerusalem on a donkey. He and His disciples had come to town to celebrate Passover. As He rode in, many people thought he was riding in like a king, so they waved palm branches at Him and laid down their clothes for the donkey to walk over like a red carpet. They shouted, "*Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!*"

The night before His death, Jesus and His disciples had the Passover meal together. Jesus knew it was His last night on earth. He knew He would return to God the Father from where He came. Before going back to heaven, He wanted to give His disciples some last-minute instructions to get them ready for His death. He got them all together in the upper room and had the last supper with them.

Before dinner the devil spoke to Judas' heart and told him that this was the night to carry out his plan to betray Jesus. But before Judas did that evil deed, Jesus established what we call the *Lord's Supper* when He asked His disciples to eat broken bread and drink wine in remembrance of His sacrifice on the cross.

Then, after dinner Jesus did a very odd thing...

John 13:2-5

It was time for supper, and the devil had already prompted Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. (3) Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. (4) So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, (5) and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him.

[Teacher, at this point in the lesson do a foot washing! Bring a basin and a pitcher. Wash the first child's feet and have that child wash the next child's feet and so on, until you've gone all the way around the class, with the last child washing your feet. You will make a lasting impression on the children, to be sure! You'll get all kinds of reactions... but the lesson objectives will be firmly made!]

Why would Jesus wash the disciple's feet? The people in Jesus' day wore sandals, and streets were dusty. Just like we take our shoes off when going into someone's home so that we don't track dirt into the house, it was customary in Jesus' day to wash guests' feet when they

arrived at your home. Foot washing was usually a job for a household servant to carry out.

Can you imagine? Jesus, God the Son, washing dirty feet? What do you think Jesus wanted to teach His followers? Even though He was their leader and God Himself, He was not too proud to be a servant. He was serving them with a humble heart. If Jesus is willing to serve, then we must also be servants, willing to serve in any way that glorifies God.

A humble person does whatever is necessary to help someone who has a need. He's not concerned about acting important or making others like him. The Lord Jesus was serving His disciples because He loved them.

If Jesus is your Savior, God wants you to serve others with a humble heart. The Bible says that *"as we have opportunity, let us do good to all"* (Galatians 6:10). That means, you are to look for every chance you can find to do something nice for someone else. Jesus was teaching the disciples a lesson about true greatness.

But, Peter strongly objected to Jesus' washing his feet.

John 13:6-9

When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" (7) Jesus replied, "You don't understand now what I am doing, but someday you will." (8) "No," Peter protested, "you will never ever wash my feet!" Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you won't belong to me." (9) Simon Peter exclaimed, "Then wash my hands and head as well, Lord, not just my feet!"

Imagine being Peter and watching Jesus come around the table washing each of the other disciple's feet, all the while moving closer and closer to you. Peter was upset that Jesus, His Lord, should stoop to serve like a common household slave. But Jesus insisted. If Peter would not obey and allow the Lord to wash his feet, he would have no fellowship with Jesus. Peter didn't understand that Jesus was trying to teach them a spiritual lesson.

John 13:10-11

Jesus replied, "A person who has bathed all over does not need to wash, except for the feet, to be entirely clean. And you disciples are clean, but not all of you." (11) For Jesus knew who would betray him. That is what he meant when he said, "Not all of you are clean."

When you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you are washed from your sin, meaning that you will not be sent to hell as punishment for your sin.

However, in our day-to-day life, you and I still sin (our feet get dirty.) We must seek daily cleansing by confessing our sins.

When Jesus said, *"You are not all clean,"* He was referring to Judas.

Do you think it was hard for Jesus to wash Judas' feet, knowing that Judas was going to betray Him? How would you feel if you were Jesus? Jesus loved Judas and wanted to give him one last opportunity to choose NOT to do the evil thing he was planning.

John 13:12

After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, "Do you understand what I was doing?"

The Lord wanted to be sure that His disciples understood why He had washed their feet. By His action He was showing His love and He was teaching them a truth. Do you know what Jesus was trying to teach them? If the Master and Lord is willing to humble Himself and be a servant by washing the disciple's feet, then the disciples should be willing to be servants, also.

Why is it sometimes hard to serve others with a humble heart? We want to be served; we want our own rights; we like to do important things so others will see and reward us. Yet Jesus told His disciples, *"Whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant"* (Mark 10:43). That means if you want to truly please God, you will serve others with a humble heart. You may not be noticed or thanked

here on earth, but God will reward you someday. If Jesus is your example, you won't be too proud to do jobs that seem unimportant.

John 13:13-15

You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you are right, because that's what I am. (14) And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. (15) I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you.

Who can you serve? How can you serve others? [Teacher, give the children opportunity to share ideas. Allow children to name specific ways they can help others.] God wants you to serve others with a humble heart.

Closing Prayer

Lord, we know that You want us to serve others with a happy humble heart, help us to look for ways to do that this week. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Using the example coupon that follows, make a coupon book to take home and give to parents or someone of their choice.

- This coupon good for one trash pickup around the house.
- This coupon good for helping Dad wash the car.
- This coupon good for two nights of washing supper dishes.

Encourage children to fill in the coupons with chores that are not already their responsibility and that they don't particularly like to do.

[illegible]

This coupon is good for:

*As we have opportunity, let us
do good to all, especially to
those who are of the household
of faith. (Galatians 6:10)*

[illegible]

Game Center

Use the Memory Verse in a relay game. Or, use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. What did Jesus and His disciples do on the night before His death? (They had the Last Supper together.)
2. What did the devil tell Judas to do this night? (Betray Jesus.)
3. What special ceremony did Jesus do at the Last Supper that we do sometimes in church and why? (Have the Lord's Supper: eat broken bread and drink grape juice in remembrance of His death for us on the cross.)
4. After supper, what odd thing did Jesus do? (After supper Jesus got up, took off His robe, wrapped a towel around His waist, poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciple's feet and to wipe them with the towel He had around Him.)
5. Why would Jesus wash the disciple's feet? (The people in Jesus' day wore sandals, and streets were dusty. Washing guests' feet

was a job for a household servant to carry out when guests arrived.)

6. What do you think Jesus wanted to teach His followers? (Even though He was their leader and God Himself, He was not too proud to be a servant. He was serving them with a humble heart. If Jesus is willing to serve, then we must also be servants, willing to serve in any way that glorifies God.)
7. Who strongly objected to Jesus washing his feet and why? (Peter. He thought it was beneath the Lord to serve like a common household slave.)
8. What was the spiritual lesson Jesus was trying to teach the disciples by washing their feet? (When you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you are washed from your sin, meaning that you will not be sent to hell as punishment for your sin. However, in our day-to-day life, you and I still sin (our feet get dirty.) We must seek daily cleansing by confessing our sins.)
9. Do you think it was hard for Jesus to wash Judas' feet, knowing that Judas was going to betray Him? (No, Jesus loved Judas, too, and wanted to give him one last opportunity to choose to do the right thing instead of the evil thing he was planning to do.)
10. Why is it sometimes hard to serve others with a humble heart? (We want to be served; we want our own rights; we like to do important things so others will see and reward us.)
11. Who can you serve? How can you serve them?
12. What is today's memory verse? (Galatians 6:10, *As we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.*)

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit
<https://www.FreeChildrensMinistryLessons.com>]

Jesus in the Garden

(Matthew 26:30-56)

Introduction

Have you ever denied Jesus? Have you ever lived as though He is not important to you, or that you don't know Him? Have you ever pretended to not be a believer when you're around certain friends? Did you know that every one of Jesus' disciples did this right before Jesus died?

All the disciples swore that they would die before disowning Jesus. But just a few hours later, they all ran away. Talk is cheap. It is easy to say we are devoted to Jesus, but our words are meaningless if our faith is not strong.

Opening Prayer

Father, we want to walk our talk. We want our faith to be strong enough to stand up under intense trial. Please give us the strength of character to mean what we say when we express our love for You. Give us the strength we need to remain always faithful and true to You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16)

Lesson

Review....

For the past few Sundays, we've been learning about the last week of Jesus' life. One week before His death, Jesus came riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. He and His disciples had come to town to celebrate Passover. As He rode in, many people thought he was riding in like a king, so they waved palm branches at Him and laid

down their clothes for the donkey to walk over like a red carpet. They shouted, "*Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!*"

The night before His death, Jesus and His disciples had the Passover meal together. Jesus knew it was His last night on earth. He knew He would return to God the Father from where He came. Before going back to heaven, He wanted to give His disciples some last-minute instructions to get them ready for His death. He got them all together in the upper room and had the last supper with them.

Before dinner the devil spoke to Judas' heart and told him that this was the night to carry out his plan to betray Jesus. But before Judas did that evil deed, Jesus established what we call the Lord's Supper when He asked His disciples to eat broken bread and drink wine in remembrance of His sacrifice on the cross.

After that Jesus got up, took off His robe, wrapped a towel around His waist, poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciple's feet and to wipe them with the towel He had around Him. He wanted to teach them an important spiritual lesson: If He, their Lord, was willing to humble Himself and be a servant by washing their feet, then they should be willing to serve others, also.

After supper, Judas left to tell the priests where they could find Jesus.

Then, Jesus and the disciples sang a hymn and went out to a garden on the Mount of Olives. This was a special place for Jesus; He often went there to pray.

Matthew 26:30

Then they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives.

On their way to the garden, Jesus told His disciples a shocking thing...

Matthew 26:31-32

On the way, Jesus told them, "Tonight all of you will desert me. For the Scriptures say, 'God will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' (32) But after I have been raised from the dead, I will go ahead of you to Galilee and meet you there."

The disciples had faithfully followed Jesus for three years. Certainly, they would not leave Him now; they would be loyal!

Sometimes it is easier to say you're a loyal, faithful follower of His than to *be* one. To be loyal means to be true to those who deserve your faithful love and support. At times it is very difficult to be loyal.

Can you think of times when it's hard to be a loyal follower of Jesus? How about when you're around people that are making fun of Christians? You might be tempted to act like you don't know Him.

People can tell if you are a true follower of Jesus by the way you dress and talk and act. Your attitudes and actions will reveal whether you follow Jesus or not. It is by God's grace that you and I can have courage to keep from denying the Lord Jesus.

The best way to guard against turning from Jesus at a difficult time is to pray. God promises special strength "*in time of need*" (Hebrews 4:16). Be on guard and pray for strength to be loyal to Jesus.

I know that you who love the Lord Jesus want to be loyal to Him. That is how the disciples felt, too. They would surely not turn away from Him.

When Jesus told the disciples that they would all deny that they even knew Him, Peter strongly protested.

Matthew 26:33-35

Peter declared, "Even if everyone else deserts you, I will never desert you." (34) Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, Peter—this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny three times that you even know me." (35) "No!" Peter insisted. "Even if I have to die with you, I will never deny you!" And all the other disciples vowed the same.

Peter and all the disciples insisted that they would remain loyal and true to Jesus no matter what!

When they came to the garden Jesus told them to stay on guard by the garden gate while He prayed.

Matthew 26:36-38

Then Jesus went with them to the olive grove called Gethsemane, and he said, "Sit here while I go over there to pray." (37) He took Peter and Zebedee's two sons, James and John, and he became anguished and distressed. (38) He told them, "My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

Jesus took Peter, James and John to pray with Him and began to plead with God the Father that He might not have to die this awful death. "*Stay awake with Me,*" Jesus asked. "*My heart is breaking with sorrow and sadness.*"

Matthew 26:39

He went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground, praying, "My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."

Jesus knew what was going to happen; He knew He was going to face a cruel and painful death the next day. He, who had never sinned, was to be judged a sinner and treated as one. He was to be blamed for the sins of everyone in the whole world. But He also knew that there was no other way to deliver mankind from sin's penalty and power. He prayed, "*Father, if it is possible, don't let Me go through the terrible suffering that lies ahead. But let Your will be done, not Mine.*" He knew it must happen. If He were to give up now there would be no hope, no salvation for anybody. That's why He said, "*Your will be done, not Mine.*"

Jesus was sorrowful. He was feeling the weight of the sin of the world. Have you ever thought about how terrible sin really is? [Teacher, allow children to discuss.]

It was Jesus' love for you and me that made Him willing to go through this agony. We can't even imagine what pain Jesus suffered. Although Jesus was dreading the awful ordeal ahead, He would carry out His Father's will because of His great love for us.

Matthew 29:40-41

Then he returned to the disciples and found them asleep. He said to Peter, "Couldn't you watch with me even one hour? (41) Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak!"

Here Jesus was praying in agony and He found His three best friends asleep! Not only did Jesus need their support, but Jesus knew what was ahead for them, too. He knew they needed to pray for God's strength, as well.

Matthew 29:42-44

Then Jesus left them a second time and prayed, "My Father! If this cup cannot be taken away unless I drink it, your will be done." (43) When he returned to them again, he found them sleeping, for they couldn't keep their eyes open. (44) So he went to pray a third time, saying the same things again.

Three times Jesus had prayed for strength to do God's will; three times He had found the disciples sleeping. Jesus knew they wanted to be true to Him. That's why He warned them to watch and pray! He had wanted them to also ask God for help.

As Christians, we, too, want to be loyal to Jesus. But sometimes we fail Him. Can you think of a promise you have made to Him, but didn't keep? [Teacher, allow children to respond — to obey parents, to read your Bible and pray, to give money to missionaries, to witness.]

How can we remain loyal to the Lord? Not by trusting in our own strength; if we do that, we will fail (Rom 7:18, 24, 25). We need God's grace — the strength we gain through prayer. The Lord commands us to watch and pray. James 5:16 says, "*The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man [a person who is right before God] avails much [it is powerful]!*" God will give you courage to stand for Him when you are tempted. So be on guard, and pray for strength to be loyal to Jesus. The disciples lost their chance to gain strength through prayer because they slept. Little did they know what would happen.

Matthew 26:45-46

Then he came to the disciples and said, "Go ahead and sleep. Have your rest. But look—the time has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. (46) Up, let's be going. Look, my betrayer is here!"

While Jesus was telling the disciples that the one who would betray Him was coming, suddenly the darkness was shattered by torchlight. A mob, including Roman soldiers, surged through the garden gate, their swords glistening in the moonlight.

Matthew 26:47-50

And even as Jesus said this, Judas, one of the twelve disciples, arrived with a crowd of men armed with swords and clubs. They had been sent by the leading priests and elders of the people. (48) The traitor, Judas, had given them a prearranged signal: "You will know which one to arrest when I greet him with a kiss." (49) So Judas came straight to Jesus. "Greetings, Rabbi!" he exclaimed and gave him the kiss. (50) Jesus said, "My friend, go ahead and do what you have come for." Then the others grabbed Jesus and arrested him.

Judas walked up to Jesus and kissed Him. This was the sign that Judas had said he would give. (Just as we greet each other with a hand shake, greeting someone with a hug and a kiss on either cheek is still a custom in most European and Eastern cultures.) The soldiers moved forward to arrest Jesus.

Matthew 26:51-54

But one of the men with Jesus pulled out his sword and struck the high priest's slave, slashing off his ear. (52) "Put away your sword," Jesus told him. "Those who use the sword will die by the sword. (53) Don't you realize that I could ask my Father for thousands of angels to protect us, and he would send them instantly? (54) But if I did, how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that describe what must happen now?"

Peter was furious. He pulled out a sword and lashed out wildly, cutting off the ear of one of the high priest's servants. Peter did not understand God's will in this situation. Jesus reminded him that He could call armies of angels to fight for Him. But Jesus' arrest was all

part of God's plan. This was a fulfillment of prophecy. (Isaiah 50:6; 53:2-11.) [Note: a legion is 6,000; 12 legions is 72,000.]

Matthew 26:55-56

Then Jesus said to the crowd, "Am I some dangerous revolutionary, that you come with swords and clubs to arrest me? Why didn't you arrest me in the Temple? I was there teaching every day. (56) But this is all happening to fulfill the words of the prophets as recorded in the Scriptures." At that point, all the disciples deserted him and fled.

The frightened disciples watched as Jesus allowed the soldiers to take Him away. In panic and despair, the disciples deserted Jesus and fled. Just as Jesus said they would, the disciples turned away from Him and ran away when they could have been loyal to Him.

If you had been in the garden that night, what do you think you would have done?

What will you do or say when someone asks you if you are a Christian? Will you speak up for Jesus? Remember, as you pray, God will give you His grace — His special strength to face every situation. God promises you will *"find grace to help in time of need"* (Hebrews 4:16).

You will be strengthened by God as you read His Word and pray. This week will you be on guard and pray for strength to be loyal to Jesus?

Closing Prayer

Father, we pray that we will always be able to keep watch and pray. Don't let us get side tracked in our thoughts as we pray for Your direction in our lives. Then, Lord, help us to be able to say, as Jesus did, *"Not My will, but Your will be done."* Jesus is our example of trusting in Your plan for our lives, no matter what! We pray for that kind of strength and loyalty to You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Peek Box Scene (see page 168)

Game Center

Use the following review questions in a game of your choice. For example, print each question on a separate piece of paper. Wad the papers up and let the children have a "snow ball" fight with them. When you say, "Stop!" they have to take turns answering the question in their "snow ball."

1. What shocking thing did Jesus tell His disciples as they walked over to the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives? (All of you will be made to stumble, that is they would deny that they ever knew Him.)
2. What does it mean to deny the Lord Jesus? (To live as though He's not important to you.)
3. Which of the disciples strongly protested when Jesus told the disciples they would all deny that they ever knew Him? (Peter)
4. What does it mean to be loyal? (To be true to those who deserve your faithful love and support.)
5. Why is it sometimes easier to say that you are a loyal, faithful follower of Jesus than to be one? (You have to risk being different than the crowd; dare to go against what your friends think is cool.)
6. What is the best way to guard against turning away from Jesus at a difficult time? (To pray. Ask for the strength it takes to be loyal.)

7. What did Jesus ask Peter, James, and John to do while He prayed? (Stay here and watch with Me.)
8. What did His disciples do while Jesus prayed? (They fell asleep.)
9. Fill in these blanks: When Jesus came to the disciples and found them sleeping, He said, "The spirit indeed is _____, but the flesh is _____." (willing; weak.)
10. How did Judas show the Roman soldiers who Jesus was? (He greeted Him with a kiss.)
11. When the soldiers came and arrested Jesus, what did Peter do? (Peter drew his sword and cut off the soldier's ear.)
12. If you had been in the garden that night when they came to arrest Jesus, what do you think you would have done?
13. What will you do or say next time someone asks you if you are a Christian?

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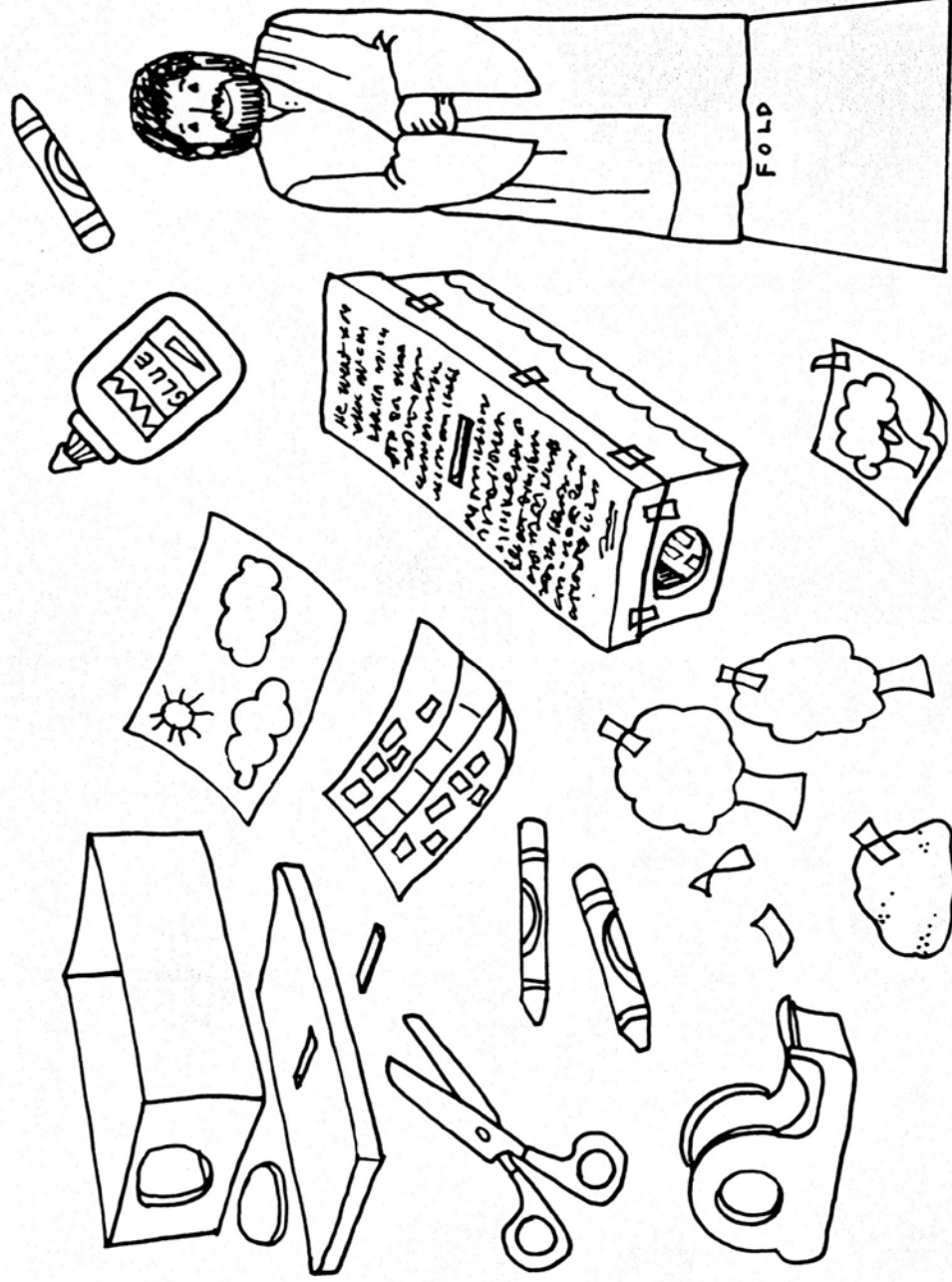
"Your Will Be Done"

When Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, He asked that God's will be done in His life. (Matthew 26:39, 42) Depict the scene, Jesus at prayer, in a "peek box."

Materials Needed:

- Bible
- shoe box with lid
- construction paper
- tape
- glue
- scissors

Directions: Take the top off a shoe box and set it aside. Cut a hole in one end of the box. Create a scene inside the box facing the hole. Decorate the side of the box to show that the scene takes place in a garden. Tape or glue paper to the box to indicate sky. Cover the bottom of the box to look like the ground. Use paper and other materials to make a figure of Jesus and scenery for the Garden of Gethsemane. Attach the figures to the bottom of the box with tape or glue. The pieces that are most important should be near the front. Cut a slit in the box top to let in a little light. Tape the top to the shoe box and decorate it. Write the Scripture passage Matthew 26:36-50 on the outside of the box. Share the story with your family and let them look into the "peek box."



Jesus' Trial and Crucifixion

(Mark 14; Luke 22, 23; John 18, 19)

Introduction

Often, we are punished because we do wrong things. Perhaps you were disciplined because you failed to clean your room. Maybe you were punished because you got into a fight or because you were talking when you were supposed to be listening at school? But have you ever been punished for something you did not do? How would you react if that happened to you? [Teacher, let the children discuss.]

Jesus knows all about that. He was severely punished even though He had never done anything wrong. Yet, the Bible tells us that He willingly suffered because He knew it was for our good.

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, as we learn about Your trial and crucifixion this morning, I pray we will understand more fully how awful our sin is and what a terrible, cruel, and horrible death You suffered for our sakes. Cause us to come to a deeper appreciation of all that You did for us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

He was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. (Isaiah 53:5 NLT)

and

Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. (John 15:13)

Lesson

Review....

[Teacher, as you review, you can display various objects to help trigger the children's memories. For example, show a small plastic donkey and a small piece of palm branch when you talk about Palm Sunday. Or, a small piece of bread as you discuss the Last Supper.]

For the past few Sundays, we have been learning about the last week of Jesus' life. One week before His death, Jesus came riding into town on a donkey. He and His disciples had come to town to celebrate Passover. As He rode in, many people thought he was riding in like a king, so they waved palm branches at Him and laid down their clothes for His donkey to walk over and they shouted, "*Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!*"

Later that week Jesus and His disciples had the Passover meal together. During dinner the devil spoke to Judas' heart and told him that this was the night to carry out his plan to betray Jesus. But before Judas did that evil deed, Jesus asked His disciples to eat broken bread and drink wine in remembrance of Him. After supper Jesus washed the Disciples' feet to teach them that God wants us to serve others with a humble heart.

After supper, Judas left to tell the priests where Jesus was going to be in a secluded place. Then, Jesus and the disciples sang a hymn and went out to a garden on the Mount of Olives. While they were there, Judas, accompanied by a crowd of Roman soldiers carrying swords and clubs, found Jesus with His disciples and betrayed Him with a kiss.

As Jesus willingly submitted to the soldiers, Peter impetuously cut off the ear of Malus, the high priest's servant, but Jesus restored it, commanding Peter to put away his sword.

Today's Lesson...

[Teacher, we will be reading verses from Mark, Luke, and John. Put book marks into the children's Bibles before class to help them locate the various passages more quickly.]

The soldiers bound Jesus and brought Him to the Jewish high priest's house for questioning and trial.

John 18:12-13

So the soldiers, their commanding officer, and the Temple guards arrested Jesus and tied him up. (13) First they took him to Annas, since he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest at that time.

The Jewish religious leaders were in a hurry — they wanted to complete the trial and execution before sun up when the Sabbath began and the Passover celebration officially started. So, they took Jesus off to a trial in the home of the High Priest in the middle of the night.

Mark 14:53, 55

They took Jesus to the high priest's home where the leading priests, the elders, and the teachers of religious law had gathered...(55) Inside, the leading priests and the entire high council were trying to find evidence against Jesus, so they could put him to death. But they couldn't find any.

The religious leaders knew they had no grounds for charging Jesus, so they tried to build evidence against him by using false witnesses. After false witnesses testified against Jesus, they began to make fun of Jesus.

Luke 22:63-65

The guards in charge of Jesus began mocking and beating him. (64) They blindfolded him and said, "Prophecy to us! Who hit you that time?" (65) And they hurled all sorts of terrible insults at him.

They mocked Jesus and beat Him.

John 18:19-24

Inside, the high priest began asking Jesus about his followers and what he had been teaching them. (20) Jesus replied, "Everyone knows what I teach. I have preached regularly in the synagogues and the Temple, where the people gather. I have not spoken in secret. (21) Why are you

asking me this question? Ask those who heard me. They know what I said." (22) Then one of the Temple guards standing nearby slapped Jesus across the face. "Is that the way to answer the high priest?" he demanded. (23) Jesus replied, "If I said anything wrong, you must prove it. But if I'm speaking the truth, why are you beating me?" (24) Then Annas bound Jesus and sent him to Caiaphas, the high priest.

Why would Jesus allow men to accuse Him of lying and treat Him so cruelly? Jesus' suffering and cruel treatment was part of God's plan so because of His love for you, He willingly allowed them to mistreat Him.

So first they took Him to Annas' house for questioning. When they couldn't find anything to charge Him with, they sent Him to Caiaphas', his son-in-law.

Next, the soldiers brought Jesus to Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea (the region where Jerusalem is located). [Teacher, show the children a map of Israel.]

John 18:29-31

So Pilate, the governor, went out to them and asked, "What is your charge against this man?" (30) "We wouldn't have handed him over to you if he weren't a criminal!" they retorted. (31) "Then take him away and judge him by your own law," Pilate told them. "Only the Romans are permitted to execute someone," the Jewish leaders replied.

Governor Pilate could find no fault in Jesus and he didn't want to handle this case. So when he found out that Jesus had lived and worked up in Galilee, he sent Him to Herod, the Roman ruler of the Galilee region, who happened to be in Jerusalem for Passover.

Luke 23:6-11

"Oh, is he a Galilean?" Pilate asked. (7) When they said that he was, Pilate sent him to Herod Antipas, because Galilee was under Herod's jurisdiction, and Herod happened to be in Jerusalem at the time. (8) Herod was delighted at the opportunity to see Jesus, because he had heard about him and had been hoping for a long time to see him perform a miracle. (9) He asked Jesus question after question, but Jesus refused

to answer. (10) Meanwhile, the leading priests and the teachers of religious law stood there shouting their accusations. (11) Then Herod and his soldiers began mocking and ridiculing Jesus. Finally, they put a royal robe on him and sent him back to Pilate.

Pilate sent Jesus to Herod, but Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate.

Luke 23:13-16

Then Pilate called together the leading priests and other religious leaders, along with the people, (14) and he announced his verdict. "You brought this man to me, accusing him of leading a revolt. I have examined him thoroughly on this point in your presence and find him innocent. (15) Herod came to the same conclusion and sent him back to us. Nothing this man has done calls for the death penalty. (16) So I will have him flogged, and then I will release him."

Pilate could find no fault in Jesus; Jesus had done nothing that called for the death penalty. So Pilate said he would have Jesus whipped and then he would release Him.

John 19:1-3

Then Pilate had Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip. (2) The soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they put a purple robe on him. (3) "Hail! King of the Jews!" they mocked, as they slapped him across the face.

Even though Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent, to satisfy the Jews, Pilate had Jesus whipped, a purple robe placed on His shoulders and a crown of thorns smashed on His head.

The whipping was done using strips of leather embedded with pieces of metal and bone. The whipping alone could have killed Him. The purple robe, suggesting royalty, and the crown of thorns were used to mock Christ's declaration of kingship.

Still the Jews demanded His death.

Luke 23:21-25

But they kept shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" (22) For the third time he demanded, "Why? What crime has he committed? I have found no reason to sentence him to death. So I will have him flogged, and then I will release him." (23) But the mob shouted louder and louder, demanding that Jesus be crucified, and their voices prevailed. (24) So Pilate sentenced Jesus to die as they demanded. (25) As they had requested, he released Barabbas, the man in prison for insurrection and murder. But he turned Jesus over to them to do as they wished.

Pilate wanted to release Jesus, but the crowd loudly demanded his death. Pilate was afraid the crowd would cause a riot and that he might lose his job. So, he didn't stand up for what he knew was right.

Sometimes it's hard to stand up for what you know is right. Have you ever been in a situation when your friends wanted you to do something you knew is not pleasing to the Lord? [Teacher, let the children respond.]

Had Pilate been a man of real courage, he would have released Jesus no matter what the crowds said. But he feared the crowd.

How sad that the people didn't know Who they were condemning to death. Jesus was God, the Son. He had no sin — His thoughts, words, and actions always pleased God, the Father. How unlike you and me. We are born wanting our own sinful way (Ecclesiastes 7:20).

Think of times when you have not pleased God. Maybe you have lied to your teacher at school. Perhaps you have selfishly refused to share something with your brother or sister. The Bible says that our sin deserves punishment. But Jesus didn't deserve to be punished.

Jesus was crucified along with two criminals.

John 19:17-19

Carrying the cross by himself, he went to the place called Place of the Skull (in Hebrew, Golgotha). (18) There they nailed him to the cross. Two others were crucified with him, one on either side, with Jesus between

them. (19) And Pilate posted a sign on the cross that read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

Because Jesus is God's perfect Son, He had no hatred for the crowd even as they cried out for His death. If only they would have realized who He really was.

Luke 23:34

Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing." And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice.

Although the soldiers nailed Jesus to the cross and mocked Him as the blood flowed from His hands and feet, Jesus still loved them and had compassion on them. As Jesus looked down from the cross upon them, He asked His Father to forgive them.

At this point, Jesus said He was thirsty, so they soaked a sponge in some wine and held it up to his lips with a stick.

John 19:30

When Jesus had tasted it, he said, "It is finished!" Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Jesus knew that His mission here on earth was finished and the Scriptures were now fulfilled, so He cried out, "*It is finished!*" and died on the cross, taking the punishment for all sin forever.

Christ's payment for sin applies to everyone. John 3:16 says, that God, the Father, gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. His suffering on the cross paid for all sin; yet, not everyone will automatically go to Heaven.

You must repent and believe that Jesus' death on the cross satisfied God's wrath against your sin. To *repent* is to stop sinning and to turn away from your sins. To *believe* in Jesus means to trust in what Jesus did on the cross to save you from the punishment of for your sin.

When you come to the understanding that you are a sinner and in need of forgiveness, come to God in prayer and to tell Him that you know you are a sinner and believe that what Jesus did on the cross paid the punishment you deserve. Then, ask Him to come and fill your life with His Holy Spirit to help you live your life in a way that pleases Him.

John 5:24

"I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life.

Have you ever told God that you want forgiveness of your sins and eternal life? If not, you can do so right now.

Closing Prayer

Father, I am a sinner, deserving of eternal punishment and separation from You. But thank You that you made a way for me to come to heaven when I die. Thank You, Jesus, for what You did for me on the cross. What suffering was Yours to have all the evil in the world put on You — You, who knew no sin! Thank You, that Your forgiveness is available for all. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

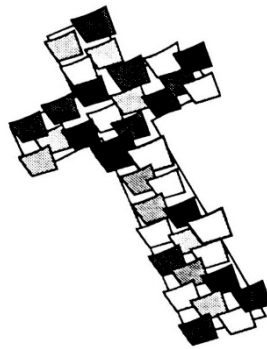
Learning Activities

Lesson Review Activity

You can review the story by placing the following items into a bag. As you take out each object, explain the story, or ask the children to tell you what the object means:

- Bread — last supper
- Coin — Judas betrayed Jesus for money
- Rope — Jesus' hands were tied

- Purple cloth — Jesus was mocked in a purple robe
- Thorns — Jesus wore a crown of thorns
- Cross — Jesus died on a cross
- Nails — nails pierced his hands and feet
- Sponge — they gave him vinegar on a sponge
- Spear (wooden skewer/toothpick) — they pierced his side
- White cloth — His burial linen
- Stone — the stone that sealed Jesus' tomb



Craft Corner

Mosaic Cross

Using a paint brush, have the children “glue” multi-colored tissue-paper squares on a construction paper cross with starch.

Game Center

Use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. Where was Jesus when the soldiers came and arrested him? (Garden of Gethsemane)
2. Who betrayed Jesus with a kiss? (Judas)
3. When Jesus was arrested, did He try to get away? (No)
4. When Jesus was arrested, who ran away? (All the disciples)
5. Who denied he knew Jesus three times? (Peter)
6. What did they do to Jesus to make fun of him? (They blindfolded, beat, spit on Him, put a purple robe on Him.)
7. Why would Jesus allow men to accuse Him of lying and treat Him so cruelly? (Because He loves us so much!)
8. What was the name of the governor that found no fault in Jesus? (Pilate)
9. Did Jesus defend Himself before Pilate? (No.)
10. What did the crowd do when Pilate wanted to release Jesus? (They demanded Jesus be put to death.)
11. What prisoner was released instead of Jesus? (Barabbas)
12. Why did Pilate sentence Jesus to die if he thought that He was innocent? (He was more concerned about his own reputation.)
13. What did the soldiers put on Jesus' head? (Crown of thorns)
14. What did they whip Jesus with? (A strap of leather embedded with pieces of metal and bone.)
15. Who helped carry Jesus' cross? (Simeon)
16. Where was Jesus crucified? (Golgotha, Place of the Skull)
17. Who was crucified with Jesus? (Two robbers.)
18. What did Jesus cry out from the cross right before He died? (“It is finished!”)
19. What does it mean to “*believe in Jesus*”? (That you trust in what Jesus did for you on the cross.)
20. Have you ever been punished for something you did not do?

The Resurrection

(Matthew 27, 28; Mark 16, and John 20)

Introduction

Have you ever been sad because someone you loved had gone away? Has anyone you loved very much died? [Teacher, allow the children to discuss.]

There was a woman, one of Jesus' followers, that was very sad because Jesus had died. Jesus was the best friend she had ever had. Before Jesus had changed her life, no one loved her. She probably thought now that Jesus was dead, her life will never be the same again. Little did she know the big surprise that she was going to experience...

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You that we serve a living God. We look forward to seeing You face-to-face. Until then, may we walk worthy of Your calling us Your sons and daughters. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. (John 5:24)

Lesson

[Teacher, we will be reading verses from Matthew, Mark, and John. Put bookmarks into the children's Bibles before class to help them locate the various passages more quickly.]

For the past few Sundays we've been learning about the last week of Jesus' life. Last week we discussed His trial and crucifixion. Today we pick up the story right after He died on the cross.

After Jesus died, a man named Joseph asked the Roman soldiers if he could take Jesus' body down off the cross and bury it.

Matthew 27:57-60

As evening approached, Joseph, a rich man from Arimathea who had become a follower of Jesus, (58) went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. And Pilate issued an order to release it to him. (59) Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a long sheet of clean linen cloth. (60) He placed it in his own new tomb, which had been carved out of the rock. Then he rolled a great stone across the entrance and left.

Joseph was a secret disciple of Jesus, an honored religious leader. In the past, Joseph had been afraid to speak against the religious leaders who opposed Jesus. Now he boldly came forward and courageously asked to take Jesus' body from the cross and to bury it.

Matthew 27:62-66

The next day, on the Sabbath, the leading priests and Pharisees went to see Pilate. (63) They told him, "Sir, we remember what that deceiver once said while he was still alive: 'After three days I will rise from the dead.' (64) So we request that you seal the tomb until the third day. This will prevent his disciples from coming and stealing his body and then telling everyone he was raised from the dead! If that happens, we'll be worse off than we were at first." (65) Pilate replied, "Take guards and secure it the best you can." (66) So they sealed the tomb and posted guards to protect it.

Early the next morning Mary Magdalene and her friends decided to go to the garden where Jesus was buried. They brought spices so they might wrap Jesus' body according to the customs of that day. [Teacher, they wrapped the corps like a mummy.]

Mark 16:1-3

Saturday evening, when the Sabbath ended, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome went out and purchased burial spices so they could anoint Jesus' body. (2) Very early on Sunday morning, just at sunrise, they went to the tomb. (3) On the way they were asking each other, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?"

Grave stones weighed tons, these women knew there was no way they could move it. Yet, they went to the tomb in obedience to the Holy Spirit not knowing what to expect.

Matthew 28:2-4

Suddenly there was a great earthquake! For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled aside the stone, and sat on it. (3) His face shone like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. (4) The guards shook with fear when they saw him, and they fell into a dead faint.

The angels did not roll away the stone from the entrance to the tomb so Jesus could get out. He could have left easily without moving the stone. It was rolled away so others could get in and see for themselves that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead, just as He said he would do.

Meanwhile, a group of religious leaders was plotting how to cover up the story.

Matthew 28:11-15

As the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and told the leading priests what had happened. (12) A meeting with the elders was called, and they decided to give the soldiers a large bribe. (13) They told the soldiers, "You must say, 'Jesus' disciples came during the night while we were sleeping, and they stole his body.'" (14) If the governor hears about it, we'll stand up for you so you won't get in trouble." (15) So the guards accepted the bribe and said what they were told to say. Their story spread widely among the Jews, and they still tell it today.

At the same time as the religious leaders were plotting to cover up the story, back at the tomb the angel invited the women to see the empty tomb.

Mark 16:4-8

But as they arrived, they looked up and saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled aside. (5) When they entered the

tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a white robe sitting on the right side. The women were shocked, (6) but the angel said, "Don't be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He isn't here! He is risen from the dead! Look, this is where they laid his body. (7) Now go and tell his disciples, including Peter, that Jesus is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there, just as he told you before he died." (8) The women fled from the tomb, trembling and bewildered, and they said nothing to anyone because they were too frightened. [Then they briefly reported all this to Peter and his companions. Afterward Jesus himself sent them out from east to west with the sacred and unfailing message of salvation that gives eternal life. Amen.]

Since Mary knew that the disciples would not have taken Jesus' body, she believed that grave robbers had stolen it. So, she ran to tell the disciples...

John 20:2

She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, "They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

Peter and John ran to the tomb and found it empty except for the linen burial cloths in which Jesus had been wrapped.

John 20:3-7

Peter and the other disciple started out for the tomb. (4) They were both running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. (5) He stooped and looked in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he didn't go in. (6) Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, (7) while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings.

The fact that the grave clothes were all left as if Jesus had passed right through them was the first sign that a robbery had not taken place. The headpiece was neatly folded up and lying to the side. A grave robber couldn't possibly have made off with Jesus' body and left the linens as if they were still shaped around it.

The disciples returned home, but Mary remained outside the tomb crying.

John 20:10-11

Then they went home. (11) Mary was standing outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she stooped and looked in.

When Mary looked inside the tomb once again, she saw two angels dressed in white, sitting where Jesus' body had been.

John 20:12-13

She saw two white-robed angels, one sitting at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying. (13) "Dear woman, why are you crying?" the angels asked her. "Because they have taken away my Lord," she replied, "and I don't know where they have put him."

Mary turned around and saw a man she assumed to be the gardener.

John 20:14-15

She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn't recognize him. (15) "Dear woman, why are you crying?" Jesus asked her. "Who are you looking for?" She thought he was the gardener. "Sir," she said, "if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him."

The man asked Mary why she was crying and she told him that she wanted to find Jesus. When the man called Mary by name, she immediately realized that He was Jesus.

John 20:16

"Mary!" Jesus said. She turned to him and cried out, "Rabboni!" (which is Hebrew for "Teacher").

When Jesus called Mary by name, she recognized His voice, realizing that He was her Lord who had truly come back to life! Mary was no longer sad, but rejoiced knowing that the Lord Jesus had died and risen for her!

Jesus instructed Mary to tell the disciples that she had seen Him.

John 20:17

"Don't cling to me," Jesus said, "for I haven't yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

Mary did not want to lose Jesus again. But when He asked her to go to the disciples and tell them the good news, she immediately obeyed Jesus.

John 20:18-21

Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, "I have seen the Lord!" Then she gave them his message. (19) That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them! "Peace be with you," he said. (20) As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord! (21) Again he said, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you."

Mary did not meet the risen Christ until she had discovered the empty tomb. Like Mary, we cannot know Jesus as our Lord and Savior until we believe without a doubt that He is indeed alive and that His tomb truly was empty. Mary was so full of joy she couldn't wait to tell others about Jesus. She wanted to share the good news of Jesus' resurrection with the disciples and others. We, too, should be excited to tell others that He wants them to rise with Him and live with Him forever in heaven.

Isn't it wonderful that because Jesus arose from the dead you will too, if you have received Him as your Savior. Jesus told us something very important...

Review the memory verse: John 5:24

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

In conclusion...

Jesus' resurrection is the key to our Christian faith:

- He does not lie! Just as He said, Jesus rose from the dead. We can be confident, therefore, that He will accomplish all He has promised.
- He is alive and He wants a relationship with us! Jesus' bodily resurrection shows us that the living Christ, not a false prophet or imposter, is ruler of God's eternal kingdom. (All other religions have dead leaders — Mohammod, Buddha, etc.)
- Death is not the end — there is future life! We can be certain of our own resurrection because Jesus was resurrected.
- Resurrection power is available to us! The same divine power that brought Jesus back to life is now available to us to bring our spiritually dead selves back to life.
- The resurrection is the basis for the church's witness to the world.

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord, You are alive! You have proven Who You are — the God of all gods. Because You live, we have hope; we can face tomorrow! Thank You! In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities**Lesson Review Activity**

Review the story by placing the following items into a bag. As you take out each object, explain the story, or ask the children to tell you what the object means:

- Bread — last supper

- Coin — Judas betrayed Jesus for money
- Rope — Jesus' hands were tied
- Purple cloth — Jesus was mocked in a purple robe
- Thorns — Jesus wore a crown of thorns
- Cross — Jesus died on a cross
- Nails — nails pierced his hands and feet
- Sponge — they gave him vinegar on a sponge
- Spear (wooden skewer/toothpick) — they pierced his side
- White cloth — His burial linen
- Stone — the stone that sealed Jesus' tomb

Game Center***Drama Activity***

Don't miss acting out this lesson, it's so exciting! Bring pieces of fabric or towels, a robe for Jesus, bed sheets for the angels. Use your imagination for the props and costumes. Reading from Matthew 28:1-10, narrate the story using a children's, easy-to-understand Bible.

Pictionary Game

Play *Pictionary* or *Charades* using lesson themes from the past few weeks. Alternate between teams. Give one minute to guess the topic. If Team A guesses correctly they get 1,000 points. If team A doesn't guess it, but Team B does, then Team B gets 500 points.

Lesson Theme Idea:

- Triumphal Entry (Palm Sunday)

- Last Supper (bread & wine)
- Jesus Washes His Disciple's Feet
- Crucifixion
- Resurrection (empty tomb)
- Ascension (Jesus rises to heaven)
- Holy Spirit comes (tongues of fire)
- Lame man is healed

Cut the following into game cards:

Triumphal Entry (Palm Sunday)	Last Supper (bread and wine)	Jesus Washes Disciple's Feet
Garden of Gethsemane	Crucifixion	Resurrection (empty tomb)

Ascension (Jesus rises to heaven)	Holy Spirit comes (tongues of fire)	Lame man is healed
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Or, Use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. Who buried Jesus in his own tomb? (Joseph)
2. What was put across the entrance of Jesus' tomb? (A stone)
3. After Jesus died, what were the Pharisees afraid might happen? (That someone might try to steal His body.)
4. What did the women see when they went to Jesus' tomb? (They saw that the stone had been rolled away)
5. What did the angel say had happened to Jesus? (He is risen! He is not here.)
6. Who saw Jesus first after His resurrection? (Mary Magdalene)
7. Where did Jesus say the disciples should go to see Him? (Galilee)
8. Who told the guards to lie about what happened? (The chief priests and elders)
9. What were Jesus last instructions to His disciples? (*"Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you."*)

Jesus Appears on the Emmaus Road

(Luke 24:1-43)

Introduction

Who knows why we celebrate Easter? [Let the children respond.] Yes, we celebrate the fact that Jesus came back to life. That's good news! We worship a living God!

We know that 40 days after our Lord's resurrection, He returned to the glories of Heaven where He is right now, sitting on the throne of God. But have you ever wondered what He did for those 40 days here on earth before He went up to heaven?

For the next few weeks, we are going to learn about some of the times Jesus appeared to His disciples after His resurrection and before He ascended back up to Heaven.

Opening Prayer

Father, sometimes we can lose sight of the fact that You are a living God, walking right beside us every moment of every day. Help us to trust in You, even though we cannot see you. Help us to remember that You have a plan and a purpose in everything that happens to us even when we don't understand what's happening in our lives. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. (Luke 24:31a)

Lesson

The Lord Jesus had died a painful death by being nailed to a cross. He gave His life because He was taking the punishment for your sin and my sin. He suffered so that you and I can be forgiven of our sin. (1 Corinthians 15:3b, 4) and given eternal life. He died and was buried in a tomb and His followers were full of sorrow. They thought they had lost Jesus forever.

Has someone that was really important to you died? Perhaps a Grandmother? Losing someone can be devastating. When Jesus died on the cross, His followers felt a deep sense of loss and hopelessness.

As it turned out, Jesus did not go straight up to Heaven when He died. He actually came back to life and was here walking around on earth. For 40 days after His resurrection, Jesus appeared to His followers at different times and different places.

The first ones to see the risen Lord was Mary Magdalene and some other women who had gone out to the tomb very early the morning after His crucifixion.

Luke 24:1-3

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. (2) And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, (3) but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

Two angels were there and asked the women why they were looking for Jesus. They said, "*He isn't here! He is risen from the dead!*"

So, they ran back to tell the disciples what happened. But the disciples didn't believe them.

That same day, the day after Jesus' death and burial, two of Jesus' followers decided to walk to the village of Emmaus. It was seven miles from Jerusalem, so they had a long time (about 3 hours) to talk about all these things that were so heavy on their hearts—everything that had happened to Jesus—His arrest, His death, His burial.

Luke 24:13-14

That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened.

These two men thought that Jesus was going to be a great political ruler and would rescue Israel from the Romans. They didn't understand that Jesus had come to rescue people's souls.

While they were walking and talking, a third Man joined them, He was a stranger to them.

Luke 24:15-16

While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. (16) But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

Why do you think these two men didn't recognize Jesus? [Teacher, let the children discuss this.] Perhaps because Jesus was the last person they expected to see, it didn't register that it was Him. Maybe it was because they were so consumed with sadness and disappointment, they weren't looking for Jesus.

Sometimes we can be like that, too. We can be so caught up in our own troubles that we don't even realize that Jesus is walking right alongside of us.

It can be hard to remember that God has a plan and a purpose in everything that happens to us in our lives. We can be so distracted by our own thoughts and worries that we don't even realize that Jesus is at work in our lives.

There's a lesson here for us: We are to keep our eyes open for Jesus! God is always working...even when life is puzzling! Even though we don't see Jesus and even when it seems like all hope is lost, Jesus is still at work in our lives!

Jesus asked them what they were talking about.

Luke 24:17

And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad.

The men stopped walking. They couldn't believe this Man hadn't heard about everything that had been going on.

Luke 24:18

Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?"

In other words, Cleopas said, "Where have you been all week? Haven't you heard about the terrible things that have happened?"

Luke 24:19-20

And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him.

And, they explained to Jesus that religious leaders handed Him over to the Roman government to be condemned to death by crucifixion.

Luke 24:21-24

But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. (22) Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, (23) and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. (24) Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see."

They couldn't stop talking about what had happened.

Then the Man said to them, "Why do you find it so hard to believe? The Messiah's death and resurrection had been predicted by the prophets. Don't you believe your scriptures?"

Luke 24:25-26

And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! (26) Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"

The Man showed them how the prophets had written about the Messiah all the way through the Bible, from the first book to the last. The prophets had clearly predicted that He must suffer before entering glory.

The whole Bible speaks of Jesus.

Luke 24:27

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

The Man opened their minds to understand the Scriptures; He showed them that it was written long ago that the Messiah must suffer and die and rise from the dead on the third day. (See verses 45-46)

These two men were so interested in what this stranger was teaching them that when they reached Emmaus, they asked Him to stay overnight.

Luke 24:28-29

So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, (29) but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them.

Why do you think Jesus "acted as if he were going farther"? He wanted them to invite Him in rather than inviting Himself in. In the same way, He wants us to ask Him into our hearts! Jesus is just waiting for us to invite him into every area of our lives.

When they all sat down to eat, the stranger asked God to bless the food. Then He took a small loaf of bread and broke it and passed it to them.

Luke 24:30-31

When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. (31) And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight.

How did these men suddenly know it was Jesus? In verse 35 it says, "He was known to them in the breaking of the bread". Perhaps, they saw the nail prints in His hand. Or, maybe they remembered what Jesus had done at the Last Supper. (Remember, Jesus told His disciples that the bread and wine were symbols of His body and blood.) The fact was that Jesus revealed to them at that moment that it was Him; He was alive! But just as quickly as they recognized Jesus, He disappeared.

Luke 24:32

They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

The men were so excited, they said, "We must go at once to Jerusalem and tell the others that Jesus truly is alive!"

Luke 24:33-34

And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, (34) saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"

Then the two men shared their good news.

Luke 24:35

Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Then, just as He had suddenly disappeared from them, while they were talking, Jesus suddenly stood before them. He reappeared!

Luke 24:36-37

As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!" (37) But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit.

The men were so surprised, it scared them. They thought He was a ghost!

Luke 24:38-40

And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? (39) See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." (40) And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.

Jesus said, *"Don't be afraid! It is really Me!"* Then He let them touch the nail marks in His hands and feet just to prove it was really Him.

Then, just to be sure they knew He was really alive, He asked them for something to eat.

Luke 24:41-43

And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" (42) They gave him a piece of broiled fish, (43) and he took it and ate before them.

It was hard to believe! But Jesus was alive! Just as He had promised.

These two men thought that they had lost Jesus forever. They thought that all hope was lost. But even though they couldn't recognize Jesus, he was still with them.

Jesus is with us today and he is at work in our lives, even if we can't see him or if things seem bad. Jesus gave us ways to remember him by, one of which is the breaking of bread.

Jesus is waiting for us to invite him into every area of our lives and as we live closely with him and talk to him regularly, He teaches us about himself!

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You that you give us hope even when all seems lost. Help us to have the faith to invite You into our lives to teach us about Yourself. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Game Center

"Who?" "What?" or "Why?" —

Before class, write several Who, What, and Why questions pertaining to the lesson. Cut a triangle, a square, and a circle in the bottom of a cardboard box. Make the openings big enough for a beanbag. Decorate the box and label the shapes "Who?," "What?," and "Why?"

When a child throws a beanbag through a shape he may select a card of the corresponding shape with a question to answer for points for his team.

Or, use the following review questions in a time of discussion or a game of your choice:

1. Why do we celebrate Easter? (We celebrate the fact that Jesus came back to life. We worship a living God!)
2. What village were the two men walking to? (Emmaus)
3. What were the two men talking about as they were walking to Emmaus? (Everything that had happened to Jesus—His arrest, His death, His burial.)
4. Who came and walked with these two men? (Jesus)
5. What prevented these two men from recognizing Jesus? (They weren't expecting to see Jesus; or, they were too concerned about their own problems to see Him.)
6. What did Jesus explain to these men? (Jesus taught them how the prophets had written about the Messiah all the way through the Bible, from the first book to the last. The prophets had clearly predicted that He must suffer before entering glory.)

7. Why do you think Jesus “*acted as if he were going farther*”?
(Jesus wanted them to invite them into their home.)
8. Why did these men suddenly know it was Jesus? (Perhaps, they saw the nail prints in His hand or they remembered what Jesus had done at the Last Supper.)
9. The two men walking to Emmaus did not realize Jesus was walking right beside them. Is it easy for us to see Jesus? Why is it we can't see Jesus in our lives at times? (We can be so caught up in our own troubles that we don't even realize that Jesus is walking right alongside of us. Even though we don't see Jesus and even when it seems like all hope is lost, Jesus is still at work in our lives!)
10. It says that when Jesus suddenly appeared to them, they thought it was a ghost. Why do you think they were afraid or shocked? (Seeing Him alive again was shocking! They'd never seen anyone raise themselves from the dead.)

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit
<https://www.FreeChildrensMinistryLessons.com>]

Jesus Appears to Thomas

(John 20:19-29)

Introduction

Do you ever wonder if God is really listening to your prayers? We all have moments of doubt. When He doesn't answer our prayers right away, we wonder if He really cares about us or if He is even there. God isn't upset with us when we doubt Him; He uses these times as opportunities to grow our faith. With God's help, our doubt can be transformed into faith.

One of Jesus' disciples went through a time of doubt. He had seen Jesus do many miracles. He had even seen Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead, but he just couldn't believe that Jesus had come back to life. Today we are going to learn how Jesus turned his doubt into faith.

Opening Prayer

Father, we desire that You would give us all stronger faith. Please help us to trust You, even when we are going through times of trial in our lives. Show us You are real so our faith can grow. Amen.

Memory Verse

And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved..." (Acts 16:31)

Lesson

We've been learning about what Jesus did for the 40 days He was here on earth between the time He rose from the dead and the time He went up to heaven.

The first one to see the risen Lord was Mary Magdalene. She had gone out to the tomb very early the morning after His crucifixion while it was still dark. When she got there, she saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.

She looked in and saw that the tomb was empty. So, she ran back to tell the disciples, but they didn't believe her.

That same day, two men were on their way to Emmaus. As they were walking along, Jesus joined them. They didn't recognize Him at first. Do you remember from last week's lesson how they finally realized it was Jesus? (They recognized Him when He broke the bread.)

Then, the moment they recognized Him, He disappeared! So, these two men ran back to Jerusalem to tell the disciples what happened.

They found the disciples hiding in a room. They were afraid the Jews would come after them next.

While these two men were telling the disciples about meeting Jesus on the road to Emmaus, suddenly he appeared.

John 20:19

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

How did Jesus suddenly enter the room? [Teacher, let the class discuss.] Apparently, our resurrection bodies are not like our earthly bodies! At any rate, it must have freaked them out when He suddenly appeared in the room because the first thing He said was, "Peace be with you."

John 20:20

When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

Why do you think He showed them the wounds in his hands and his side? He wanted them to see with their own eyes and believe that He was really alive! Jesus knew their fear and He wanted to comfort them. See how in verse 21 He says to them again, "Peace be with you."

They were filled with joy when their spiritual eyes were opened and they recognized it was really the Lord. He turned their fear into faith!

Unfortunately for Thomas, he had missed seeing Jesus!

John 20:24

Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came.

We don't know why Thomas wasn't there. But, for some reason Thomas was not present when all the other disciples saw Jesus after His resurrection.

John 20:25

So, the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."

Why didn't Thomas believe the other disciples when they told him they had seen the Lord? [Teacher, let the class discuss.] Thomas hadn't seen Him personally and he wasn't about to believe this incredible story! He was saying, *"If you can't prove it, I won't believe it!"* He wanted to see Jesus' wounds for himself.

But Jesus didn't want Thomas to doubt that He was alive.

John 20:26

Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."

Eight days later the disciples were again huddled together in a room. They were still afraid the Jews would come after them like they did Jesus. This time Thomas was with them. And, again, even though the doors were locked, suddenly Jesus stood among them.

John 20:27

Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe."

Jesus wanted Thomas to believe that He was alive!

John 20:28

Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"

Thomas fell on his knees and with tears streaming down his face said, *"You are my Lord and my God!"* Thomas didn't doubt anymore. He had seen with his own eyes that Jesus was alive. He had seen Jesus' wounds in his hands and side.

John 20:29

Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Jesus wasn't scolding Thomas for not believing He was alive. He knew Thomas honestly wanted to know the truth. God wants all of us to search for the truth.

Thomas is a good example to us. He refused to say he understood when he didn't, he refused to pretend to believe when he didn't. And when he *did* understand and believe, he went all the way and properly called Jesus Lord and God.

While Thomas was saying, *"Show me and I will believe!"*, Jesus tells us if we believe, then He will show us Himself. God will reveal His power to us in our lives if we trust in Him without actually seeing Him.

Even though God is invisible we need to trust and believe that He is.

Thomas refused to believe until He saw Jesus in person. We must have faith to believe even when we cannot see God with our eyes. If we use our spiritual eyes, we can certainly know that He is working in our lives.

There are many things in life that we cannot see yet we know they exist. For example, we know that germs exist because we can see their effect. Some people can get sick from the Corona virus and even die from it.

We don't need to doubt Jesus is alive today. We can see His effect in the lives of people. We have proof He lives from the Bible and from other Christians who share what Jesus means to them.

How do *you* know that Jesus is alive? Can you tell me about a time that Jesus touched your life? Perhaps He healed you, or protected you, or provided miraculously for your family. (Teacher, share a personal testimony with your class.)

How would you recognize Jesus if you met him? What things would he be doing/saying? How have you recognized Jesus at work in your life before? E.g., answered prayers, other people's kindness.

Jesus turned Thomas' doubt into faith. And He wants to transform your doubts into faith, too.

Closing Prayer

Father, Thank You that You sent Jesus to die on the cross for our sins. Thank You that You raised Him from the dead so that we can know without any doubts that Jesus is alive; we serve a living Savior! In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Game Center

Use the following review questions in a time of discussion or a game of your choice:

1. Who was the first one to see the risen Jesus? (Mary Magdalene.)
2. Why didn't people recognize the risen Jesus? (He was the last person they expected to see; they thought He was dead!)

3. Why were the disciples hiding in the room? (They were afraid the Jews would come after them like they did Jesus.)
4. How was it possible for Jesus to disappear and reappear? (He was in His resurrection body.)
5. Why did Jesus show them the wounds in his hands and side? (To prove it was really Him.)
6. Who was Thomas? (He was one of Jesus' disciples.)
7. Why didn't Thomas believe the disciples when they said Jesus was alive? (He wanted to see Jesus for himself.)
8. What did Jesus say to Thomas? ("*Peace be with you.*" Then, "*Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.*")
9. How did Thomas' doubt become faith? (When he saw Jesus wounds in his hands and side.)
10. Because we can't see the nail prints in Jesus' hands and feet, what must we do to be saved? (Believe in Him. We must trust Him without actually seeing Him.)
11. How has God helped your faith to grow?
12. How do we know that Jesus is alive? (The Bible tells us that He rose from the dead and didn't die again. He was taken up into heaven through the clouds.)
13. How would you recognize Jesus if you met Him? What things would He be doing or saying?

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Jesus Appears in Galilee

(John 21:1-17)

Introduction

Have you ever made a mistake? We all mess things up from time to time; sometimes we mess up in small ways, like forgetting to put the eggs in a cake mix. Or sometimes we mess up in big ways, like hurting our friend's feelings.

Have you ever really sinned against someone? I have! [Teacher, discuss with class. Give an example from your own life. Be sure to include how God reconciled your sin through forgiveness and gave you the confidence to continue serving.]

When you blow it, what do you do? Do you just try to ignore it and pretend it didn't happen? Or do you own up to your sin?

Sometimes we can be so embarrassed with ourselves it's hard to hold up our heads. But, let me tell you, you never know how God can use what happened for our good and His glory! God can take our mistakes and turn them into something new and meaningful. We sin and mess things up, but Christ was sent to restore us!

Today we're going to learn there is no sin too awful to bring to Him. No matter what we do, if we have a truly repentant heart, God is always ready to forgive us. He has a plan and a purpose for your life because you are His precious child.

Opening Prayer

Father, we make so many mistakes, but we know You offer a new beginning every time we seek forgiveness. Thank You for loving us and helping us become more like You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

*The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.
(Lamentations 3:22-23)*

Lesson

We've been learning about what Jesus did for the 40 days He was here on earth between the time He rose from the dead and the time He went up to heaven.

The first one to see the risen Lord was Mary Magdalene. She had gone out to the tomb very early the morning after His crucifixion while it was still dark. She looked in the tomb and found that it was empty. So, she ran back to tell the disciples, but they didn't believe her.

The next ones to see Jesus were the two men walking to Emmaus. They walked and talked with Jesus for 7 miles. They didn't know it was Him until they had dinner that night and He took the bread, broke it, blessed it, and gave it to them. At that moment, their spiritual eyes were opened and they recognized Him. The moment they recognized Him, He disappeared! So, these two men ran back to Jerusalem to tell the disciples what happened.

While these two men were telling the disciples about meeting Jesus on the road to Emmaus, suddenly He appeared. But as we learned last week, Thomas wasn't there. He missed the whole thing.

At first Thomas refused to believe the other disciples when they told him that they'd seen Jesus alive. But then, 8 days later, Jesus reappeared and this time Thomas was there.

Today we're going to learn about another time Jesus appeared to the disciples after His resurrection. This was about a week later while some of the disciples were fishing on the Sea of Galilee.

John 21:3

Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

They fished all night and didn't catch a single fish. When morning came, the men were tired and hungry. So, they started to row in to shore and they saw a Man standing on the beach.

John 21:4

Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.

There was Jesus standing on the shore, but the disciples didn't recognize Him.

John 21:5-6

Jesus said to them, "Children, do you have any fish?" They answered him, "No." (6) He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So, they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish.

Even though they had fished all night and hadn't caught a single fish, they obeyed this Stranger on the beach. And when they did, their nets became so full of fish they could barely haul the net in!

There's a lesson here for us! If we are obedient, things will go well for us. If you obey Jesus, He will bless your life.

John looked at this enormous catch of fish and he thought, "*There's only one Man that could do something this wonderful!*"

John 21:7

That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea.

When John yelled, "*It is Jesus*", Peter got so excited that he jumped out of the boat and swam as fast as he could to shore. He didn't want to wait for the others to row the boat in. He wanted to be with Jesus!

Do you ever get really excited about spending time with Jesus?

John 21:8-9

The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off. When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread.

Jesus built a campfire and called His disciples to come and eat.

Question: Where did Jesus get the fish?

John 21:12

Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord.

After breakfast Jesus took Peter aside. Now before we go on with the story, let me remind you of a terrible thing that Peter did before the Lord was crucified. He really messed up.

The Roman soldiers had come and arrested Jesus and they took Him and beat Him and whipped Him until His back was bloody. They put a purple robe on Him and pushed a crown of thorns on His head and they spit on Him and made fun of Him because He had said, He was the King of the Jews.

While they were doing all this to Jesus, Peter was in the crowd watching. What do you think Peter was thinking and feeling as he watched Jesus being so cruelly treated? [Let the class discuss.]

Three times while Peter was watching what the Romans were doing to Jesus, some people pointed at Peter and accused him of being one of Jesus' followers. Peter was so scared that the Romans would come after him and beat him up like they were doing to Jesus that all three times he lied and said that He didn't even know Jesus.

Have you ever lied? How did you feel? Did you feel guilty? Peter felt so guilty for denying that he even knew Jesus that he wept bitterly.

Now back to our story. The disciples had just eaten breakfast with the Lord on the beach and Jesus took Peter aside...

John 21:15

*When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "**Feed my lambs.**"*

When Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him, He used the Greek word *agape*, which is God's kind of perfect love. But when Peter answered, he used the word *fileo* [Fi-Leo], which is a word for "brotherly love". In other words, Jesus asked, "Do you love me" and Peter responded, "I like you."

Then Jesus told Peter to "Feed my lambs".

Then Jesus asked Peter the same question a second time.

John 21:16

*He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "**Tend my sheep.**"*

Again, Jesus asked, "Do you love me" and Peter responded, "You know that I like you."

This time Jesus told Peter to "Tend my sheep."

Then Jesus asked Peter a third time.

John 21:17

*He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "**Feed my sheep.**"*

This time Jesus used *fileo*. He asked Peter, "Do you even like Me?" And this saddened Peter. He said to Jesus "You know everything. You know that that I like you."

Jesus didn't doubt Peter's love. Jesus knew that Peter loved Him as a brother. But Jesus was calling Peter to a higher and deeper level of love. Jesus didn't want Peter to simply like Him; Jesus wanted Peter to love Him with all his heart so that he could be a strong and confident witness.

Why do you think that Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved Him? [Let the class discuss.]

Just as Peter had denied knowing Jesus three times, the risen Jesus asked Peter to affirm his love three times.

Notice that Jesus gave Peter a very special job to do.

Jesus told Peter to "Feed my lambs" (vs 15), "Tend my sheep" (vs 16) and "Feed my sheep" (vs 17).

Was Jesus telling Peter He wanted him to become a shepherd?

No, when Jesus told Peter, to "feed" and "tend" His sheep, Jesus wasn't talking about the kind of sheep that have wool and go *bah, bah, bah*.

How many of you have pets at home? Is it important to feed and care for your pet? Well, the Bible tells us that God is our Good Shepherd. He thinks of His followers as His precious little lambs that need to be fed and cared for.

So, when Jesus was talking about His "sheep", He was thinking about the people who followed Him and loved Him. Jesus knew that He was going to go back to His heavenly Father soon and He wanted to make sure Peter would teach and care for the people who would be left on earth without Him. Jesus wanted to know that they were going to be fed and looked after by leaders like Peter.

Jesus knew that Peter was truly sorry that He had lied about even knowing Him. So, even though Peter had messed up and lied about knowing Him, Jesus wanted Peter to know that he was forgiven and that He still wanted him take care of His people, His precious lambs.

How happy Peter was to be able to tell others about Jesus. Ten days later, Peter preached a sermon and three thousand people came to believe in Jesus that day!

Jesus had forgiven Peter and restored him to right standing.

Even when we mess up and sin, if we confess our love for Jesus, He is faithful to forgive us and to give us a fresh start in life. God is merciful and always ready to forgive.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for Your mercy and grace. Thank You that you are so willing to forgive us and to restore us to right standing with You. Give us opportunities to share Your love with others and to take care of their needs. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Game Center

Fishing Game

Write questions on the back of fish shapes. Put a paperclip on each "fish" and put them all into a bucket. Make a "fishing pole" using a dowel and string with a magnet on the end. Let children "fish" for the questions. On a felt board, put point values on the back of felt fish shapes. On a correctly answered question, the child chooses a felt fish to win points for his or her team.

Or, use the following review questions in a time of discussion or a game of your choice:

1. Who was the first one to see the risen Jesus? (Mary Magdalene.)

2. Who were the second ones to see the risen Jesus? (The two men walking to Emmaus.)
3. Why didn't these followers of Jesus recognize Him after His resurrection? (Teacher, let the children discuss this. Perhaps it was because Jesus was the last person they expected to see, it didn't register that it was Him.)
4. After they fished all night and caught nothing, what did Jesus tell the disciple to do? (Cast their nets on the other side of the boat.)
5. What would have happened if the disciples had refused to throw their nets on the other side of the boat? (They would have missed out on having breakfast with Jesus on the beach!)
6. How was it that John figured out it was Jesus? (He knew there was only One person that could perform such a miracle.)
7. What did Peter do when John yelled, "*It's the Lord*"? (He jumped into the water and swam ashore. He wanted to be with Jesus.)
8. What did Jesus want to teach the disciples by giving them the huge, miraculous catch of fish? (That He alone can do the impossible. He will supply all their needs. If you obey Him, He will bless your life.)
9. What was Jesus doing while the disciples were coming ashore? (He built a fire and was fixing breakfast.)
10. Why did Peter deny the Lord? (Peter was so scared that the Romans would come after him and beat him up like they were doing to Jesus, that he lied and said that He didn't even know Jesus.)
11. Why did Jesus ask Peter three times if he loved Him? (Just as Peter had denied Jesus three times, the risen Jesus asked Peter

to affirm his love three times. Jesus wanted Peter to know he was totally forgiven and restored to right standing with God.)

12. What was Jesus talking about when He told Peter to “*Feed my lambs*” and “*Tend my sheep*”? (Jesus wanted Peter to teach and care for His followers.)

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Jesus' Ascension

(Acts 1:3-11)

Introduction

Have you ever waited anxiously for something to happen? Did someone promise to take you somewhere? Perhaps you know the anticipation of waiting for your birthday or for Christmas? How does it feel to anticipate a wonderful experience that you can barely stand to wait for? [Teacher, let the children discuss.]

Jesus has promised that He's going to come back to get us! What an exciting day that will be! In the same way we anticipate our birthday, we should be anxiously expecting Him at any moment!

Opening Prayer

Father, it is a thrill to think that Jesus is coming back to get us. I can't wait to see Heaven! I know it must be such a wonderful place. I'm so excited to see You, too. And, I'm excited also this morning to learn more about Your ascension into heaven and Your promise to return. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

And now, dear children, remain in fellowship with Christ so that when He returns, you will be full of courage and not shrink back from Him in shame. (1 John 2:28 NLT)

Lesson

For the past few Sundays we've been learning about the 40 days after Jesus rose from the dead and before He went back up to heaven. During that time Jesus appeared at different times to His disciples. These had been the most exciting days of the disciples' lives! Their beloved Friend, the Lord Jesus, had risen from the dead! There could be no doubt that He was alive!

Acts 1:3

He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

How did Jesus prove to His disciples He came back to life? [Lead the children in a review of His various appearances.]

For forty days, the disciples talked with Him, ate with Him, and in His hands and feet they saw the scars where nails had held Him on the cross.

Acts 1:4-5

And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; (5) for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

The disciples were confused about what Jesus was talking about.

Acts 1:6-7

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (7) He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority."

The disciples were still hoping that Jesus was going to become their earthly king and free Israel from Roman power.

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Jesus was telling them that He was not going to set up His kingdom on earth now. He had to go back to the Father in heaven so that the Holy Spirit could come to help them and to teach them. [Teacher, see also John 14:16-17, 26; 16:7-8, 13-15]

There is only one God, but He is a three-part God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. You can think of it like the

corner of the ceiling: there is a wall, another wall, and a ceiling that make up one "corner".

If Jesus had stayed on earth as a human, he could only be in one place at a time. The Holy Spirit can be present everywhere because He is a spirit so He can help everyone all at the same time.

The Spirit gives us comfort, guides us into all truth, reminds us of God's word, gives us the right words to say to others, and fills us with the power to live our lives in a way that pleases God. The power of the Holy Spirit gives us the courage to say "No!" to sin, and "Yes!" to God's way of thinking and acting. If you believe in Jesus, you have the power of the Holy Spirit in your life right now!

As He finished speaking, Jesus went up into the air, right before their eyes!

Acts 1:9

And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

Imagine the disciple's shock when they saw Jesus going up into the clouds alive! Suddenly He was gone! Even though He had told them He was going, they didn't feel ready to see Him leave. Perhaps they had forgotten that He had promised to come back again.

Jesus will come back suddenly and without warning! It could be during your lifetime. It could be anytime. If you have asked Jesus to come into your life, you have become a child of God and someday you will live with Him forever in heaven!

Will you be glad to see Him when He returns? God wants us to stay in fellowship with Him so that when He comes, we will not be ashamed of ourselves. [Teacher, review the Memory Verse.]

What are some things you don't want to be caught doing when Jesus returns? [Teacher, let the kids discuss this topic: disobeying your dad, being rude to your mother, cheating in a game or on a test at school, being angry with your brother or sister, saying a bad word.]

Jesus could return at any time. When He does, will you be ready for His return? The disciples were amazed when they saw Jesus go up, think how surprising it will be when He comes back!

After the cloud hid Him from sight, the disciples stared at the sky.

Acts 1:10-11

And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, (11) and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

Who were these two men in white robes? (Angels)

Two angels appeared, standing right there beside them and told them Jesus will come back again from heaven in a cloud. Although no one except God knows when this will take place, we do know that God always keeps His promises.

Each day remind yourself that today could be the day of His return! In everything you do, ask yourself, "*Is this what I want Jesus to find me doing when He comes back?*" When you are tempted to think or say or do anything that you know is not pleasing to the Lord, ask the Holy Spirit to give you the strength to say, "No!"

Jesus is coming back and He wants us to be ready so that we'll be happy to see Him.

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, You are coming soon. I want You to catch me doing something good. We want to be pleasing to You in everything that we think, say, and do. Help us to call upon the power of the Holy Spirit to say, "No!" to sin and to continue to live close to You every day. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Cloud Cards: Prepare a cloud-shaped card for each student. On it print in large letters: “**Perhaps today!**” Add 1 John 2:28 in smaller print below the two words. This card could be small enough to be set up “tent style” on a table or large enough to hang on the wall. Encourage the children to use it each day as a reminder of Christ’s return so they will choose behavior that would please Him.

Game Center

Heaven Concentration: Prepare 16 identical white clouds for the flannel board or tacky board. On the back, write one of the following messages; use each message twice:

- God is powerful
- No more death
- No crying there
- A city of pure gold
- No night there
- No pain there
- A river clear as crystal
- 12 Gates, each one pearl

Ask a review question, and the child that answers tries to find two matching statements about Heaven. If the pieces match, remove them. If not, replace them and ask the next question.

Or, use the following review questions in another game of your choice:

1. Why was the Lord Jesus nailed to a cross? (He gave His life because He was taking the punishment for my sins.)
2. How did the disciples feel when they realized Jesus had risen from the dead? (They were excited!)
3. How many days did Jesus walk on earth between His resurrection and His ascension? (Forty days.)
4. What did Jesus do with His disciples after He rose from the dead? (He talked and ate with them.)
5. At first they were terrified and frightened and thought He was a ghost. How did He convince them it really was Him? (He showed them his hands and feet and let them touch Him. Finally he asked for food.)
6. Why did the disciples ask Jesus, “*Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?*” (They still thought Jesus was going to become their king and free Israel from Roman power.)
7. What did Jesus tell the disciples they would receive when the Holy Spirit came? (Power.)
8. Explain the relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (There is only one God, but He is three persons. Like the three states of water.)
9. Why was it necessary for Jesus to go back to the Father? (So the Holy Spirit could come. Because Jesus is physical, He could only be in one place at a time. The Holy Spirit can be everywhere at once.)
10. Why is it good to have the power of the Holy Spirit? (He gives us courage, boldness, confidence, insight, ability, and authority.)

11. How did Jesus go up into Heaven? (A cloud received Him out of their sight.)
12. When will Jesus come back? (Only God knows the exact time; but it could be any time.)
13. What do you want to be caught doing when Jesus returns? (Something good!)
14. What's an important thing to remind yourself each day? (That this could be the day of His glorious appearing!)

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit
<https://www.FreeChildrensMinistryLessons.com>]

Names of Jesus

(Isaiah 9:6)

Introduction

When you pray, do you ever end your prayer by saying, "in the name of Jesus"? Why do you do that? Have you ever wondered what that means exactly?

Today we're going to look at what Jesus' name means and what praying in His name is all about.

Opening Prayer

Lord, You are the King of kings and the Lord of lords. You are the creator of the universe and the author of our faith. There is no one like You! I ask You this morning, in the power of Your name, to open our spiritual understanding so that we might know You better and fall more in love with You. Help us to learn the lesson You want to teach us. In the power of Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6)

Lesson

The third commandment is "*You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.*" The word *vain* means *worthless, useless, foolish, silly, without success or result; and in a disrespectful manner.*

What are some examples of using God's name in vain or disrespectful ways? [Teacher, let children respond.] Have you ever heard someone say, "*Oh my God*" just in the course of their conversation? That is a careless and useless way to use God's name.

The way we use God's name conveys how we really feel about Him.

We should respect his name and use it appropriately, speaking it in praise or worship rather than in curse or a disrespectful way.

What's in a name?

Today, people's names don't carry much meaning, but the people of Bible times took names very seriously. In those days a man's name represented his character. *Jesus* is a Greek form of the Hebrew name *Joshua*. It was a common name and means *the Lord saves*. Just as Joshua had led Israel into the Promised Land, so Jesus would lead His people into eternal life. Jesus' name stands for His power and authority to save us from Satan's power and to lead us into eternal life with Him. God's name is special because it carries His personal identity.

When you end your prayers "*in the name of Jesus*" what you are saying is, "*by the authority of Jesus.*" You are showing who gives the power and authority to do what you've asked for. What you're doing is telling God that you know that if He answers your prayer and gives you the desire of your heart, it won't happen in your own power; it will be God working through Jesus to accomplish what you've asked for.

It is in Jesus' name that people are healed, demons are banished, and sins are forgiven. You are not to use Jesus' name as magic; you are to use it in faith. Remember that it is Jesus himself, not merely the sound of His name, who gives our prayers their power.

Names for Messiah

Before Jesus was even born, Isaiah used five special names to describe the coming Messiah in Isaiah 9:6:

Name	Significance
Wonderful	<i>Wonderful</i> means <i>marvelous, astonishing, unusually good, admirable, supernaturally amazing</i> — beyond anything you've ever known before. Jesus is awesome and full of wonder. You could spend your whole life time learning about Jesus and He will never cease to amaze you.

Name	Significance
Counselor	A <i>counselor</i> is one that gives advice. Jesus never gives us bad advice. God's way is always perfect. He would never lead you to do a wrong thing.
Mighty God	God is all-powerful. He created the world by just speaking it into existence. There is nothing our God cannot do.
Everlasting Father	He is timeless; He had no beginning and He will have no end. He is God our Father; guarding us, supplying and caring for our needs. He's not like our earthly fathers who will sometimes let us down or disappoint us. He will never leave us nor forsake us. He always has our best interest in mind.
Prince of Peace	We can know His peace (Ephesians 2:13-18). In the middle of a hard time in life, we can draw upon the Lord for wholeness if we feel like we're just falling apart; prosperity if we feel like we're poor in spirit; and tranquility if we're anxious or angry and feeling agitated.

Because He is the Mighty God, He can be a true Father to His people, He can bring lasting peace, and He can give counsel that is truly wonderful.

Names and Titles of Jesus

There are hundreds of names for Jesus in the Bible. If a name says something about a person's character, what do these titles of Jesus mean to us? (Teacher, write these on the board.)

Name	Reference	Significance
Advocate	1 John 2:1	Like a legal defender, Jesus pleads our case before the Father.
Faithful and True	Rev 19:11	There is never any glitch in any of His other characteristics. He is always fair, merciful, full of grace, tenderhearted, etc.
Savior	Tit 3:6	He paid the price for our sin; He rescued us from the power of Satan and from the penalty of hell.
The way, the truth, and the life	John 14:6	There is no other way to be saved!

It's important to always use the name of God in a meaningful and respectful way. Next time you ask God for something and end your prayer by saying, "*in Jesus' name, Amen*" you are saying to God that because you know He is almighty, He is able to do whatever you ask. You know He can answer your prayer. And, because you know He is full of mercy and grace, he will answer your prayer if it is the best thing for you. You also know that because He loves you with a perfect love, you can trust that He will never give you anything that would be bad for you. So, if He doesn't give you what you're asking for, it could be that you're not ready for it or it's just not as good for you as you may think it might be.

In any case, He's a good God and He's well worth our praise and worship.

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You that You are so wonderful! I can't imagine what life would be like without knowing You. Thank You that You are a God that hears and answers prayers. Your ear is always bent towards us, listening to our prayers. And thank You that You are a God who loves to give Your children good things. It's wonderful being your kid, Lord. And, we look forward to being with You for all eternity in Heaven. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen!

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Have the children make a collage by writing the names of Jesus on a paper in creative ways using colorful markers, different sizes, etc.

Game Center

Use the following questions in a game of your choice:

1. In Bible times, what special significance did people's names have? (A man's name represented his character.)
2. What does the name "Jesus" mean? (The Lord Saves.)
3. What importance does Jesus' name have? (It stands for His power and authority to save us from Satan's power and to lead us into eternal life with Him.)
4. What are some of the names Isaiah used to describe Jesus? (Wonderful, Counselor, Almighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.)
5. What does *Wonderful* mean and how does this describe Jesus? (Marvelous, amazing. Jesus is awesome in all His ways.)
6. What does *Counselor* mean and how does this describe Jesus? (One that gives advice. God's way is perfect.)
7. What does *Mighty God* mean and how does this describe Jesus? (All powerful. There is nothing God can not do. Jesus is able to do all we ask.)
8. What does *Everlasting Father* mean and how does this describe Jesus? (Timeless; Guardian. Before the beginning began, Jesus was! God supplies all our needs.)
9. What does *Prince of Peace* mean and how does this describe Jesus? (Jesus is our peace in every circumstance.)
10. What are some other names of Jesus? (*Advocate, Faithful and True, Savior, The way, the truth and the life.*)
11. When you pray in Jesus' name, what are you saying to God? (You know that He is able to do what you've asked and is willing to do it if it's the right thing for you.)

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Names of Jesus

(Isaiah 9:6)

For unto _____ a _____ is born,

*Unto us a _____ is given...And His name
will be called*

_____, _____, _____

_____, _____

_____, _____ of

_____.

The “I Am’s” of Jesus

(Part 1)

Introduction

Who knows what a word picture is? A word picture is a way of using words to describe an idea so that you can imagine it in your mind. For example, if I said, “*It is darker than the inside of a cat*” you’d know that there is no light at all, not even the glow of the moon or a street light. What comes into your mind if your mom said, “*Your room looks like a tornado hit it?*”

Word pictures use common, everyday things to describe feelings and other concepts that you can’t see with your physical eyes — things that you must use your imagination to understand.

To help us understand Him in a deeper and more meaningful way, the Lord Jesus used word pictures that compared Him to everyday things people are familiar with.

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, we do want to know You and understand You with the deepest part of our understanding. Open the eyes of our heart and mind this morning as we study some of the word pictures that You used to describe Yourself. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.” (John 6:35)

Was Jesus saying he was a loaf of bread? No! He was using a word picture to give you an idea of what He is like. We’ll be talking more about that in just a minute.

Lesson

Remember when Moses met God in the burning bush and asked Him what His name was?

Exodus 3:13-14

But Moses protested, “If I go to the people of Israel and tell them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ they will ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what should I tell them?” (14) God replied to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. Say this to the people of Israel: I AM has sent me to you.”

God was saying, “I am the One who is.” In other words, He never had a beginning and He will never have an end. He was before the beginning began. He created the whole universe!

Jesus is God come to earth in the form of a human. He came so that we could get to know God for who He really is. In describing Himself to His disciples, Jesus often called Himself, “*I am*” and the people knew He was saying that He was equal with God.

This morning we’ll be looking at some of the “I Am’s” of Jesus.

1. Alpha and Omega

Revelation 22:13

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, like our A and the Z. Jesus was saying that He is the beginning and the end; that He has always existed. He was present before the world began, and He will still be present after it is gone.

He created all things: the galaxies, the world, and everything in it — including you and me.

Colossians 1:15-16

Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, (16) for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see—such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him.

He keeps all systems going — orbits, gravity, tides, seasons, day and night. By telling us He is the Alpha and the Omega, Jesus is reminding us that He will never leave us. He will be with us forever. He should be the One we put first in our lives.

2. Bread of Life

In teaching his disciples, Jesus told them that just like the Father gave the Israelites manna from heaven during their 40-year journey through the wilderness to the Promised Land, the Father gives Jesus to people during their journey through life towards heaven.

John 6:32-35

Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, Moses didn’t give you bread from heaven. My Father did. And now he offers you the true bread from heaven. (33) The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” (34) “Sir,” they said, “give us that bread every day.” (35) Jesus replied, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

Jesus was comparing Himself with bread, a common, everyday thing that everybody can understand. [Teacher, before class cut a slit in the bottom of a round loaf of French bread and pull out a little of the bread. Tuck a pocket-sized New Testament in the loaf. During the pre-session activity, have the children come and break bread with you. They will be amazed to find the Bible inside the loaf and will make the connection between the Word of God and the bread. Ask them what similarities they see in the qualities of bread and Jesus.]

Bread is the basic food of life (the staff of life). You and I cannot live very long without eating, can we? Bread brings you nourishment and makes you grow. In the same way that food is the only source of life here on earth, Jesus is the only source of eternal life.

As our bodies feel hunger for food, so our souls feel hunger for forgiveness and peace. Only Jesus can satisfy the hunger of your soul. Just as bread will not do you any good unless you take it into your body, Jesus will not save you until you receive Him as your Savior from sin. Once you do, the Lord will continue to “feed” you spiritually through His Word.

3. Light of the World

Jesus also compared Himself with light, another common, everyday thing that everybody can understand.

John 8:12

Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, “I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won’t have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.”

Have you ever been in a place that was “darker than the inside of a cat?” When it’s completely dark you can’t see where you’re going, can you? You can’t even see your own hand held up in front of your face. If you were trying to go somewhere you could stumble and fall or get lost. You might end up on the wrong path, one that would lead you to the edge of a cliff.

Darkness is often used as a symbol of evil, sin, and ignorance. Jesus says He is the Light of the World. He is not one of many lights; He is the only “light” that can make our spiritual darkness disappear. He is like the sun that shines on everyone in the whole world. To come into the “light,” a person must admit he is in the darkness of his sin and receive Jesus as Savior.

Just like the sun is the physical light of the world, Jesus is the spiritual light of the world. [Teacher, use a flash light to show how Jesus turns

your darkness into light. Show how it lights up a dark room.] Jesus' life brings light to mankind. In His light, [Shine the flashlight on each child...] we see ourselves as we really are (sinners in need of a Savior). When we follow Jesus, the true Light, we can avoid walking blindly and falling into sin. He lights the path ahead of us so we can see how to live. He removes the darkness of sin from our lives. If you let Jesus guide your life, you'll never need to stumble in the darkness.

Believers are also called, "*the light of the world*":

Matt 5:14, 16

"You are the light of the world... (16) In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father."

We are not the source of the light; Jesus is. [Teacher, compare the flashlight battery to Jesus. The torch is useless without it.] As the moon reflects the light of the sun, so we are to reflect the truth and purity of the Lord Jesus to everyone around us.

Closing Prayer

Jesus, thank You for using so many great word pictures to describe Yourself to us. We can understand what it means when you say You are the bread of life or the light of the world because we know what bread and light are like. These word pictures give us a deeper understand of who You are. We always want to be hungry for You, Lord Jesus. Help us to continue to feed upon Your word so that we might know you better every day. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Centers

Craft Corner

Have children draw pictures of the three ways Jesus described Himself in today's lesson: A-Z, Bread, and Light. As they work on their pictures have them explain how Jesus is like these things.

Game Center

Use the following questions in a game of your choice:

1. What is a word picture? (A way of using words to describe an idea so that you can imagine it in your mind.)
2. What did God tell Moses His name is and what does it mean? (I Am, meaning God is and He always was and will always be. He never had a beginning and never will have an end.)
3. When Jesus described Himself to people and said, "I Am" what did people think He was telling them? (That He is equal with God.)
4. What does Alpha and Omega mean? (They are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet.)
5. What did Jesus mean when He said He was the Alpha and the Omega? (He is the beginning and the end; that He has always existed.)
6. How is Jesus like bread? (Bread brings us nourishment. Food is the only source of life here on earth; Jesus is the only source of eternal life. Only Jesus can satisfy the hunger of your soul.)
7. If your body feels hunger for food; what does your soul hunger for? (Forgiveness and peace with God.)
8. How can you "feed" your soul? (By reading God's word, praying, fellowshiping with other believers, etc.)
9. How is Jesus like a light? (He shows us the darkness of our sin and shows us the right way to live.)
10. How are we also called, "*the light of the world*"? (Like the moon reflecting the light of the sun, we are to reflect the truth and purity of the Lord Jesus to everyone around us.)

The "I Am's" of Jesus

What "I Am" did Jesus use? Fill in the name and draw a picture.

1. Jesus has always existed, even before the world began.

I Am _____ (Rev 22:13)

2. Just like the basic need of a human is food, Jesus is the only source of eternal life.

I Am _____ (John 6:35)

3. When we follow Jesus, we can avoid walking blindly and falling into sin.

I Am _____ (John 8:12)

The “I Am’s” of Jesus

(Part 2)

Introduction

Who knows what a word picture is? (A word picture is a way of using words to describe an idea so that you can imagine it in your mind.) Can you think of an example of using a word picture to get an idea across? If I told you, “*I feel like a million dollars*”, you’d know I felt really great about myself; very valuable to you. If I told you I bought a car that’s a *real lemon*, what do you think I’d be telling you? (I got a sour deal, the car is no good, things are wrong with it.)

Word pictures use common, everyday things to describe feelings and other concepts that you can’t see with your physical eyes — things that you must use your imagination to understand.

This morning we’re going to look at some more word pictures that the Lord Jesus used to describe Himself.

Opening Prayer

Father, again today we want to know Jesus on a deeper and more meaningful level. Will you open the eyes of our understanding so that we might see Him for who He really is? In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. (John 15:5)

Was Jesus saying He’s a plant? No! He was using a word picture to give you an idea of what He is like. We’ll be talking more about that in just a minute.

Lesson

Last week we looked at three-word pictures that the Lord Jesus used to describe Himself. Can anyone remember what they were? (Alpha and Omega, Bread of Life, Light of the World.)

When Jesus described Himself to people and said, “I Am”, what did people think He was telling them? (That He is equal with God.) Why? (Because God told Moses that His name is I Am.)

This morning we’re going to look at four more “I Am’s” of Jesus....

4. The Good Shepherd

When Jesus lived on earth, many of His countrymen kept sheep. Those who looked after the sheep were called shepherds. Jesus calls Himself the Good Shepherd, and He speaks of us who have received Him as His sheep.

John 10:11-15

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep. (12) A hired hand will run when he sees a wolf coming. He will abandon the sheep because they don’t belong to him and he isn’t their shepherd. And so the wolf attacks them and scatters the flock. (13) The hired hand runs away because he’s working only for the money and doesn’t really care about the sheep. (14) “I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me, (15) just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep.

Some shepherds took very good care of their sheep. Their animals ate well; they grazed and slept in safety. The Lord loves His “sheep.” As our Good Shepherd, Jesus makes a promise that He will provide us with everything we need (Psalm 23). As a shepherd protects his sheep from lions and bears, Jesus protects us from our enemy, the Devil, who is seeking to devour us (1 Peter 5:8).

Other shepherds were careless. Some shepherds were hirelings who did not own the sheep they cared for. When danger came, those shepherds would run away and leave the sheep unprotected.

A good shepherd, on the other hand, was willing to do anything to save his sheep — even if he had to give up his own life. Since Jesus, your Good Shepherd, gave His life on the cross to pay for your sin, you can surely trust Him to stay with you throughout your life, supplying all your needs (Hebrews 13:5, 6)

5. The Door

Jesus compared Himself to the door or gateway into a sheep pen.

John 10:6-10

Those who heard Jesus use this illustration didn’t understand what he meant, (7) so he explained it to them: “I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. (8) All who came before me were thieves and robbers. But the true sheep did not listen to them. (9) Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures. (10) The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.

At night the sheep were kept in a pen that had only one opening. There was no gate (or door) across that entrance. The shepherd himself would lie in the opening — he became the door. Then no one could go in or out of the pen unless they went by him. The sheep were safe as long as the shepherd was at the gate. Jesus is the only One who can grant us entrance into the kingdom of heaven. Once you are in His kingdom, you can rest safely, knowing that Jesus is your protector. He has also promised to be your Provider.

6. The Way, the Truth, and the Life

Jesus is the only way to God.

John 14:6

Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.

When you go on a trip, you have to choose the right roadway to travel so that you can reach the place you want to go. Jesus calls Himself

the Way because only by accepting Him as Savior can we reach heaven.

The Lord calls Himself the *Truth* because He was the only human being who completely understood, spoke, and lived truth. During His life on earth, He lived out the teachings of God’s Word perfectly.

Jesus calls Himself the *Life* because He brings life to our spirits, which start out as dead in sin. Jesus told Nicodemus, “*you must be born again.*” Spiritual life enables us to live each day pleasing to God. And because we have this new life, we will join the Lord in heaven forever.

7. The Vine

Jesus tells us that He is the Vine, and we are the branches.

John 15:5

“Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.

The vine is the main stem of a grape plant. It alone gives life and nourishment to the branches. Unless a branch is growing on the vine, it cannot live or produce fruit. Apart from Jesus, we do not have eternal life. Nor can we accomplish anything for Him. Without Jesus, we can do nothing.

One day one of Jesus’ disciples asked Him to show them the Father.

John 14:8-11

Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” (9) Jesus replied, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don’t know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you? (10) Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me. (11) Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe because of the work you have seen me do.

When Jesus described Himself with the words “I Am”, He was telling people that He is equal with God.

John 10:30-31

The Father and I are one.” (31) Once again the people picked up stones to kill him.

There was no doubt in the people’s minds that He was telling them that He is none other than God Himself. Some people reacted in a negative way and tried to kill Him when He’d tell them who He was.

What do you think? Was Jesus the “I Am”?

Closing Prayer

Jesus, thank You for using so many great word pictures to describe Yourself to us. We can understand what it means when you say You are the door. We know You’re not saying that you are a piece of wood that swings on a hinge, but that You are truly the only One who can grant us entrance into the kingdom of heaven. When You use word pictures to describe Yourself to us, it gives us a deeper understand of who You are. We always want to abide in You like a branch attached to a vine. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Have children draw pictures of the four ways Jesus described Himself in today’s lesson: Shepherd, door, way (road or path), and vine. As they work on their pictures have them explain how Jesus is like these things.

Game Center

Have the children work on the “I Am’s” of Jesus worksheet or send it home as a “Take Home” paper.

Use the following questions in a game of your choice:

1. When Jesus said, “*I am the Alpha and the Omega*” what does that tell you about God? (He’s the beginning and the end; He has always existed.)
2. When Jesus said, “*I am the bread of life*” what does that tell you about God? (Only God can satisfy the hunger of your soul.)
3. When Jesus said, “*I am the light of the world*” what does that tell you about God? (He shows us the darkness of our sin and shows us the right way to live.)
4. When Jesus said, “*I am the good shepherd*” what does that tell you about God? (He protects us from our enemy — the Devil, watches over us, and provides for our spiritual needs.)
5. How did Jesus prove that He was a good shepherd? (He gave His life on the cross to pay for our sin.)
6. Why did Jesus compare Himself to the door or gateway to a sheep pen? (He is the only One who can grant us entrance into the kingdom of heaven.)
7. Explain what Jesus meant when He said, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life*?” (He is the only way into God’s kingdom.)
8. What did Jesus mean when He said, “*I am the vine, you are the branches*?” (Apart from Jesus, we do not have eternal life; we’d be dead in our sins.)
9. Why do you know that Jesus is God? (He told us that He and the Father are one. And, because He rose from the dead, we can believe what He tells us.)
10. What are some word pictures Jesus used to describe Himself? (Bread, light, good shepherd, door, the way, vine)

11. If Jesus and the Father are one God, what are some qualities about God that you have learned as you have gotten to know Jesus better? (God will always be there for me. He will always provide for me and protect me from evil...)

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit
<https://www.FreeChildrensMinistryLessons.com>]

The "I Am's" of Jesus

What "I Am" did Jesus use? Fill in the name and draw a picture.

1. Jesus protects us from our enemy — the Devil, watches over us and provides for our needs.

I Am _____ (John 10:11-15)

2. Jesus is the only One who can grant us entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

I Am _____ (John 10:7-10)

3. Jesus is the only way into God's kingdom.

I Am _____ (John 14:6)

4. Apart from Jesus, we do not have eternal life.

I Am _____ (John 15:5)

