COMMUNITY OF CHRIST LESSONS

CHILDREN

29 NOVEMBER 2015–22 MAY 2016
COMMUNITY OF CHRIST LESSONS

Discipleship is grounded in spiritual formation and includes scripture study, worship, mission, peacemaking, and lifelong learning—for all ages. We invite you to use these lessons for your class, group, or congregation.

**Lectionary-based:** The weekly lessons connect the *Revised Common Lectionary* for worship with Community of Christ identity, mission, message, and beliefs.

**Quick, easy:** The lessons are designed for approximately 45-minute class sessions with two to three pages of ideas, discussion starters, and activities. Additional preparation help may be found in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*.

Lessons are available for these age groups:

- **Children (multiage, 6–11):** Help children engage in the Bible and introduce mission and beliefs with stories, crafts, and activities.

- **Youth (ages 12–18):** Engage teens in scripture study and provocative questions about identity, mission, and beliefs.

- **Adult (ages 19 and older):** Deepen faith and understanding with reflective questions, theological understanding, and discussion ideas.

Note: Unless otherwise noted, all Bible scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) Bible, copyright 1989, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 21:25–36

**Lesson Focus:** God’s Vision for Creation (Shalom)—Jesus is coming! Advent is the season of being alert and preparing for Jesus’ arrival. God’s vision for creation (shalom) can only happen if we follow Jesus and engage in acts of love and invitation.

**Objectives**

The learners will...

- play a game portraying what it means to be alert to Jesus’ coming.
- hear the Luke scripture passage of the call to get ready for Jesus.
- explore what we can do to prepare for Jesus’ coming.
- hear a story of transformation and love.
- create characters for a Christmas crèche.

**Supplies**

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Community of Christ Sings* (CCS)
- Flip chart and markers
- String or yarn and ring (See Be Alert game in Gather section.)
- Optional: house plants; figs or fig cookies for a snack
- Paper stars (pattern for photocopying at end of lesson), paper punch, tape, string, glitter glue. See “Follow the Stars” in the Respond section for details.

Supplies for this activity: Ivory® soap, glycerin craft soap (cut into cubes), or moldable air-drying children’s clay; table knives; toothpicks; waxed paper


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1 **GATHER**

Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson (15% of total lesson time)

Welcome children with a gathering song, “Jesu, Tawa Pano (Jesus, We Are Here)” CCS 71. Sing one time through; then invite children to join in. Insert each child’s name into the song (“Jesus, [child’s name] is here...”). Repeat for each child.

Today’s theme is “Be Alert!” (Ask children if they know what alert means.) Being alert means to be aware, to watch, to pay close attention. Let’s play a Be Alert game.

**Be Alert Game**

Ask children to stand in a circle, facing inward. Unroll a long piece of yarn or string and have children hold it taut with their hands apart, palms down. Once all the children in the circle are holding on, cut the rope or yarn. Slide a ring onto the yarn and tie the ends together.

Choose a child to stand in the middle of the circle, close her or his eyes, and count to ten. Tell children to pass the ring around the rope from hand to hand, keeping the string taut. Children should move their hands whether they are moving the ring or not. Call out “Stop!” after a short time. The child in the middle makes three guesses who has the ring. If she or he guesses correctly,
the one who has the ring moves into the middle. If the child cannot identify who has the ring, he or she trades places with a child who has not yet had a turn in the middle. Play the game several times, and children will become more and more alert to the ring’s movement. Discuss:

Is it difficult to watch for the ring, to be alert? Is it fun?

Offer an opening prayer.

2 ENGAGE
Invites exploration and interaction
(35% of lesson time)

Who’s Coming?
In today’s scripture passage, Jesus told a parable. Read the following scripture from the Gospel of Luke.

Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see certain things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near.


Jesus said you can tell spring is coming because the trees begin to sprout leaves.

• If we look around us and are alert, what holiday do we know is coming next? (Christmas)
• What have you seen to know Christmas is coming? (church decorations, holiday store displays, family planning for Christmas)

This is the season of the year called Advent. Advent means coming; something is about to happen. It is the time when we look forward to and prepare for Jesus’ coming.

Read from the Gospel of Luke:

Jesus said, “So when you see signs in the sun, the moon, the stars, and earth, then you will see me coming... Be alert and pray that you will have strength when I come” (Luke 21:25–36, adapted).

Jesus is coming—God’s son who taught us how to live our love of God and taught us how to care for others. Jesus’ coming means that God’s vision for creation can occur if we work together and help make it happen.

God’s vision is justice, hope, happiness, harmony, and beauty. Jesus teaches us to care for one another, help one another, and treat one another kindly. When we work together and follow Jesus, we can make this vision happen!

Is it difficult to watch for the ring, to be alert? Is it fun?

Offer an opening prayer.

3 RESPOND
Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of lesson time)

Follow the Stars
Invite children to think of ways to help those who come to church prepare for Jesus.

Photocopy and cut out enough blank stars to create a path to the front of the sanctuary. Distribute stars to children and invite them to write one idea about preparing for Jesus on each star. Think of ideas as a group; encourage children to suggest ideas. These can be listed on a flip chart for children to copy. Stars can then be decorated with supplies provided. When they are dry, create a “trail” of stars to the altar or the front of the sanctuary by taping stars to the walls or floor or hanging them from the ceiling. The children’s ideas of preparing for Christ’s coming should enrich all who pass by.

A Christmas Miracle
(an optional activity continuing each Sunday throughout Advent)

The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey should be read in parts during the weeks of Advent. Show the cover of the book. Tell children this story shows how God’s vision of love and peace, as told in the Christmas story, can bless people. Each week, the children will carve or mold an object so that by Christmas they will have created their own crèche. Have one or more samples of nativity sets for them to model. Choose either moldable craft clay or soap that can be carved with plastic knives. Check the Internet for soap carving tutorials, or ask someone who is gifted in sculpture to help with this project.

This week, begin the story and stop after the sheep is carved. Discuss:

• Why was Jonathan Toomey called gloomy?
• Why did the widow and her son go to Mr. Toomey’s?
• What did the boy Thomas say the sheep should look like?

Provide supplies for children to carve or mold a sheep. Keep their creations in a safe place each week until all are done on Christmas Sunday to take home.

Advent Game
All children stand up and follow the instructions of the leader who makes statements that include the phrase “Jesus is coming.” All statements should connect with the good that happens when Jesus comes. Children should only follow the instructions if the phrase “Jesus is coming” is added. You may add other ideas to this list:

- If there is new life, Jesus is coming. Take one step forward.
- When you love nature, Jesus is coming. Hop on one foot.
- Twirl in a circle. (If children twirl, say, “Stop! I didn’t say Jesus was coming!”)
- When love is being shared, Jesus is coming. Twirl in a circle.
- If you invite others and make friends, Jesus is coming. Take a giant step forward.

Gather children into a circle, and ask children to complete this prayer sentence: “I love you, God. This week I will help prepare for you by...”

Sing a goodbye song, “Go with Us, Lord” CCS 612. Sing through once, and then insert each child’s name as a blessing (“Go with [child’s name], Lord...”). Offer a closing prayer of blessing.
SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (LOVE)


Lesson Focus: Peace of Jesus Christ—Jesus is coming! Advent is the season of preparing for Jesus’ arrival. John the Baptizer is the guide, the one who prepared the way of Jesus and called persons to repent and be baptized.

Objectives
The learners will...

- hear about John the Baptizer who called persons to repent in preparation for Jesus’ coming.
- learn the steps of repentance.
- engage in the Christmas story by creating a Christmas crèche.

Supplies
- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- Community of Christ Sings (CCS)
- Large cookie baking sheet, fine sand, two wooden spoons

Supplies for this activity: Ivory® soap, glycerin craft soap (cut into cubes), or moldable air-drying children’s clay; table knives; toothpicks; waxed paper

1 GATHER
Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson (15% of total lesson time)

As the children enter the room or gather for the lesson, deliberately make mistakes while preparing the lesson or in arranging the classroom. Suggestions:

- Drop something on the floor.
- Place a chair backwards.
- Display a picture upside down.
- Begin to write something on a flip chart, and cross it out.
- After each error say, “I’m sorry; I made a mistake.” Then correct the mistake.

Gather children with a song, “Jesu, Tawa Pano (Jesus, We Are Here)” CCS 71. Sing one time through; then invite children to join in. Insert each child’s name into the song (“Jesus, [child’s name] is here…”). Repeat for each child. Offer an opening prayer.

2 ENGAGE
Invites exploration and interaction (35% of lesson time)

John the Baptizer—the Guide to Jesus
Discuss with children:

- How did you get to church this morning? (*parents or other adults drove them or they walked*)
- Would you be able to find your way by yourself? Do you know the way?
- Could you tell someone the way to get here?

Today’s scripture passage tells us about John the Baptizer. Read to children or ask a child to read from the Bible.

The word of God came to John in the wilderness. John went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. As the prophet Isaiah wrote, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
'Prepare the way of the Lord [Jesus], make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'

—Luke 3:2–6, adapted

John, a relative of Jesus, was born for a specific reason—to "light the way" to Jesus—to tell others about Jesus and prepare them before Jesus came. John spent much of his time in the desert, the wilderness. He showed the path people were to follow to Jesus.

Show children a cookie sheet filled with sand. Create a curvy road with hills and valleys in the sand using a wooden spoon. Make an X representing where Jesus is at the end of the road. Then, using a second wooden spoon (representing John), show how John smoothed the path to lead people to Jesus. (Smooth the crooked path with the spoon, or draw a direct line to Jesus in the sand with the spoon.) John didn't literally smooth the path, but he taught people about Jesus. He was a guide who helped people prepare for Jesus or find their way to Jesus. He did this by preaching about Jesus—what to expect, what Jesus was like, how to get ready. He was called the Baptist or the Baptizer because he baptized people.

**SEND**

Explores how the lesson might be lived out (10% of lesson time)

**A Christmas Miracle** (optional)

Continue *The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey* from where you ended last week, and stop after the cow is carved. Remind children that this tells how God's vision of love and peace, as shown in the Christmas story, can bless people. Provide supplies for children to carve or mold a cow. If they wish, they may also carve an angel this week. Discuss:

- Was Mr. Toomey changing in his attitude toward the widow and Thomas? How can you tell?
- Thomas said his cow should look “_______.” Why?

Keep their creations in a safe place each week until all are done on Christmas Sunday to take home.

**BLESS**

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope (5% of lesson time)

Sing a goodbye song, “Go with Us, Lord” CCS 612. Sing through once, and then insert each child's name as a blessing (“Go with [child's name], Lord…”).

Offer a closing prayer of blessing.
Focus Scripture Passage: Luke 3:7–18/3:12–25 IV

Lesson Focus: Grace and Generosity—In the season of Advent, we are challenged by John the Baptizer to be generous, loving, and just in preparation for Jesus’ coming!

Objectives
The learners will...

- hear John the Baptizer’s message to be generous and just in preparation for Christ’s coming.
- discover ways to share generously today and throughout the year.
- engage in the Christmas story by creating a Christmas crèche.

Supplies
- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- Community of Christ Sings (CCS)
- Flip chart, markers, thin markers
- Crunchy cereal, honey, milk, bowls, and spoons, or alternative snack
- “John the Proclaimer” skit, one copy for each learner
- Generosity cards (See instructions at end of this lesson.)
- Blank Christmas cards and envelopes—one or two for each learner

Supplies for this activity: Ivory® soap, glycerin craft soap (cut into cubes), or moldable air-drying children’s clay; table knives; toothpicks; waxed paper


1 GATHER
Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson
(15% of total lesson time)

Breakfast Bugs?
Gather children to share with you a breakfast based on the story of John the Baptist. The Bible tells us that John ate locusts, a good source of protein, and honey, which has many vitamins as well. Make a “locust and honey” cereal with honey and milk dribbled over crunchy cereal for breakfast with the children. (Adjust if you are aware of any allergies.)

After cleaning up, sing a gathering song, “Jesu, Tawa Pano (Jesus, We Are Here)” CCS 71. Sing one time through; then invite children to join in. Insert each child’s name into the song (“Jesus, [child’s name] is here…”). Repeat for each child.

Offer an opening prayer.

2 ENGAGE
Invites exploration and interaction
(35% of lesson time)

Note: You may create an alternate crunchy snack made of nuts, crackers, crispy cereal, and honey.

John the Proclaimer
Last week we learned about John the Baptist as a guide who called us to repent and follow Jesus. This week, we learn about John the Baptist as a proclaimer of the good news of Jesus Christ.
What is a proclaimer? (someone who announces or praises someone or something publicly) Today each of you can be a proclaimer of the words John said.

Give each child a copy of the skit on page 11. Ask for volunteers to act out the parts. Provide a rough camel’s hair cloak (a towel, for instance) for John to wear.

After the play, ask children what John proclaimed we are to do to prepare for Jesus’ coming.

- What did John say about repenting?
- What did John say about how we can be generous?
- What did John say about how to treat others?
- What did John say about Jesus?

In Community of Christ, we, too, proclaim Jesus Christ. Our mission statement is:

We proclaim Jesus Christ and promote communities of joy, hope, love, and peace.

Write the mission statement on a flip chart for children to read aloud. You might challenge the children to memorize it.

**RESPOND**

Takes the learners from hearing to doing (35% of lesson time)

Be Generous

John the Baptizer told us to prepare for Jesus’ coming by being generous, fair, and just. How can you be generous during Advent?

Send children on a hunt for the generosity cards (see instructions, end of lesson) prepared before class and hidden around the room or church. Tell children to find one or two cards and bring them back to the group. If they find more, they should share with a child who has none.

When children have returned with all the cards, invite them to read their cards to the group. If children want to exchange cards, they may. Then give children the Christmas cards you brought. On their Christmas cards, they should copy what their generosity card says, such as “I will offer a prayer sometime during a worship service,” and then sign the card. On the envelope, they should write the name of the person they will give this Christmas card to. You may need to help the children identify a deacon, an older person, or the name of someone in the congregation who would enjoy a particular card. Encourage children to give out their Christmas cards today—immediately before or after the worship service, if possible. Ask:

- How does it feel to gift yourself to someone? (If it seems a little frightening, God will be with you and bless you!)
- How can you continue to share yourself with this person throughout the year?

**A Christmas Miracle** (optional)

Continue *The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey* from where you ended last week, and stop after the wise men are carved. Remind children that this tells how God’s generosity and grace, as shown in the Christmas story, can bless people. Provide supplies for children to carve or mold the wise men to add to their own Christmas crèche. Discuss the story:

- How did Thomas want his angel to look?
- What did Thomas begin to carve? How did Mr. Toomey help Thomas be successful?
- How can you tell Mr. Toomey was changing?
- What did the widow do for Mr. Toomey?

Keep their creations in a safe place until all are done next Sunday to take home.

**SEND**

Explores how the lesson might be lived out (10% of lesson time)

Gather children into a circle, and ask children to complete this prayer sentence: “I love you, God. This week I will be generous like Jesus by…”

**BLESS**

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope (5% of lesson time)

Sing a goodbye song, “Go with Us, Lord” CCS 612. Sing through once, and then insert each child’s name as a blessing (“Go with [child’s name], Lord…”). Offer a closing prayer of blessing.
John the Proclaimer
(a skit based on Luke 3:1–18 in The Message and the NRSV)

One reader will be John the Baptizer and wear the cloak of “camel’s hair.” If you have a large class, pass the cloak from one child to another and share John’s lines. All other children will become the group of people who ask questions of John.

Narrator: John traveled around the region of the Jordan River, calling for people to be baptized to show that they were changing their hearts and lives. Crowds of people came to hear John and be baptized by him because it was the popular thing to do. They did not expect to have to change. But John proclaimed God’s vision of creation to them.

John: Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near! Your life is important to God. So is it growing, loving, and generous? Turn away from sin, and repent. Be baptized.

People: What are we supposed to do?

John: If you have two coats, give one away to a person who has none. If you have food, give some away to a person who has none.

Tax Collectors: What are we supposed to do?

John: Collect no more money than the law says.

Soldiers: What are we supposed to do?

John: Do not take money from anyone by bullying them. Be happy with what you have.

People: We’re waiting for the Messiah. Are you the Messiah?

John: No. I will baptize you with water, but someone greater than me will baptize with the Holy Spirit, for he is pure grace and generosity.

Narrator: And John continued to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.
### Generosity Cards

Print on brightly colored paper or card stock. Cut apart and hide around the classroom. When children find the cards, help them identify who older persons, deacons, and others are in your congregation. Write your own ideas in the blank spaces.

Children will transfer the message from the generosity card to a Christmas card, sign it, and write the recipient’s name on the envelope. Christmas cards can be delivered before or after the worship service today.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To an older person:</th>
<th>To the pastor:</th>
<th>To a deacon:</th>
<th>To a young child:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I will sit by you in church sometime.</td>
<td>I will say a prayer sometime during a worship service.</td>
<td>I will help collect the offering during a worship service.</td>
<td>I will sit by you in church sometime.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To a young child:</th>
<th>To a deacon:</th>
<th>To a new friend:</th>
<th>To the pastor:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I will read you a story sometime.</td>
<td>I will help you on cleanup day.</td>
<td>I will invite you to my house someday.</td>
<td>I will say a prayer sometime during a worship service.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To a church dinner planner:</th>
<th>To a greeter:</th>
<th>To a young child:</th>
<th>To a music leader:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I will help you with the next potluck or church dinner.</td>
<td>I will welcome people and give them a church bulletin.</td>
<td>I will read you a story sometime.</td>
<td>I will sing in a choir sometime.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (PEACE)

LESSON 4
20 December 2015


Lesson Focus: Blessings of Community—The gospel of Jesus Christ is best expressed in community where we live, love, share, proclaim, and find joy together.

Objectives

The learners will...

- hear the story of young Mary and her cousin Elizabeth who assure each other of the good news of God’s work in the world.
- identify mentors who help them learn about, live out, and share the gospel.
- engage in the Christmas story by creating a Christmas crèche.

Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- Community of Christ Sings (CCS)
- Flip chart and markers
- Drawing paper, markers or crayons


1 GATHER
Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson (15% of total lesson time)

Welcome children and gather them into a circle.

Today’s theme is “The World Is about to Turn.” Let’s play a turning game and see if we can discover what is about to turn.

Play a version of Duck, Duck, Goose in which children sit in a circle (preferably on the floor). They are all sitting ducks. A child is chosen (IT) who walks around the outside of the circle tapping children on the head, saying “Duck” with each tap. Randomly, IT taps a child and calls out “Goose!” That child (GOOSE) jumps up, chases IT around the circle in the same direction, and tries to tap IT before IT reaches the empty space. If IT reaches the space, GOOSE is now IT, and proceeds in the same manner.

That is the standard way of playing “Duck, Duck, Goose.” In this version, tell children that you will randomly yell out “Turn!” When you do, IT must turn and go the other direction, but so must GOOSE. Turning can quickly change the result of the game.

After a few rounds of this game, let children rest. Tell children that when John the Baptist came to proclaim the coming of Jesus Christ, he was announcing that the world would soon be turned around or even turned upside down, meaning that things would change. Jesus would become a new kind of leader who taught peace, love, and justice. The old ways and old laws would be done away with. A new vision for God’s creation was about to occur.
Sing “Jesu, Tawa Pano (Jesus, We Are Here)” CCS 71. Sing one time through; then invite children to join in. Insert each child’s name into the song (“Jesus, [child’s name] is here…”). Repeat for each child.

Offer an opening prayer.

**ENGAGE**
Invites exploration and interaction (35% of lesson time)

Mary and Elizabeth

We have talked about getting ready for Jesus to come, and we have learned about John the Baptizer and his message to get ready. But there were two other important people who were getting ready to help the world to turn. One was Mary, the mother of Jesus. The other was Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptizer.

The angel Gabriel came to Mary and told her that she would bear a son and name him Jesus, and he would be called “Son of God” (Luke 1:31–35, adapted).

The angel Gabriel came to Elizabeth saying she would bear a son and name him John, and he would go before him [Jesus] and prepare people for the Lord (Luke 1:13–17, adapted).

Mary and Elizabeth were related, but Elizabeth was much older. In today’s story, Mary visited Elizabeth, who was her friend, relative, and teacher.

In our church communities, we are not alone. We can turn to one another to learn, to understand, to love, and to help one another. We learn together about God’s vision for creation, about the peace that Jesus Christ is teaching us to share. We don’t have to do it alone. We have our community to help us.

Mary shared a beautiful song of joy and love and hope and peace. This story is found within the story “Mary, Elizabeth, and Their Babies” from The Lectionary Story Bible, Year C, pp. 28–29. Read this to the class.

**SEND**
Explores how the lesson might be lived out (10% of lesson time)

Gather children into a circle, and ask children to complete this prayer sentence: “I love you, God. This week I will celebrate Jesus’ coming by…”

**RESPOND**
Takes the learners from hearing to doing (35% of lesson time)

Who Supports You?

Last Sunday we made Christmas cards and gave them to people with whom we wanted to share our generosity. Some of those people might be people who give you support and guidance, your mentors. A mentor is a trusted friend who guides or supports you.

- To whom do you go if you need help deciding something?
- Who could teach you something you needed to know?
- How can you be a mentor or a friend?

Pass out paper and markers or crayons. Tell children to write a prayer, poem, or song of praise about their mentors or about people (parents, grandparents, teachers, for example) who help others. Children may also draw pictures of themselves and their mentor on the paper.

When all have finished, ask children to show their drawings or read their writings about their mentors to the class. Encourage children to share this writing and drawing with their mentors, perhaps as a gift for Christmas.

**A Christmas Miracle** (optional)

Continue The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey where you ended last week, and finish the book. Remind children that this tells how God’s generosity and grace, as shown in the Christmas story, can bless people. Provide supplies for children to carve or mold the baby Jesus and Mary to add to their own Christmas crèche.

- How did Thomas want his baby Jesus and Mary to look?
- What did the widow and Thomas bring to Mr. Toomey?
- Where did Mr. Toomey get the idea to carve Jesus and Mary?
- What caused Mr. Toomey to feel God’s generosity and grace?

Keep their creations in a safe place until after the service when children may take them home.

**BLESS**
Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope (5% of lesson time)

Sing a goodbye song, “Go with Us, Lord” CCS 612. Sing through once, and then insert each child’s name as a blessing (“Go with [child’s name], Lord…”). Offer a closing prayer of blessing.

Welcome children and gather them into a circle.

During Advent, we talked about getting ready for Jesus to come. Now Christmas Day is past.

Today’s theme is “Develop Disciples to Serve.” We are disciples—people who follow Jesus, who learn from him, and do what he did. Developing disciples are those who are learning, growing, and sharing their gifts as they continue to follow Jesus. When we share our gifts with others, they share their gifts, and on and on it goes. It’s like a game called Electricity.

Have children hold hands around the circle. Ask children to suggest gifts they can share. Select one who will start the electrical current by gently squeezing the hand of the child on his or her right. Each child will pass the current along by receiving a squeeze with one hand and passing it on with the other. Continue to ask about other gifts they can share, selecting different children to start the current each time. The game can go as long as you have time.

Ask: How can our giftedness spread like electricity from person to person? It happens when we prepare ourselves as disciples of Jesus Christ and continue to grow in our discipleship.

Sing “Jesu, Tawa Pano (Jesus, We Are Here)” CCS 71. Sing one time through; then invite children to join in. Insert each child’s name into the song (“Jesus, [child’s name] is here...”). Repeat for each child.

Offer an opening prayer.
Jesus, the Child

The only story of Jesus as a child tells us that Jesus was learning what he could do as a child of God.

Give out copies of the skit “Jesus, the Child.” Ask for volunteers to play Jesus, his parents, Mary and Joseph, and two teachers in the temple. After the skit, discuss:

• Do you think Jesus knew he was going to do something special?
• How do you think Jesus’ parents felt when they thought he was lost? How did they feel when they found him?
• Whose house did Jesus say he was in? What did he mean? Did his parents understand?
• What does it mean to say Jesus “increased in wisdom and in favor with God and people”?

Pass out copies of the coloring page “Jesus Increases in Wisdom.” Children can write in the dialogue balloons what Mary and Joseph might have said when they found Jesus. This coloring page can be completed in class or sent home with children.

Gifts Relay

Jesus knew his gifts and purpose at a young age.

• Do you know what your gifts or skills are? Review some ideas with the children such as skateboarding, riding a horse, spelling, or math. Some skills may relate to the gifts they received at Christmas.

Form children in two teams. On the wall, tape two large sheets of paper (such as newsprint or poster board) and give each player a washable marker. When you say “go,” players will run, one at a time, to the wall and write one skill or possession they have. For instance, they may write a skill like good singer, or a possession like skateboard. Children may write in any direction, large or small, to create a unique word-art poster of their combined gifts.

After each child has had at least two turns, seat teams at separate tables and give them the other team’s poster. Ask them to brainstorm how the gifts listed can be shared as Jesus would. For instance, if a gift is I love dogs, the team might write help at an animal shelter.

After some time, ask each team to share their ideas for using the other team’s gifts.

Give children index cards and ask them to pledge one deed they will do with one of their gifts in the next few weeks. Suggest that they share their ideas with their families.

SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived out
(10% of lesson time)

Gather children in a circle, and ask children these questions:

• What would you like to learn to do?
• What would you like someone to teach you?
• What have you taught yourself to do?

Ask children to complete this prayer sentence: “I love you, God. I want to grow in wisdom like Jesus. This week I will share one of my skills by…”

BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
(5% of lesson time)

Sing a goodbye song, “Go with Us, Lord” CCS 612. Sing through once, and then insert each child’s name as a blessing (“Go with [child’s name], Lord…”). Offer a closing prayer of blessing.
Jesus, the Child
(a skit based on Luke 2:49–52 NRSV)

Ask children to read the parts of the narrator, Mary, Joseph, and Jesus. They should imagine what their characters would be feeling and express those emotions as they read.

Narrator: Mary and Joseph had traveled with their son Jesus and many other families to Jerusalem. When it was time to go home, they were in a large group, and they thought Jesus was with them.

Mary: Wait! Jesus isn’t here!

Joseph: Let’s go back right away to find him.

Narrator: After three days, they found him in the temple courtyard with the teachers.

Mary: Jesus, why did you do this?

Teacher 1: He has been listening to us, and asking questions.

Teacher 2: We are amazed at what he understands.

Mary: Jesus, didn’t you know we would worry about you?

Jesus: Didn’t you know I would be in God’s house?

Narrator: Jesus went back to Nazareth with his parents, Mary and Joseph. He grew in years and in wisdom. He grew in favor with God and with his community.
Focus Scripture Passage: John 1:1–18/1:1–19 IV

Lesson Focus: Peace of Jesus Christ—Jesus came so we might become the children of God. We are not limited by our life, our skills, or what others think of us. All of us are children of God.

Objectives
The learners will...

- hear who Jesus is through reading the scripture passage John 1:1–18.
- identify how they can share their gifts as they continue to grow and learn—as Jesus did.

Supplies
- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- Community of Christ Sings (CCS)
- Flip chart and markers
- Flashlight
- Air-drying clay, carving tools such as plastic knives
- "Who Is Jesus?" handout (end of lesson) one for each child
- “John 1:1–14” reading page (end of lesson) one for each child
- Pencils or crayons


GATHER
Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson (15% of total lesson time)

Welcome children and gather them into a circle.

Christmas is over. Our Christmas ornaments, our Christmas trees, and all our decorations are probably all packed away now. Are yours?

Christmas is past, but do you remember what Christmas was about? (Encourage discussion.) Jesus was the light for all people. He showed us the way by being a light in the darkness, a guide, and a teacher.

Play a game of flashlight tag. Ask for a volunteer to be IT. Another volunteer will be Jesus, the light. Give Jesus the flashlight.

Instruct children to move around the room in slow motion. IT tries to tag children, freezing them in place. But only Jesus can untag a child by shining a light on him or her. Once the frozen child sees the light beam on his or her body, he or she can begin moving around again. Play until all children have an opportunity to play IT or Jesus.

- What was it like being IT, trying to keep all the children tagged?
- What was it like being Jesus, the light?
- How is the real Jesus like the Jesus in the game?

Sing “Jesu, Tawa Pano (Jesus, We Are Here)” CCS 71. Sing one time through; then invite children to join in. Insert each child’s name into the song (“Jesus, [child’s name] is here...”). Repeat for each child.

Offer an opening prayer.

ENGAGE
Invites exploration and interaction (35% of lesson time)

Jesus, the Light
Pass out the second handout, “John 1:1–14,” (end of lesson) to children. Read the passage round-robin style, so each child has opportunity to read one or two lines.
Read the scripture passage from John 1:1–14 together. Give out the “Who Is Jesus?” worksheet (end of lesson) and have children follow the directions to discover what the passage says about Jesus. When all have had time to complete the task, ask for a volunteer to read the passage. It says: “Jesus is the true light of God. Jesus brings light to all people. Jesus helps us know who God is.”

**Make Your Mark**

In the early days of the church, Christians used a fish symbol to show they followed Jesus. They also used uniquely designed seals to leave their marks. Show children the fish symbol by drawing it on the flip chart. The fish symbol was a secret Christian symbol used by followers of Jesus. The fish symbol was used because the word for fish in Greek is ἸΧΘΥΣ, which is spelled by using the first letter of each word in the phrase which translates “Jesus Christ, God’s Son, Savior.” Provide supplies for children to make a fish seal stamp.

1. Give each child a small piece of air-drying clay.
2. Have children shape the clay to resemble a large coin.
3. Carve the Christian fish symbol into the clay using a plastic knife or other utensil.
4. Allow stamps to air dry before using. You can send them home with children with instructions how to dip the dry stamp in a shallow bowl of washable paint and stamp on paper (demonstrate using one already dry) or have them ready for students to stamp next week in class.

Optional: Select a different way to have children create fish symbols (drawing, painting, making the symbol with glue and decorating with beads or pebbles). You may also choose to copy the symbol on paper and have them write or draw ways they will be the light of Jesus to others.

**3 RESPOND**

Takes the learners from hearing to doing (35% of lesson time)

**What Is Jesus Like?**

Tell children you are going to read a few stories about Jesus. In each story, ask them to think about what Jesus is doing and what he is like.

During the reading of the stories, engage children by asking for volunteers to act out the characters as you read the story. They will have to listen carefully to follow the story’s action.

After reading each story, ask children what Jesus was like in the story. (kind, forgiving, loving, patient, etc.) Write these ideas on a flip chart for the next activity.

Scripture stories to read (you may adapt these for understanding as you read):

- Matthew 14:19–21 (cared about others’ hunger and fed them)
- Mark 1:40–42 (healed an outcast man)
- Matthew 15:21–28 (was kind to the woman’s daughter)

Ask children to look at the flip chart of Jesus’ qualities. This is who Jesus wants us to be, too. This is what Jesus wants us to do. Ask children:

- Think of a way you can help someone who is hungry. What can you do?
- What could you do to make someone feel better if he or she is sad?
- What could you do to show kindness to someone?

If there is enough time, ask children to create a skit to act out one of these examples.

As disciples of Jesus, we are to follow Jesus and do as Jesus did. Remember, Jesus is the light of the world. We can be lights, too, for the people we meet and are close to.

**4 SEND**

Explores how the lesson might be lived out (10% of lesson time)

Gather children into a circle, and ask children to complete this prayer sentence: “I love you, God. I want to be a light to others like Jesus was. This week I will share my light by…”

**5 BLESS**

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope (5% of lesson time)

Sing a goodbye song “Go with Us, Lord” CCS 612. Sing through once, and then insert each child’s name to bless them (“Go with [child’s name], Lord…”). Offer a closing prayer of blessing.
Who Is Jesus?

Follow the arrows around the path. Fill the blank spaces with a vowel (a, e, i, o, u). Be ready to read it with your class.
John 1:1–14 (adapted)

In the beginning was the Word; Jesus was the Word.

The Word was with God, and the Word was God. Jesus, God, and the Holy Spirit are One.

Jesus was in the beginning with God.

All things came to life through Jesus.

Jesus’ life was the light of all people.

A man sent from God, whose name was John, came to proclaim Jesus as the light.

John himself was not the light, but he came to proclaim the light.

The true light, Jesus, who brings light to everyone, was coming into the world.

And he called everyone who believed in him “Children of God.”

Jesus lived among us; he was full of grace and truth.

We have all received grace and truth from him.

The Ten Commandments were given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

No one has ever seen God. But Jesus helps us know what God is like.
FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY—BAPTISM OF THE LORD

LESSON 7
10 January 2016


Lesson Focus: Renewal of Covenant, Spiritual Renewal—Baptism symbolizes a desire to covenant with God to become a follower of Jesus.

Objectives
The learners will...

- examine the newness water can bring.
- act out the story of Jesus’ baptism.
- explore symbols used to represent the Holy Spirit.
- discuss their personal testimonies of baptism in Community of Christ.

Supplies
- Community of Christ Sings (CCS)
- Dry sponges, permanent markers, bowl of water
- Blue cloth or masking tape, optional “fishing pole”
- Examples of symbols
- Photocopies of dove and name tag patterns (end of lesson); scissors; crayons, colored pencils, or markers; string; clear tape

1 GATHER
Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson (15% of total lesson time)

Sometimes we just want to wash away the past and start brand new. The beginning of a new year is a time to think about how you would like to live the new year. It is the chance for a fresh start.

Give each child a dry sponge. Ask them to write on the sponge something (just one!) they would like to do in this coming year. Use permanent markers and help younger children as needed. As children place their sponges in a bowl of water, have them share what they wrote, and if they wish, why they wrote it.

After all sponges have been renewed with water, discuss:

What makes water special...

- when you are thirsty?
- when your body is dirty?
- when your clothes are dirty?
- when it’s hot outside and you need refreshed?
- when plants need to grow and flourish?
- when it is used for the sacrament of baptism?

Baptism of Water: Persons choose baptism to show they have faith in Jesus Christ and wish to become his disciples. Community of Christ believes that baptism is for those who are old enough (age 8 and older) to decide for themselves to follow Jesus Christ. Baptism includes repentance (asking for forgiveness of those acts which hurt yourself or others) and remembering that you have made a promise, a commitment.

—Of Water and Spirit, pp. 58–59


Children Community of Christ Lesson—22
As a class, act out the skit, "The Messiah Revealed." If class is too small to act out the skit, read the story "Jesus Is Baptized," Lectionary Story Bible, Year C, p. 43.

Following the skit or story, discuss:

- Jesus’ baptism served as a symbol of the beginning of his ministry. After his baptism, people began to see him as the Messiah—the Son of God. They began to follow him.
- The Living God is a loving, eternal community—God, Jesus, Holy Spirit. How was this loving community present at Jesus’ baptism?

John preached a baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins. What does repentance mean? (Repentance is saying you’re sorry for something you’ve done that has hurt you or hurt another. When we do something wrong, we should say we are sorry and try to correct the wrong we have done.)

Gather some items that are easily recognized as symbols of something else. These might include: sports logo (team), yin-yang (balance), cross (Christianity), dove (Holy Spirit or peace), heart (love), or four-leaf clover (good luck). Discuss how the items help us identify or explain what they symbolize. Discuss why the dove is often used as a symbol for the Holy Spirit.

**Holy Spirit Dove Craft**

1. Photocopy or trace the dove and name tag onto paper (see end of lesson).
2. Fold paper in half so the dove is folded along the dotted line. Cut out the dove while folded. Cut a V-slit along the fold.
3. Cut slits in the wings and tail to simulate feathers.
4. Cut out the name tag. Write your name on each side of the name tag. Place tape over the edge of the name tag; punch a hole through the tape.
5. Slip the edge of the name tag with the hole into the slit along the dove’s fold. Tie string or yarn through the hole; hang the dove from the ceiling.
6. As each dove is hung, say, "[Child’s name], you are a beloved child of God."

**Community of Christ Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation**

When we choose to be baptized, we have decided that we believe and want to follow the teachings of Jesus for the rest of our lives. Sing "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" CCS 499. After singing the song, discuss baptism in Community of Christ.

- How many of you have already been baptized?
- How many of you would like to be baptized someday?
- Why are we baptized?
- How are we baptized in Community of Christ?
- What does the minister say during the baptism?
- What happens during confirmation (the sacrament of confirming the presence of the Holy Spirit in each life, and conferring membership in Community of Christ)?

**Breath Prayer**

Find a comfortable position for sitting, possibly on the floor on a rug. Have everyone breathe in together and breathe out together. Repeat this until a rhythm is fixed. Have children close their eyes. Then quietly add words to the breathing:

Breathing in: Fill me... Breathing out: O God...
Breathing in: Fill me... Breathing out: Jesus...
Breathing in: Fill me... Breathing out: Spirit...
Skit: The Messiah Revealed

Characters
• Narrator
• Jesus
• John
• Voice of God
• People in the crowd

Props
• Blue cloth or masking tape on floor to represent river
• Optional: a dove hanging from a pole so it can be lowered over Jesus' head

Narrator: In the time of Jesus, there was a man named John. John was the son of Zechariah and the cousin of Jesus. (pointing to each one)

Jesus: (waving “hi” to John) Hi, John.

John: (waving “hi” to Jesus) Hi, Jesus.

Narrator: (John walks around the room as if in the wilderness.) The word of God came to John while in the wilderness.

God: John, I need you to prepare the way for the Lord.

Narrator: John went throughout the valley of the Jordan River, preaching about a baptism of repentance and the coming Messiah. Crowds came to see and hear him. (Crowds gather.) Some were just curious; others believed what John was teaching and wanted to be baptized.

John: Repent of your sins. Come be baptized. Be cleansed by the water and be forgiven. John waves to the people inviting them to be baptized. People come into the river and are baptized by John.

Narrator: The people were filled with expectation. (People jump up and down in excited anticipation.) Soon many began to wonder if John was the Messiah.

People in crowd whisper to each other and begin to ask questions.

Person 1: John the Baptizer, are you really the one you have been telling us about?

Person 2: Are you really the Messiah?

John: No! I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie...his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Narrator: One day, among the crowds Jesus also came to be baptized. (Jesus is baptized.) After Jesus was baptized something wonderful happened. While he was praying (Jesus prays) the Holy Spirit descended on him in the form of a dove (hold dove over Jesus) and a voice was heard from the heavens:

God: You are my Son...I am well pleased with you.
SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EIPIPHANY

LESSON 8
17 January 2016

Focus Scripture Passage: John 2:1–11

Lesson Focus: Peace of Jesus Christ, Grace and Generosity—At the wedding in Cana, Jesus’ identity began to change from son of Joseph, the carpenter, to son of God.

Objectives
The learners will...

- learn about Jesus’ first public miracle.
- examine the effect of such a miracle if people saw it happen today.


Supplies

- Community of Christ Sings (CCS)
- Opaque pitcher, clear pitcher, water, drink mix or thawed grape juice concentrate, clear glasses
- Newspaper headlines or computer with Internet access
- Flip chart or whiteboard, markers
- Paper, pencils, microphone prop, video recorder

1 GATHER
Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson (15% of total lesson time)

As children gather, ask them to share a baptism story they heard from their parents, grandparents, or friends.

Water into Wine
In an opaque pitcher, pour sweetened grape drink mix or fully-thawed grape juice concentrate. In a clear pitcher place the correct amount of water needed to properly dilute the drink. Give each person a clear drinking glass. Explain that today’s scripture story is about Jesus’ first recorded miracle, and in honor of that story everyone will receive a drink. Pour the water from the clear pitcher into the opaque pitcher. Stir to mix the drink; then pour some into each glass. As children enjoy their drinks, talk about what just happened.

- How did I do that? Was it a miracle? (Of course not. You’ve already figured out what I did.)
- What if changing the water into the grape drink wasn’t so easy to figure out? What would you do if you saw it happen? Would you want to tell others? Would you want to understand more?

2 ENGAGE
Invites exploration and interaction (35% of lesson time)

Read the scripture story, “The Wonderful Wedding Party” from the Lectionary Story Bible, Year C, p. 47. This story is based on John 2:1–11.

Discuss the story: Have you ever been to a wedding? What was it like? Was there a reception or party after the wedding? What did the people do? Did they greet one another? Were they joyful, laughing, and maybe even dancing? Were they eating and drinking?

Ask children to close their eyes and imagine that they are one of the guests at the wedding in Cana. Look around. What do you see? Who is there? (bride, groom, the...
couples family, Jesus and his mother, Jesus’ disciples) What are the people doing? (laughing, talking, eating, drinking, dancing) What happens when the drink runs out? You are standing close by when Mary asks Jesus to do something about the problem of no wine. Remember, you only know Jesus as a carpenter who lives down the street and goes to church with you. What do you think Mary is asking Jesus to do? (go somewhere and get more wine) You watch as Jesus tells the servants what to do: “Fill those six big jars with water. Now pour the water from the jars you just filled into this large jug. From that jug, fill the people’s cups.” What do you see? (wine is poured from the jug, and everyone loves it) How do you feel? Are you eager to tell your friends what you saw? Do you want to know more about the man who did this?

Explain that this was Jesus’ first public miracle. Many people witnessed it. Through his actions that day, Jesus began to reveal his divinity publicly. No longer would he just be known as Jesus, son of Joseph the carpenter, but as Jesus, son of God. People would follow him, trying to see and hear him. They wanted to know more. They wanted to believe.

RESPOND
Takes the learners from hearing to doing (35% of lesson time)

Read All about It
Look at the headlines from a recent newspaper. If you have access to the Internet, you may wish to check out the headlines on news websites for a broader look at what is happening in the world. Talk about how headlines capture a story in a few words that draw people’s attention, making them want to know more. As a class, brainstorm headlines that might be written about the wedding of Cana. Write them on a flip chart or whiteboard. Select the best headline for making others want to believe and know more about Jesus. Use this headline for the following activity.

Reporter for a Day
Have children pretend they are reporters for a newspaper, website, or television station. Offer the following activities from which they can choose:

BEAUTY
Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope (5% of lesson time)

The people in today’s scripture story saw something very special in the man they knew as Jesus. Celebrate together by singing “Takwaba Uwabanga Yesu! (There’s No One Like Jesus!)” CCS121 in English. As children learn the tune, encourage them to sing in other languages. Include these actions as they sing the chorus:

I’m walking, walking (march in place),
here (arms sway to right), there (arms sway to left)
I’m searching, searching (hand above eyes, look right and left),
here (arms sway to right), there (arms sway to left)
I turn around (turn in circle),
here (arms sway to right), there (arms sway to left).
There’s no one, (clap) there’s no one (clap) like him! (clap)

SEND
Explores how the lesson might be lived out (10% of lesson time)

What’s My Headline?
We are all called to share and live what we believe. What would headlines about you reveal? Write a headline that tells what you believe and how you live. What headline would others write about you? Is it different from the one you wrote for yourself? Why? What can you do to help others learn about the way you live your life?

If the class is large, divide into groups of two or three.

4

5


Children Community of Christ Lesson—27
Focus Scripture Passage: Luke 4:14–21/13–21 IV

Lesson Focus: Worth of All Persons, Mission and Discipleship—All persons, even children, are called to make a difference in the lives of others as they live out their mission.

Objectives

The learners will...

- learn how men in Jesus’ time read from the Hebrew Scriptures.
- explore the mission of Jesus, the mission of Community of Christ, and the mission to which the children feel called.


Supplies

- Community of Christ Sings (CCS)
- For each child: one long sheet of paper, two dowel rods or sticks (at least 1 in/2 cm longer than the narrow width of paper), clear tape, crayons or markers, adapted scripture text for children to copy, ribbon or string
- Scripture scroll (example of craft created before class)

1 GATHER
Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson (15% of total lesson time)

Scripture Scroll Craft
Let children create their own scrolls from which they can read scripture. Explain that in Jesus’ time, the Hebrew Scriptures were written on a scroll. (Show sample.) Unroll the scroll and lay flat on the table.

Give each child a long sheet of paper. Have them copy the adapted version of the scripture passage Jesus read (see below) onto their papers, leaving blank space on each end to allow for rolling scroll.

...tell the poor about God’s love.
...tell prisoners they are free.
...heal those who are hurting.
...announce grace and forgiveness for all.

Tape a dowel rod to each end of the scroll paper. Roll ends toward the center until they meet. Tie with ribbon or string.

As children work on the scrolls talk about ways they learn, read, and hear about God’s message of hope. How do people today learn differently from the people in Jesus’ time?

2 ENGAGE
Invites exploration and interaction (35% of lesson time)

Remind the children of last week’s scripture story about Jesus at a wedding in Cana. Ask them for details about what happened. To set the stage for today’s story,
explain that since the wedding celebration, Jesus and his disciples have been many places teaching people about God. In today’s story, Jesus has returned to his hometown of Nazareth. Nazareth is where he grew up, so many of the people there watched him grow from a little boy into a man.

Read the story “Jesus Learns about His Job” from the Lectionary Story Bible, Year C, p. 54. Explain that when a man read from the Hebrew scrolls of scripture, he stood. When he talked about what the scripture passage meant, he sat.

Ask students to take turns standing to read the scripture passage from the scrolls they created earlier. If the class is larger, have students read a phrase, then sit down for someone else to stand and read the next phrase.

Read the last paragraph of the scripture story or read Luke 4:20.

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

Discuss. What did Jesus mean when he said, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing”? (He was the Messiah Isaiah spoke about. His mission was to bring hope to the world through the message of God’s love, grace, and forgiveness.)

Jesus’ Mission Statement

Jesus used the visit to his home synagogue as a way to tell the community what he was doing (teaching and preaching the good news), who he was (the Messiah, the son of God), and why he came (to share the gospel message of God’s love and grace).

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

—Luke 4:18

When we read about the poor, we often think first of those who are economically poor, but people can be poor in other ways. For the author of Luke, the poor also includes people who are not accepted by society for one reason or another. The blind are people who can’t see the worth of all persons. The oppressed are people who are affected by the blindness of others (victims of racial conflicts, bullying, opposing beliefs, prejudice, and inability to forgive).

Discuss:
- Think about our world today. Are there poor among us?
- Who are the captives?
- What about the blind and oppressed?

We are all called to be disciples of Jesus Christ. So if you are a disciple, what is your mission? Brainstorm a list of what children and families can do to minister to the poor, the captives, the prisoners, the blind, and the oppressed.

Community of Christ Mission Statement

Community of Christ has a mission statement that expresses what we believe we are called to do and be in the world:

We proclaim Jesus Christ and promote communities of joy, hope, love, and peace.

Discuss:
- What does it mean to proclaim? How can you proclaim Jesus Christ at home, at school, to friends and family, and in your community?
- What does it mean to promote? How can you promote communities of joy? Hope? Love? Peace?

Mission Prayer

Teach this prayer to children and encourage them to pray it daily.

God, where will your Spirit lead today? (Students repeat with hands together as in prayer.)

Help me be fully awake and ready to respond. (Students repeat with arms extended upward as in praise.)

Grant me courage to risk something new (Students repeat with hands together over heart.)

and become a blessing of your love and peace. (Students repeat with arms extended outward.)

Amen. (Students repeat.)
Send
Explores how the lesson might be lived out
(10% of lesson time)

My Mission
God's blessing flows through all of us. Ask each child to finish the sentence, “As a disciple of Jesus Christ, my mission is...”

Synagogue Field Trip
If there is a Jewish synagogue close enough to visit, plan a field trip for the families of the children in class. Contact the synagogue ahead of time to arrange an opportunity for the children to view an actual Hebrew scripture scroll.

5 BLESS
Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
(5% of lesson time)

Sing “Go with Us, Lord” CCS 612. Sing through once as written, and then repeat using each child’s name in place of “us” until everyone has been blessed.
FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

LESSON 10
31 January 2016


Lesson Focus: Worth of All Persons—We are called to see people as God sees them, of invaluable worth.

Objectives
The learners will...

- see that even people who knew Jesus didn’t understand who he was.
- consider how people see us.
- explore what it means to see the truth in people through God’s eyes.

Supplies
- Variety of pictures of people
- Copies of skit “Jesus’ Rejection”
- Copies of Whom Do You See? journal page (end of lesson), pencils, small mirrors
- Craft sticks, glue, variegated yarn, scissors
- Instruction sheet for making God’s Eye craft (end of lesson)


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- Instruction sheet for making God’s Eye craft (end of lesson)


GATHER
Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson
(15% of total lesson time)

As children gather, stand at the doorway and greet each one: “Welcome to class, [name of child]! God loves you!”

On a table or on the walls around the room, create a picture display that includes a diverse selection of people (multiple cultures and races, young and old, male and female, homeless, wealthy, persons with disabilities, sickness, persons with different physical characteristics).

For older children place a blank sheet of paper next to each picture. Ask children to look at the pictures and write down one or two words that describe their first reaction to looking at the picture.

Look at the pictures together. What stands out in each picture? How do you feel looking at these pictures? Ask, “Does God love this person as much as God loves you?” Stress that God is not just my God or your God. God loves every person. God is our God.

ENGAGE
Invites exploration and interaction
(35% of lesson time)

Scripture Story:

Review what happened in last week’s lesson when Jesus went to the synagogue in his hometown of Nazareth. Explain that today’s lesson continues last week’s story, and the resulting actions of the people may be a surprise. Have children act out the skit, “Jesus’ Rejection.” (end of lesson)

Discuss the skit:
- How do you feel about the way this story ends?
- How do you think Jesus felt?

Encourage older children to also read the stories of Elijah and Zarephath (1 Kings 17:8–24) and Elisha with Naaman (2 Kings 5:14–17).
Do You See Me?
In today’s story, Jesus was already seen by some as a special person, even divine. But when he came home to Nazareth the people only saw him as the son of Joseph the carpenter. They were not open to seeing other qualities and callings.

Discuss. Have you ever been misjudged or have you ever misjudged someone else? Sometimes we decide what we think about people by what we see on the outside, never letting ourselves get to really know them.

Give each child a copy of the “Whom Do You See” journal page (end of lesson) and a mirror. If small individual mirrors are not available, let children share. Ask each child to look into the mirror and then answer the questions on the journal page. Walk the class through the questions, pausing to give them time to respond. If you see confusion or hesitation with a specific question, elaborate with examples to help the children understand and relate. These could be personal answers, especially for older children, so use discretion if you ask them to share.

Stand for Truth
We can look at something every day without really seeing what is there. Play the game Stand for Truth. Have children sit with their backs to one another and eyes closed. Make a statement about someone or something inside or visible from the room. (See examples below.) If a child thinks the statement is true, he or she should stand; if not, he or she should remain seated. Let children open their eyes and see if a statement is true before moving on to the next. Make sure some of the statements are true and some are false.

• Jane is wearing a blue dress.
• Randall has red hair.
• In the picture on the wall, Jesus is holding a sheep.
• Samuel is taller than Jeri.
• There are pink curtains on the classroom window.
• The clock on the wall is white.
• The flowers outside our window are in bloom.

At the end of the game, discuss what it means to open our eyes and really see each other and the world around us.

Ojo de Dios Craft
Ojo de Dios (oh-ho day DEE-ohs) or God’s Eye comes from the Huichol Indians of Mexico. This simple woven craft represents God watching over us. While children work on the craft, explain that their God’s Eye can remind them that no matter what anyone says, no matter how anyone else sees them, God knows and loves the real person. To God you are and always will be WONDERFUL!

Supplies:
• two craft sticks for each child (previously glued together)
• 2–3 ft/1 m variegated yarn (length depends on size of sticks) for each child
• Glue

Instructions (see illustration at end of lesson):
1. Each child should receive a + made of two craft sticks previously glued together. Tie one end of yarn around the middle. Secure by crossing yarn between the sticks two times.
2. Working clockwise, wrap the yarn under section 1.
3. Rotate the sticks one quarter turn and wrap the yarn over and under section 4.
4. Rotate the sticks one quarter turn again, and wrap the yarn over and under section 3.
5. Continue this pattern until yarn reaches the end.
6. Tie off yarn and trim, or tuck end under and glue.

Send
Explores how the lesson might be lived out (10% of lesson time)

Look again at the pictures used in the gathering time. Discuss. Are the pictures any different than they were at the beginning of class? Do you see them differently? Ask yourself what life is like for the people in the pictures. What do they want to do? Who do they want to be? We looked at them earlier through our eyes. Can you begin to see them as God sees them?

Bless
Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope (5% of lesson time)

Close class with a group prayer. Everyone gathers in a tight circle and extends one hand to the middle (like a
Children Community of Christ Lesson—33

Creator of all people,
Help us see the world as you see. Help us see the truth beyond what we see first. Help us see and understand the truth of others’ challenges, burdens, joys, and fears. Help us be your hands and heart for people we meet. Help us show your love this week to… (children call out names).

Finish the prayer by saying, “In your name we pray, A-M-E-N!” As the closing amen is said, lower hands together then bring them up and out into the air while everyone shouts, “A-M-E-N!”

Skit: Jesus’ Rejection
(adapted from Luke 4:21–30 The Message)

Character

• Narrator
• Jesus
• Person
• People in the synagogue

Narrator: Jesus finished reading the scripture from Isaiah to the people in the synagogue. (Jesus stands and holds the scroll as if reading.) He rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the assistant, and sat down. (Jesus rolls up scroll, hands to narrator or assistant, and sits down.) Every eye in the place was on him. (Everyone turns and looks at Jesus.) Then Jesus said,

Jesus: You have just heard Scripture make history. It came true just now in this place.

Narrator: All who were there, watching and listening, were surprised at how well he spoke. But then someone spoke up.

Person: Isn’t this Joseph’s son, the one we’ve known since he was a little boy?

Jesus: I suppose you’re going to say, “Doctor, go heal yourself. Do here in your hometown what we heard you did in Capernaum.”

Narrator: Stories of Jesus’ travels and teaching had already made their way to Nazareth.

Jesus: Let me tell you something: No prophet is ever welcomed in his hometown. Isn’t it a fact there were many widows in Israel during the three and a half years of drought? Famine devastated the land, but Elijah was only sent to help the widow Zarephath in Sidon. And there were many lepers in Israel at the time of the prophet Elisha, but the only one cleansed was Naaman, the Syrian.

Narrator: Jesus’ response made everyone in the meeting place angry. (Everyone but Jesus looks angry and acts out the following actions as they are read.) They threw Jesus out of the meeting place, ran him out of the village, then took him to a cliff at the edge of the village where they were going to throw him over. But Jesus gave them the slip (Jesus slips around the others and walks away), left town, and went on his way to the village in Galilee called Capernaum.
God’s Eye Craft
Whom Do You See?
*Answer the questions using words, phrases, or drawings.*

When you look into a mirror, what do you see?

How would you describe yourself?

How would your friends describe you?

How would your family describe you?

How would someone who has only known you one day describe you?

What would you like people to see or know about you?

Jesus had a calling—a mission—that people who knew him his whole life didn’t see or understand. Is there something you feel called to do that your friends or family might not know about or understand? What is it?
LAST SUNDAY
AFTER THE EPIPHANY—
TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY


Lesson Focus: Peace of Jesus Christ—Jesus has a message for us to hear and follow if we are willing to open our hearts and listen.

Objectives
The learners will...

- learn about Jesus’ transfiguration.
- compare the message of Jesus to other messages shared by the world today.
- reflect on transformation through hands-on experiences.

Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- Community of Christ Sings (CCS)
- Modeling clay
- Flip chart or whiteboard, markers
- Copies of transforming picture (end of lesson), crayons or markers
- Paper, pencils
- Optional: “Peace through All People” video (www.CofChrist.org/resources search salaam)


1 GATHER
Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson (15% of total lesson time)

Provide modeling clay for children to play with as they arrive. As they play, discuss the uniqueness of clay: It starts as a blob, but you can quickly change it to look like something else. The blob of clay doesn’t change what it’s made of; however, it can look like one thing, transform into something different, and even transform again. The various shapes may look different, but they are not separate things. Each transformation was always within the clay. Explain that today’s lesson is about a transformation that showed Jesus in a new light. This mountaintop experience was witnessed only by Peter, James, and John. It helped them better understand Jesus.

2 ENGAGE
Invites exploration and interaction (35% of lesson time)

Read the story “Jesus on the Mountaintop” from the Lectionary Story Bible, Year C, pp. 81–83. Tape large sheets of paper to the classroom wall to create a blank mural. Let children work together to retell the story as they draw it on the mural.

Encourage older children, reading this directly from Luke 9:28–36, to back up a few verses to see what is meant in Luke 9:28 when it says, “Now about eight days after these sayings...”
Children Community of Christ Lesson—37

RESPOND
Takes the learners from hearing to doing (35% of lesson time)

Listen to Jesus
In today’s scripture story of Jesus’ transfiguration, Peter, James, and John heard the words, “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!” Discuss: Where do you think the voice came from? To whom was it speaking? To whom were they supposed to listen? Why?

There are many voices speaking to us each day. Brainstorm together a list of voices the children encounter on a regular basis, seeking their attention with things to tell, teach, or show (parents, grandparents, teachers, siblings, friends, books, video games, movies, television [commercials and programs], magazines, church, coaches).

Next to each item on the list, write the types of messages they might hear from each source. How different are these messages from the message shared by Jesus?

Transforming Picture
Give each child a copy of the coloring page found at the end of this lesson. Provide crayons or markers. Instruct them to choose three or four colors to color the picture. Make sure no two spaces are the same color. Wait to show their finished pictures all at once so their transformations will be a surprise.

Transfiguration
Write the word “Transfiguration” so everyone can see it. Work together, using only the letters in the word, to transform this one word into many.

Transfiguration = train, fig, ran, against, ago, air, again, afar, ant, art, as, at, far, faint, fair, fasting, fat, fast, fog, fort, frog, grain, frost, gas, goat, groan, gut, in, inn, guitar, iron, it, is, iris, nag, no, nitro, oat, of, raft, our, out, rag, rat, ring, roar, rot, rug, rust, sat, sofa, song, sing, snort, star, stir, tan, tar, tag, sun, tart, tin, to, tong, tot...

SEND
Explores how the lesson might be lived out (10% of lesson time)

Jesus went up the mountain with Peter, James, and John to pray. In scriptures we often read of times when Jesus went somewhere alone or with just his disciples to pray. He showed us the importance of spending personal time with God. Ask the children to find a comfortable spot to sit. Explain that you are going to play a song that was recorded by people from our church who live in different places all around the world. This song is called “Peace Salaam Shalom.”* Listen to Jesus through the words of peace shared in the song. If you are using the music video, turn down the lights and let the children watch.

*B“Peace Salaam Shalom” CCS 310; “Peace through All People” video (www.CofChrist.org/resources search salaam)

BLESS
Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope (5% of lesson time)

Close class with a group prayer. Everyone gathers into a tight circle and reaches one hand inside (like a team before a game). Start the prayer by saying, “Jesus, your transforming message of love and peace fills our hearts. This week we ask you to... (Give time for students to call out their prayers.)” When everyone has had a chance to share, finish the prayer by saying, “In your name we pray, A-M-E-N!” As the closing amen is said, lower hands together; then bring them up and out into the air while everyone shouts, “A-M-E-N!”

Transforming Picture

Choose three or four different colors. Color each space using a repeating pattern until the page is filled.
Make sure no touching spaces are the same color.
Lesson Focus: Spiritual Formation, Servant Ministry, Social Justice

Objectives
The learners will...
- learn about temptation and choices.
- read the story “Jesus Gets Ready” from the Lectionary Story Bible, Year C.
- learn how the Holy Spirit can help guide their choices.
- begin their Lenten journey.

Supplies
- Modeling clay, building toys, coloring books, musical instruments, food, drink, stringing beads
- Community of Christ Sings (CCS)
- Multiple sheets of paper, masking tape, markers
- Lenten journey sheet (First Sunday in Lent)


GATHER
Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson (15% of total lesson time)

Provide various “temptations” on the table for children when they come in: play dough, building toys, coloring books, musical instruments, food to eat, something to drink, beads to string, etc. Welcome children, but don’t give any instructions. Let children decide what and if they will interact with the items on the table. If they ask permission, reply by saying, “It is up to you.” When it is time for class to begin, discuss:
- What did you think when you saw everything on the table?
- What did the display of items make you want to do?
- Were you influenced by others who came into the class before you?
- What would you have done if you were told to sit at the table, but don’t touch? Let’s try it. From now on don’t touch anything on the table.
- Sidetrack the conversation a bit, asking about their week, commenting on their clothes, their family, etc. After a few minutes—or after someone gives in and starts playing with items on the table—go back to the discussion.
- What did it feel like to be tempted by something you wanted right in front of you, and yet you knew you shouldn’t touch?
- Explain that today’s scripture story is about a time when Jesus had choices to make because temptation was right in front of him.

ENGAGE
Invites exploration and interaction (35% of lesson time)

- The first verse says, “Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness.” Why was Jesus full of the Holy Spirit? Do you remember what happened to him at the Jordan River?
• Jesus felt the Spirit leading him into the wilderness. Explain how the 40 days alone in the wilderness were at the beginning of his ministry. He knew what he was called to do, but even Jesus needed to prepare.

• What do you think Jesus did during those 40 days? (prayed, meditated, enjoyed the night sky, slept in the warm sun, appreciated the majesty of creation, thought about the future)

• The scripture passage tells us that he did not eat or drink. How do you feel when you don't eat or drink?

• Do you remember the choices Jesus had to make and how he responded? (turn stone into bread, receive power over all the kingdoms of the world, test God by jumping from the top of a temple so angels would catch him)

• Explain that temptations lead us away from God. Many are not bad but they can be overused or used for wrong purposes.

RESPOND
3
Takes the learners from hearing to doing (35% of lesson time)

Bombarded with Temptations
Have the children brainstorm a list of common temptations for children their age. (cheating at a game, being a bully, taking more than one's share of something, ignoring chores, disobeying parents) What are some temptations that are not necessarily bad, but can lead you away from God if approached irresponsibly? (screen time with video games, phone, TV, movies; junk food; competition; music; clothes; friends) As the class brainstorms, have them write their ideas on individual sheets of paper. Make sure everyone has several sheets of paper. (To be environmentally friendly, use recycled newspaper.)

Using painter's tape, create a large X on a wall. On the count of three, have children wad their papers and throw them—as fast as they can—at the X while shouting out the temptations written on them. Continue until all paper wads have been thrown.

Imagine the X is you, your friends, or someone in your family.

• How is this game like temptations in real life? Do you ever feel bombarded by temptations? If so, how can you respond?

Fasting for Lent
Today is the first Sunday in the season of Lent. Lent is a time of prayer, fasting, repentance, and giving. It reflects the 40 days Jesus spent alone preparing for his public ministry. During this time Jesus fasted from food and water. (Explain that fasting is making Responsible Choices that create more time and space for God.) You may choose to give up something for Lent.

There is another fast that the prophet Isaiah wrote about.

This is the kind of fast day I'm after: to break the chains of injustice...free the oppressed, cancel debts. What I'm interested in seeing you do is share your food with the hungry, invite the homeless poor into your homes, put clothes on the shivering ill-clad, be available to your own families.

—Isaiah 58:6–7 The Message, adapted

This is not saying no to something, but rather saying yes. Jesus wants us to experience joy in life as a disciple.

How can we joyfully celebrate Lent? Call out ideas and have children shout, “Yes!” when they hear something they can do, such as:

• Cut out screen time (TV, computer, video games) and spend time with family, friends, or someone who is lonely
• Talk to people in person—instead of texting or talking on the phone
• Buy one less snack and give the money to the Mission Initiative of Abolish Poverty, End Suffering
• Make a new friend
• Write notes of kindness and leave them where a teacher, friend, or family member will find them
• Use a weekend or evening to help your family or someone else

Brainstorm more ways they can fast for Lent.

SEND
4
Explores how the lesson might be lived out (10% of lesson time)

Give each child a copy of the Lenten journey sheet for the week (end of lesson). Review the suggested activities together and brainstorm possibilities they might do. Encourage them to draw or write thoughts on the page each day and to include their family in this Lenten journey.

BLESS
5
Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope (5% of lesson time)

Sing, listen to, or read the words to the song, “Jesus, Tempted in the Desert” CCS 449. Close with a prayer asking God to help us prepare for our ministry, like Jesus prepared for his.
My Lenten Journey with Jesus
This week I will...

give up:

pray for:

befriend someone who is lonely:

visit or call:

volunteer to:

be thankful for:

15–20 February 2016
SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

LESSON 13
21 February 2016


Lesson Focus: Peace of Jesus Christ, Blessings of Community

Objectives
The learners will...

• continue their Lenten journey.
• read the story “The Poor People of Jerusalem” in Lectionary Story Bible, Year C.
• see the strength that can come from community.

Supplies
• Paper, crayons or markers, painter’s tape
• Hen and Chick Maze
• Community of Christ Sings (CCS)
• Lenten journey sheet (Second Sunday in Lent)


1. GATHER
Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson (15% of total lesson time)

Provide paper and crayons or markers. As children gather for class ask them to write or draw pictures about what they did this week on their Lenten journey. Post on the wall to begin a pathway around the room that will continue throughout the weeks of Lent.

2. ENGAGE
Invites exploration and interaction (35% of lesson time)

Gather everyone to read the story “The Poor People of Jerusalem” from the Lectionary Story Bible, Year C, pp. 91–92. Discuss:

• Why do you think King Herod was afraid of John the Baptist and Jesus?
• Have you ever been really afraid of something, but tried to make everyone else think you were really brave? Can you tell us about it?
• Why was Jesus angry with King Herod?
• What did Jesus think King Herod should be doing?
• What did Jesus wish he could do for the people of the city?

If the class includes older children, have them read the story from Luke 13:31–35. Discuss:

• Who came to Jesus to warn him about King Herod?
• What was their warning, and why was it so unusual for Pharisees to warn him?
• Compare being part of Community of Christ to being a chick protected under a hen’s wings.
• Why is it important to gather for worship, community, and service?

3. RESPOND
Takes the learners from hearing to doing (35% of lesson time)

Tell It Again
Ask children to retell the scripture story in their own words. If the class is large enough, let them act out the story as they tell it.
Hen and Chick Maze
Provide a copy of the maze (end of lesson) for each child. Using a different color for each chick, gather the chicks through the maze to the hen.

Hen and Chick Tag
Play a game of tag. One person is the hen. The hen tries to tag the running chicks (everyone else). When someone is tagged, that person holds on to the hen’s hand and continues along, trying to tag others. When everyone has been caught, end with a big group hug. If there are enough children, let someone also be the fox. Both the hen and the fox try to tag the chicks. If the fox tags, the chick freezes until the hen can come by and tag him or her.

4 SEND
Explores how the lesson might be lived out
(10% of lesson time)

Give each child a copy of the Lenten journey sheet for the week (end of lesson). Review the suggested activities together and brainstorm possibilities they might do. Encourage everyone to draw or write thoughts on the page each day and to include their family in this Lenten journey.

5 BLESS
Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
(5% of lesson time)

Sing, listen to, or read the words of “Here, O Lord, Your Servants Gather” CCS 335 or “Gather Us In” CCS 72. Discuss the words of the song; then close with a prayer of blessing, asking Jesus to hold us safe in the love of Community of Christ.
Hen and Chicks Maze

Guide the 3 chicks safely to their mother.
My Lenten Journey with Jesus
This week I will...

ask forgiveness for:

pick up trash:

find 5 things I can donate:

say “I love you” to:

pray for someone who lives far away:

do one thing I have never done before:

21–27 February 2016
Focus Scripture Passage: Luke 13:1–9

Lesson Focus: Repent and Become Faithful—Responsible Choices, Abolish Poverty, End Suffering, Repentance

Objectives
The learners will...

- continue their Lenten journey.
- challenge temptation.
- read the scripture story “God Doesn’t Do Things Like That” from the Lectionary Story Bible, Year C.
- examine what God does and does not do

Supplies
- Building blocks
- Prepared signs printed with “No, God doesn’t do things like that!” and “Yes, God does do things like that!”
- Community of Christ Sings (CCS)
- Doctrine and Covenants
- Paper; crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- Lenten journey sheet (Third Sunday in Lent)


GATHER
Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson (15% of total lesson time)

Provide paper and crayons or markers. As children gather for class ask them to write or draw pictures about what they did this week on their Lenten journey. Post on the wall to continue the Lenten pathway around the room.

Challenge the children to build tall buildings and long bridges using the building blocks. During the activity, as the buildings become taller and the bridges longer, they may fall. Challenge children to continue trying.

ENGAGE
Invites exploration and interaction (35% of lesson time)

Read the scripture story “God Doesn’t Do Things Like That” from the Lectionary Story Bible, Year C, pp. 96–97, based on Luke 13:1–9. If the class includes older children, have them read directly from Luke 13:1–9.

If building toys are not available use scraps of wood; recycled items such as cereal boxes, juice cans, and toilet paper rolls; or even marshmallows and toothpicks.

RESPOND
Takes the learners from hearing to doing (35% of lesson time)

“God Doesn’t Do Things Like That.” Discuss the building experience during gathering time. Relate their play experience to events that really happen.

- In the last year there have been major earthquakes, tornadoes, floods, and other natural disasters. People and animals have been hurt, and some have even died. Did the people who were hurt cause the disaster? Did God cause them to be hurt because they did something bad? In the story when Jesus
was asked similar questions, he said, “No, God doesn’t do things like that!” (Hold up sign) This is a very important message and I want you to remember it. Say it with me, “No, God doesn’t do things like that!”

Continue by asking a series of questions:

• If buildings or bridges fall and there are people injured, did God let them get hurt because they were bad people?

(Hold up sign)
All: “No, God doesn’t do things like that!”

• If a flood takes out a farmer’s crops and destroys his home, did God make it happen because the farmer was a bad person? What about his family?

(Hold up sign)
All: “No, God doesn’t do things like that!”

• If a child is born blind, did God make her that way because her parents were bad people?

(Hold up sign)
All: “No, God doesn’t do things like that!”

• If people get really sick, did God cause them to get sick?

(Hold up sign)
All: “No, God doesn’t do things like that!”

• Did God make your buildings and bridges fall?

(Hold up sign)
All: “No, God doesn’t do things like that!”

The buildings and bridges just fell. Maybe your materials didn’t support your design or you tried a design that was unusual or not suited for what you were trying to build. Such events happen in real life, too. Sometimes something just goes wrong—accidents happen, people get sick or hurt, weather gets crazy and it rains too much, there are earthquakes and tornadoes. These can be scary times, but they are not happening because God is making them happen. Our creator set the universe in motion. Both good things and not so good things happen to us all. God does not make them happen to reward or punish us. These things happen because God created a world that continues to live, grow, and respond.

• None of us are perfect. Sometimes we make poor choices. Does God want us to repent when we do something wrong?

(Hold up sign)
All: “Yes, God does do things like that!”

Does God love all of us?

(Hold up sign)
All: “Yes, God does do things like that!”

Does God want us to help others in need?

(Hold up sign)
All: “Yes, God does do things like that!”

Does God help us find the strength to get through the hard times as well as the good?

(Hold up sign)
All: “Yes, God does do things like that!”

God Weeps

In this season of Lent we are reminded of our responsibilities as disciples of Christ to make responsible choices. Have children read Doctrine and Covenants 163:4a–c.

4 a. God, the Eternal Creator, weeps for the poor, displaced, mistreated, and diseased of the world because of their unnecessary suffering. Such conditions are not God’s will. Open your ears to hear the pleading of mothers and fathers in all nations who desperately seek a future of hope for their children. Do not turn away from them. For in their welfare resides your welfare.

b. The earth, lovingly created as an environment for life to flourish, shudders in distress because creation’s natural and living systems are becoming exhausted from carrying the burden of human greed and conflict. Humankind must awaken from its illusion of independence and unrestrained consumption without lasting consequences.

c. Let the...church equip people of all ages to carry the ethics of Christ’s peace into all arenas of life. Prepare new generations of disciples to bring fresh vision to bear on the perplexing problems of poverty, disease, war, and environmental deterioration. Their contributions will be multiplied if their hearts are focused on God’s will for creation.

Read the scripture again—verse by verse—and have the class illustrate what they hear the words saying, especially for people their age. As they draw, encourage them to discuss their ideas. Finished drawings can be added to their Lenten journey on the classroom wall.
Give each child a copy of the Lenten journey sheet for this week (end of lesson). Review the suggested activities together and brainstorm possibilities they might do. Encourage everyone to draw or write thoughts on the page each day and to include their family in this Lenten journey.

Sing, listen to, or read the words of “Make Us, O God, a Church That Shares” CCS 657.

Discuss the words of the song and close with a prayer of blessing, asking God to forgive us for the choices we make that draw us away from what we are called to do as disciples of Christ.

The class suggestions for lesson 17 (Palm Sunday) break from the traditional style of the lessons. You will need to plan ahead! Enlist the help of parents, teens, and other congregation members.
My Lenten Journey with Jesus
This week I will...

tell someone about Jesus:

not judge people:

sit next to someone new:

give up junk food:

pray for the earth and all of God’s creation:

29 February–5 March 2016
FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

LESSON 15
6 March 2016

Focus Scripture Passage: Luke 15:1–3, 11–32
Lesson Focus: Grace and Generosity

Objectives
The learners will...
- continue their Lenten journey.
- explore the parable of the Prodigal Son.
- focus on the grace and generosity of the father in the parable.

Supplies
- Paper, crayons or markers, tape
- Copies of script (page 53) for each child, “play” money, clothes, shoes, bag, robe,
- Instructions sheets for Respond activity, basket, apples, bucket
- Signs: Father’s House, Father’s Field, Older Son’s Journey, Younger Son’s Journey, New Country, New Friends, Buy Clothes Here, Party Here, Food, Workers Needed to Feed Pigs
- Lenten journey sheet (Fourth Sunday in Lent)
- Community of Christ Sings (CCS)


1 GATHER
Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson (15% of total lesson time)
Provide paper and crayons or markers. As children gather for class ask them to write or draw pictures about what they did this week on their Lenten journey. Post on the wall to continue the Lenten pathway around the room.

2 ENGAGE
Invites exploration and interaction (35% of lesson time)
Help children act out the story “The Parable of the Prodigal Son” in a fun and playful way. Provide copies of script for each child (end of lesson). If possible, arrange ahead of time for children to present their play during the worship service.
If you have only one or two in class, assign several parts to each person.

3 RESPOND
Takes the learners from hearing to doing (35% of lesson time)
Create a dual journey with step-by-step instructions. (page 52) Form class into two groups. Group 1 will go on the older son’s journey; group 2 will go on the younger son’s journey. Both sides start at the father’s house which is represented by a table with a sign that says “Father’s House.”
On the table are two sets of instructions. One sits beside an empty basket labeled with the sign “Older Son’s Journey;” the other sits beside four pieces of pretend money labeled with the sign “Younger Son’s Journey.”

Fewer than four children? Take both journeys together.
Large class? Place children at each station of the younger son's journey to take money and hand out instructions. Children can also pretend to be pigs waiting to be fed.
Instructions for Older Son’s Journey:
1. Start at Father’s House.
2. **Take the basket and go to Father’s Field to work.** Carry empty basket from table to area marked with a sign that says, “Father’s Field”. At this site there should be a table with apples (or other items which can be placed into the basket one at a time.)
3. **Harvest one [apple]; then go back to Father’s House.** Place one apple in basket, and go back to Father’s House. Place [apple] on table.
4. **Repeat until the younger brother returns.**

Instructions for Younger Son’s Journey:
5. Start at Father’s House.
6. **Take your money and go to new country.** Take money and go to sign that says “New Country.”
7. **Leave one piece of money here; go make new friends.** Find sign that says “New Friends.”
8. **Leave one piece of money here; go buy clothes.** Find sign that says “Buy Clothes Here.”
9. **Leave one piece of money here; go party.** Find sign that says “Party Here.”
10. **Leave one piece of money here; go eat.** Find sign that says “Food.”
11. You have no money left. **Can’t pay? Go find work.** Find sign that says “Workers Needed to Feed Pigs.”
12. **Feed pigs. Then you will get food from your employer.** Pretend to feed pigs; then go to teacher or person acting as your employer. “Employer” provides a piece of food and instructions to go home.
13. **Go home. Go to your Father’s House.** Say you are sorry and ask for forgiveness. Go back to Father’s House (table) and ask for forgiveness.

Discuss the story of the Prodigal Son and the activity.
- **Prodigal** means to spend money freely and recklessly, to be wasteful and extravagant.
- Which son in this story was the prodigal son?
- How would you feel if you were the younger son who came back home?
- How would you feel if you were the older son who stayed home? What did you do while your brother went off to play?
- What messages do you think Jesus was trying to teach with this parable?

4 **SEND**
Explores how the lesson might be lived out 
(10% of lesson time)

Provide paper, crayons, and/or markers and ask children to draw the story of the Prodigal Son. Encourage them to share their story with family and friends.

5 **BLESS**
Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope 
(5% of lesson time)

Give each child a copy of the Lenten journey sheet for this week (end of lesson). Review the suggestions together and brainstorm other possibilities. Encourage everyone to draw or write thoughts on the page each day and to include their family in this Lenten journey.

Sing, listen to, or read the words of “This Is a Day of New Beginnings” CCS 495. Discuss the words of the song; close with a prayer thanking God for each day of new beginnings.

**Note:** The class suggestions for Palm Sunday break from the traditional style of the lessons. Plan ahead! Enlist the help of parents, teens, and other congregation members. You will need actors to represent Jesus, Judas, Peter, Roman soldiers, Pilate, three townspeople, and a narrator. Copy the Holy Week booklet for each child. With coordination and planning, this could be an intergenerational event for the whole congregation.
The Parable of the Prodigal Son
(adapted from Luke 15:11–32 NRSV and The Message)

Jesus: There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father...

Younger son: Father, give me my share of the property that will belong to me when you die. Give it to me now!

Jesus: So the father divided his property and gave the younger son his share.

Father: (Hands the younger son a bag of money) Here is your inheritance.

Jesus: A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country.

Younger son: (throws clothes, shoes, and money into bag and walks away to another area; father and older brother move off to the side)

Jesus: There he wasted his money and lost his property in wild living, making poor decisions.

Younger son: Look at me! Look at everything I now have. I can do whatever I want, I can eat and drink whatever I want, and I can buy whatever I need!

Jesus: When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he no longer had money to buy food or a place to live.

Younger son: Where has all my money gone? Nothing is growing in the fields, and food is costing so much money. I guess I need to find work.

Jesus: So after many days looking for work, he got a job slopping pigs in the fields. He was so hungry he would have eaten the corncobs in the pig slop, but no one would give him any. Hunger finally brought him to his senses.

Younger son: All those farmhands working for my father eat three meals a day, and here I am starving to death. I’m going back to my father. I’ll say to him, “Father, I’ve sinned against God. I’ve sinned before you. I don’t deserve to be called your son. Take me on as a hired hand and I’ll work for my food.”

Jesus: So he set off and went to his father. (son begins to walk back home) But while he was still far off. (father holds hands above eyes and looks to the distance his father saw him and was filled with compassion and love. He ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. (father runs toward son, puts his arms around him, and kisses him)

Younger son: Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.

Father: (motions to servants) Quick, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Get a fat calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. This son of mine was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found!

Jesus: And they began to celebrate. (everyone dances around in celebration) Now his older son was in the field. When he came back to the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on.

Older son: (walks up to party, motions to servant) What is happening? Why is everyone celebrating?

Servant: Your brother has come home. Your father has killed the fatted calf because he is back, safe and sound.

Older son: I’m not going in there. He took everything and left to go have fun, leaving me to help Father do all the work.

Father: (comes over to older son) Your brother is back home. Come and join us in celebration.

Older son: Listen! For all these years, I have been working like a slave for you. I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who threw away your money comes back, you throw a huge party for him!

Father: Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.
My Lenten Journey with Jesus

This week I will...

list 5 things I’m grateful for:

write a letter or send a card:

bring a friend to church:

read the scriptures:

compliment someone:

give money to Abolish Poverty, End Suffering:

7–12 March 2016
FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Lesson 16
13 March 2016

Focus Scripture Passage: John 12:1–8

Lesson Focus: Grace and Generosity

Objectives

The learners will...

- continue their Lenten journey.
- read the story “Something Beautiful for Jesus” from the Lectionary Story Bible, Year C.
- examine why we give gifts and how our giving reflects our love of Jesus.
- put the needs of others above theirs.


Supplies

- Paper, crayons or markers, painter’s tape
- Basin of water and a towel
- Clean plastic drink bottles; scissors; permanent markers, colorful tape, or stickers.
- Lenten journey sheet (Fifth Sunday in Lent)

Plan Ahead: The class suggestions for next week (Palm/Passion Sunday) break from the traditional style of the lessons. Plan ahead! Enlist the help of parents, teens, and other congregation members. You will need actors to represent Jesus, Judas, Peter, Roman soldiers, Pilate, three townspeople, and a narrator. Copy the Holy Week booklet for each child. With coordination and planning, this could be an intergenerational event for the whole congregation.

A rehearsal for those with speaking parts is suggested.

ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction (35% of lesson time)

Read the story “Something Beautiful for Jesus” from the Lectionary Story Bible, Year C, p. 103. Older children may read this from John 12:1–8.

Discuss:

- Why do we give gifts?
- Mary shared an expensive gift because of her great love of Jesus. This was probably one of the most valuable things she owned. Why was she so generous with her gift?
- What was Judas’ complaint?
- If you were in that room, would you have responded like Judas or Mary? Why?

Act It Out: Have children retell the story in their own words as they act it out.

GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson (15% of total lesson time)

Provide paper and crayons or markers. As children gather for class ask them to write or draw pictures about what they did this week on their Lenten journey. Post on the wall to continue the Lenten pathway around the room.
3 \textbf{RESPOND} \\
Takes the learners from hearing to doing \\
(35\% of lesson time)

\textbf{J-O-Y-ful Generosity} \\
As disciples of Jesus, we are called to respond with actions as well as words. When Mary gave Jesus her gift, she was not thinking of herself. To remember this call to generosity, make JOY (Jesus first, Others second, Yourself last) “slap” bracelets from recycled drink bottles.

While the children work, explain that JOY stands for Jesus first, Others second, and Yourself last. Discuss what this generosity focus means for the choices they are challenged to make every day.

Cut out the smooth section (area under label) of a 20 oz/567 g or smaller plastic drink bottle.

Cut to desired size; trim edges smooth. Some bottles will have enough flat area to create two bracelets. The molded shape of the bottle will wrap around a child’s wrist.

Decorate the bracelet with permanent markers, duct tape, or stickers.

\textit{Craft adapted from SophiesWorldVideo (www.youtube.com/watch?v=YqU63DoDHU).}

\textbf{Washing of Feet} \\
In Jesus’ day, everyone traveled on dry, dusty roads. To clean another one’s feet was a chore for household servants. As part of Mary’s special gift to Jesus, she washed his feet. In John 13:1–17 we read how Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. These examples of humility show us that as servants of Jesus Christ, we must put others’ needs above our own. Help the children better understand this message by washing their feet. Make this a solemn experience by stressing that this is not a time for silliness, but a time to imagine what it means to be a servant of Jesus Christ.

4 \textbf{SEND} \\
Explores how the lesson might be lived out \\
(10\% of lesson time)

Give each child a copy of the Lenten journey sheet for this week (end of lesson). Review the suggestions together and brainstorm possibilities. Encourage everyone to draw or write thoughts on the page each day and to include their family in this Lenten journey.

5 \textbf{BLESS} \\
Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope \\
(5\% of lesson time)

\textbf{BLESS} \\
Close today’s class with the reading of Doctrine and Covenants 161:7.

\textit{The Spirit of the One you follow is the spirit of love and peace. That Spirit seeks to abide in the hearts of those who would embrace its call and live its message. The path will not always be easy, the choices will not always be clear, but the cause is sure and the Spirit will bear witness to the truth, and those who live the truth will know the hope and the joy of discipleship in the community of Christ. Amen.}
My Lenten Journey with Jesus
This week I will...

- take a prayer walk:
- not gossip:
- do a random act of kindness:
- bake cookies to share:
- spend time with my family:
- give up video games and phone time:

14–19 March 2016
Palm Sunday

Lesson 17

20 March 2016


Lesson Focus: Sacred Story, Events of Holy Week

Objectives

The learners will...

• walk through the events of Holy Week.
• deepen their understanding of Jesus’ life and death.

Supplies

• Community of Christ Sings (CCS)
• Scarves or fabric pieces
• Area with table, bread, water or juice
• Video(s) and player
• Lenten journey sheet

Note to teacher: This lesson plan breaks from the traditional format of the lessons. Enlist the help of parents, teens, and other congregation members. You will need actors to portray Jesus, Judas, several disciples, two Roman soldiers, and a narrator. Copy the Holy Week booklet for each child. With coordination and planning, this can be an intergenerational event for the whole congregation.


Walking with Jesus through Holy Week

Actors portraying Jesus and disciples are clothed with scarves or fabric pieces over their shoulders. Choose a place to represent the Jerusalem temple, possibly the church sanctuary. Gather children and give everyone a scarf or piece of fabric.

Scene One: Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem

Narrator: (adapted from Luke 19:28–40 The Message)

Today is a special day. We call it Palm Sunday because today we remember Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Jesus was coming back to Jerusalem with his disciples for the Feast of the Passover. Before they got there, Jesus sent two of the disciples to find a colt that had never been ridden. He told them to tell the owner they needed the colt so His Master could ride it. The disciples brought the colt to Jesus, threw their coats on its back, and helped Jesus get on.

Jesus and disciples walk in.

Narrator:

Boys and girls, I’d like you to meet Jesus and his disciples.

Jesus:

Will you come with me to Jerusalem?

Jesus begins to lead the children to the “temple” area. Take a roundabout route to allow time for a parade.

Narrator:

As Jesus rode into Jerusalem, the people gave him a grand welcome. They threw their coats on the street in front of Jesus. The whole crowd burst into enthusiastic praise over all the mighty works Jesus had done.

Invite children to wave their pieces of fabric to represent the coats that were thrown into the streets before Jesus. Sing CCS 642, “Praise the Lord Together Singing.” Sing through once; then encourage children to sing along as the parade continues to the temple space. Once they
reach the temple space everyone should sit down and let Jesus continue with the story.

Scene Two: Jesus Cleanses the Temple
(adapted from Luke 19:45–47 The Message)

Jesus:

Much will happen this week. When we arrived at the temple, I got pretty upset. Instead of people praying, the temple had been turned into a place where people were selling all kinds of things. But after that I returned to the temple each day to teach. I knew there were high priests, scholars, and leaders who didn’t like my teachings, and they were looking for a way to get rid of me. That wasn’t easy because the people, people much like you and the others in the congregation, listened to every word I spoke. They wanted to hear and learn.

Scene Three: The Feast of the Unleavened Bread
(adapted from Luke 22:1–30 NRSV)

Have a table set, possibly in another room, where everyone can sit down to eat bread and drink juice or water. Provide gluten-free bread if you have children with allergies. Jesus should invite the children to join him for the Feast of the Passover, and then lead them to the area where bread and water or juice is waiting. As they walk, Jesus continues his story.

Jesus:

Come with me. It is time for the Feast of the Unleavened Bread or, as some call it, the Feast of the Passover. I sent Peter and John ahead to prepare a room for us to share together.

When they reach the room with a table, Jesus invites everyone to sit down. While they eat and drink together, Jesus tells the story of his last meal with the disciples before he died on the cross.

Jesus:

This time with my apostles is often called the Last Supper because it was the last opportunity I had to share a meal with them before my time of great suffering. I took a loaf of bread, blessed it, and broke it to share with each one. (Invite children to eat bread.) As we shared the bread among us, I said, “Eat this bread and remember my body which I give for you.” And as we shared our drink, I said, “Drink this cup in remembrance of the blood I shed for you.” (Invite children to drink from their cups.)

Scene Four: A Time of Prayer
(adapted from Luke 22:39–53)

Jesus:

After dinner, I went to the Mount of Olives. The apostles followed. Children, will you join me?

Take children back to classroom or a location where a video can be shown.

I often went to this garden for prayer. This time I needed to find strength to meet the events I knew I would soon have to face.

Invite everyone to stand in a circle and hold hands.

Jesus:

When we got to the garden, I began to pray (Luke 22:41–44 The Message, adapted)

“Father, remove this burden from me. But please, not what I want. What do you want?”

While I prayed, the disciples slept. Just as I went to wake them, a crowd showed up with one of my twelve disciples, Judas, leading the way.

Judas walks up to Jesus and kisses him on the cheek.

Jesus:

Judas, you would betray the Son of Man with a kiss?

Two Roman soldiers lead Jesus away.

Scene Five: The Crucifixion

Invite children to take a seat to watch the rest of the Holy Week story. Darken lights in the room and turn on the video (see choices below). It should be set and ready to play.

1. The Crucifixion—Children’s Bible Stories

Stop or pause at point 4:35 on the video just after Jesus’ body is taken to the tomb. (This video will require live Internet connection to view.)

2. Download these three videos from Bible Society Australia to show from your computer or copy to a DVD to display on a player and TV setup.

Sing CCS 528, “Eat This Bread.” Sing through once; then encourage children to sing along.
Ending class with the crucifixion story could be disturbing for younger children. Help them process that event as you have time. Remind children that the crucifixion was not the end of the story. Next week is Easter, a day of celebration and praise.

Review the story of today by asking children to remember where they went and what was talked about at each station. Encourage them share the story of Jesus during Holy Week by telling it to others.

Give each child a copy of the Lenten journey sheet for this week (end of lesson). Review the suggestions together and brainstorm possibilities. Encourage everyone to draw or write thoughts on the page each day and to include their family in this Lenten journey.

BLESS
Close with prayer asking God to help the children remember and understand the teachings of Jesus and the sacrifice he made for each of us.
My Lenten Journey with Jesus
This week I will...

- donate a coat or jacket:
- read about the Last Supper:
- wash my family’s feet like Jesus washed the feet of his disciples:
- give thanks for Jesus’ sacrifice:
- pray for our church and its leaders so we might understand what it means to be Community of Christ.
- dye eggs and celebrate the new life of Jesus’ resurrection with an Easter Egg hunt.

Holy Week

21–26 March 2016
Focus Scripture Passage: John 20:1–18

Lesson Focus: Christ Has Risen! The Sacred Story of Holy Week

Objectives
The learners will...

- hear the story of Mary Magdalene's visit to Jesus' tomb and her encounter with the risen Christ.
- celebrate the joy that Jesus is alive.


1 GATHER
Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson (15% of total lesson time)

As children gather, let them make “resurrection rolls.”

1. Give each child a sheet of waxed paper to use as a working surface. Sprinkle lightly with flour.
2. Sprinkle cinnamon onto a flat, refrigerated crescent roll.
3. Place a large marshmallow on top; then wrap the roll around the marshmallow.
4. Place on a baking sheet or in muffin tin.
5. Bake according to crescent roll directions. (Best to test in oven before class makes them.)

Enlist the help of someone to bake the "resurrection rolls" while class continues.

OPTION: If cooking facilities are not available, let children create empty tombs from play dough.

2 ENGAGE
Invites exploration and interaction (35% of lesson time)

Before reading the scripture story discuss the events of last week's lesson. What was the last event that happened? (Jesus' body was taken down from the cross, placed in a tomb and a big stone was rolled in front to seal it.) Then share the story of the Resurrection directly from John 20:1–18 NRSV.

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb.
He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabbouni!” (teacher). Jesus said to her, “Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord;” and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Serve the baked “resurrection rolls” while you discuss the story. If the rolls are still hot, provide children forks to cut the rolls.

- When you cut into your “resurrection roll,” what do you find? Were you surprised to find nothing?
- Imagine you are Mary and you got up really early to take spices and oils to place on Jesus’ dead body. But when you got there the stone was rolled away, and the body was gone. Like the middle of your “resurrection roll,” it was empty. What would you think had happened? What would you do?
- How do you think Mary felt when she came face to face with the Master? How would you feel?

The scriptures read:

“Simon Peter came… and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed” (vv. 6–8).

- What was it that they suddenly believed? (Jesus had told them he would arise in three days; now they understood what that meant.)

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing (35% of lesson time)

The Empty Cross

This week we celebrate the empty cross and tomb. Jesus has risen from the dead! As a reminder of Jesus’ love for you, make a pocket cross (end of lesson). Let children cut out their crosses; then fold on dotted lines into the shape of a square. Unfold cross and inside each section of the cross, have them write words or draw pictures of blessings they have received from God.

Shout the Good News

Before class prepare plastic eggs. Write messages of joy, love, and affirmation (Jesus is alive! God loves you. Christ is risen.) on slips of paper. Place one message in each egg.

Sit in a circle. Give each child a plastic egg. Moving around the circle, have children take turns opening their eggs and whispering the message to the person on their right, who then shouts the good news to the whole group. Then that person opens his or her egg and whispers the message to the person on the right. This continues until everyone has opened at least one egg. After eggs have been opened, discuss:

- What news do you have to share today?
- Who will you tell?”

Option: If plastic eggs are not available, write messages on slips of paper and place them in basket. Have children pull out a slip of paper and proceed as explained above.
**SEND**  
Explores how the lesson might be lived out  
(10% of lesson time)

Sing the song, "I Will Sing, I Will Sing" CCS 112. As children catch on to the words and tune, let them add verses. (I will shout... I will dance... I will laugh... I will share... I will serve...) Take the class on a walk through the halls of the church, singing this joyous song along the way.

**BLESS**  
Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope  
(5% of lesson time)

Close with prayer giving thanks for the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
**Lesson Focus:** Peace Be with You—Those who believe in Christ are called to take the message of peace into the world so others may also know Christ and believe.

**Focus Scripture Passage:** John 20:19–31

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” But Thomas, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because...
you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.” Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

Explain that it’s OK to have doubts and ask questions—to wonder why. We can seek answers to erase our doubts. When that happens, we believe something is true. If it is something we have not seen for ourselves, we can have faith—we can believe—that it is true. Then we can tell others about it.

Introduce an assistant (selected ahead of time) as “A. Doubter.” (The doubter could put on a hat or sign with a question mark taped on it.) Doubters have many questions, like “How do I know you’re who you say you are?”

Read the following script.

Am I a Doubter? by Mary Kay Speaks

Teacher: Do you know who I am?
Doubter: Yes, you’re [teacher’s name].
Teacher: How do you know that?
Doubter: You told me your name when we first met.
Teacher: How could you find out if that is my real name?
Doubter: I could ask the children. (turns to class) Well, what do you think? Is this [teacher’s name]?
Teacher: What’s another way to check?
Doubter: I could ask for identification. Do you have an ID card? A name tag? A letter addressed to you?
Teacher: Yes, I do. (teacher shows identification) Or, you could call my phone number and see if I answer.
Doubter: OK. (pantomimes making a phone call)
Teacher: Hello? (pantomimes answering the phone)
Doubter: Who is this?
Teacher: It’s [teacher’s name].
Doubter: Just checking. Bye. (both hang up their phones)
Doubter: OK, I believe you. You say you’re you, the class says you’re you, your name is printed on your ID, and you answered your phone. I think I may need to change my name from A. Doubter to A. Believer.
Guide class through a breath prayer.

- Sit in a comfortable position. Close your eyes to block distractions.
- Breathe in... Breathe out...
- As the group develops a breathing rhythm, add the following phrases.
  “Receive…” (breathe in)
  “the Spirit.” (breathe out)

Ask: Have you ever doubted something others believe? When? What did you do?

Discuss how we go from being doubters to being believers. *We talk to others, we read, we listen, and we learn. We can learn about Jesus by reading stories about him in the Bible, going to Sunday school classes, talking with people at church, singing hymns, and listening to sermons.*

3 RESPOND
Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of lesson time)

Prove It or Believe It
Often we say “Show me!” or “Prove it!” when we disbelieve someone. Give a thumbs-up or thumbs-down if you believe what I say:

- There is air.
- You have a heart.
- There is a country named Switzerland.
- There is a God.
- God has a son, named Jesus.
- God loves us all.

Once children catch on, have them take turns leading the game. Discuss. Have any of you ever seen any of these? How do you know they are real, that they exist? Do you believe in the people who told you? Do you believe in faith? What helps you believe in Jesus even when you can’t see him?

Receive the Holy Spirit
Reread the following from the focus scripture passage:

Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit…”

4 SEND
Explores how the lesson might be lived out
(10% of lesson time)

Since words of counsel were shared with the 2013 World Conference by church president Stephen M. Veazey, there has been a series of webcasts and questions-and-answer sessions to delve deeper into their meaning. This evening (6:00 p.m. Central Time) the series will continue with another webcast of the prophet-president of our church—Community of Christ—speaking to all of us.

After he speaks there will be a live question-and-answer session. The questions will be submitted from people around the world.

- What questions would you like to ask President Veazey?

5 BLESS
Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
(5% of lesson time)

Lead the children in singing “Jesus Loves Me” CCS 251. The first time sing “Jesus loves me” as children point to themselves. Next time sing “Jesus loves you” as everyone points to others, and finish by singing “Jesus loves us” as they spread their arms wide. Close with a prayer asking God to open our hearts so we can find answers and peace for our questions and doubts.
Focus Scripture Passage: John 21:1–19

Lesson Focus: Do You Love Me? Share the love of Jesus with others.

Objectives
The learners will...

- explore the story from John 21:1–19.
- discuss ways they can answer Jesus’ call to “feed my sheep.”

Supplies
- Campfire setting. If weather and location allow, build a real campfire outside.
- Fish cutouts with scenarios written on backs
- Small blanket or towel
- Rolled-up socks
- Printed words for the song, “Jesus Asked, ‘Do You Love Me?’”


1 GATHER
Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson (15% of total lesson time)

To set the mood, consider creating a campfire setting. If weather and location allow, the setting could be outside with a real campfire.

Invite children to sit around the “campfire.” Encourage role-playing—pretending the fire is warm, cooking, and stoking the fire. Sing a few silly campfire songs while waiting for students to arrive.

2 ENGAGE
Invites exploration and interaction (35% of lesson time)

Share the story “Peter Learns” from the Lectionary Story Bible, Year C, page 125 (based on John 21:1–19). It takes place early one morning after Jesus’ resurrection when the disciples had gone to the lake to catch fish. Stories of Jesus often revolved around friends coming together to eat. In this story, the meal was breakfast cooked over a campfire by Jesus.

If class is large enough, let children retell the story by acting it out.

3 RESPOND
Takes the learners from hearing to doing (35% of lesson time)

Do You Love Me? Feed My Sheep.

Who are the sheep Jesus was talking about?

Trace fish pattern. Reproduce enough for everyone in class to have at least one fish. On the back of each fish write an open-ended scenario (see suggestions). Make sure there are enough fish for each person to get at least one. Place fish cutouts in basket. Before you begin, explain the steps of the object lesson:

1. Teacher offers the basket of fish to a child and asks, “Do you love Jesus?”
2. Child answers, “Yes, I love Jesus!” and takes a fish from the basket.
3. Teacher responds, “Then feed Jesus’ sheep.”
4. Child reads the scenario on the back of the fish and decides how he or she can “feed Jesus’ sheep” in that circumstance.

**Open-ended Scenarios**
- A boy at school drops his plate of food.
- Mom is not feeling well.
- A child is crying because she fell down.
- Your neighbor is 90 years old, and there was a big snow last night.
- You are jumping rope with friends, and a new girl at school is watching.
- Deacons at church need help with offering.
- You find a little boy lost in the grocery store.

**Nets Overflowing**
Using a small blanket or large beach towel, play a game of nets overflowing.

**Small class:** Players hold on to each end of the “net” (blanket or towel). Throw “fish” (rolled-up socks) into the middle. Each side tries to get the fish to bounce to their end of the net.

**Large class:** Divide into two teams. Each team has a blanket or large towel and rolled-up socks. Each team’s socks should be a different color (light or dark). Teams stand side by side with socks in middle of their nets. The object is to get each team’s fish (socks) into the net (blanket or towel) of the other team.

Option: If socks are not available, use wadded up paper, empty drink bottles, or other items with enough substance to bounce.

**Jesus Asked, “Do You Love Me?”**
*Words by Lynda Roberson*
*Tune: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jRv-fgfLFTk*

Peter said, “I’m going to fish,”
Hallelujah.
On the Sea of Galilee,
Hallelujah.

Peter’s friends heard what he said,
Hallelujah.
Came along and fished ‘til dawn,
Hallelujah.

Jesus saw them from the shore,
Hallelujah.
Told them how to catch some more,
Hallelujah.

Peter jumped and swam to land,
Hallelujah.
Couldn’t wait to shake Christ’s hand,
Hallelujah.

Jesus cooked some fish for them,
Hallelujah.
On the beach he ate with friends,
Hallelujah.

Jesus asked, “Do you love me?”
Hallelujah.
“If you do, then feed my sheep.”
Hallelujah.

**4 SEND**
Explores how the lesson might be lived out (10% of lesson time)

Sit around the campfire and teach children the song “Jesus Asked, ‘Do You Love Me?’” sung to the tune of “Michael, Row the Boat Ashore.” Make copies of the words for children as they learn the song. Discuss what it would be like to sit at the campfire with Jesus. What stories would you share?

**5 BLESS**
Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope (5% of lesson time)

Close with a prayer asking God to help children see opportunities where they can answer Jesus’ challenge to “feed my sheep.”
FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

LESSON 21
17 April 2016

Focus Scripture Passage: John 10:22–30
Lesson Focus: All are called to follow Jesus.

Objectives
The learners will...
- look for God’s love alive in world today.
- listen for the Shepherd’s voice.

Supplies
- Sheep picture (one for each child), glue, cotton balls, crayons or markers, tape, paper for banner
- Slips of paper with names of people known by their specific actions
- Community of Christ Sings (CCS)


1 GATHER
Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson (15% of total lesson time)

As children gather, work on the sheep craft (end of lesson).

- Color sheep and glue cotton balls to the sheep’s body.
- Write name below the sheep.
- Hang all the sheep where they can be seen by the congregation, such as a hallway.
- Add a banner with the words “We follow Jesus. Jesus is our Shepherd.”

2 ENGAGE
Invites exploration and interaction (35% of lesson time)

Have children read the focus scripture reading for this lesson from John 10:22–30 (adapted from NRSV and The Message).

Reader 1: The people of Jerusalem were celebrating Hanukkah. Jesus was there for the festival, too. As Jesus walked across Solomon’s porch in the temple, people began to gather around him asking questions.

Reader 2: How long are you going to keep us guessing? If you are the Messiah, then please, just tell us.

Reader 3: Jesus answered, “I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name testify of me; my actions speak louder than words.”

Reader 4: Jesus continued, “I have shown you that I am the Messiah but you do not believe, because you are not one of my sheep. My sheep recognize my voice. I know them, and they follow me.

Reader 5: I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father’s hand. The Father and I are one.”
Discuss.

- What did Jesus mean when he said “My sheep recognize my voice”?
- How do you recognize Jesus’ voice from other voices around you?
- Jesus said his actions had shown that he was the Messiah. How can people’s actions help you recognize the voice of Jesus?
- Where do you see God’s love alive in the world today?

LISTENING FOR THE SHEPHERD’S VOICE

Play this game like Simon Says, but with two leaders. Identify one as the shepherd. The leaders stand with their backs to the children so it is more difficult to tell which one is speaking. Children listen for instructions from the shepherd. When the shepherd asks children to jump or turn around, then everyone should do it. However, if the other leader asks, they should stand still. Let children take turns being the leaders.

Discuss. Jesus referred to believers as sheep and himself as the good shepherd. Cattle can be rounded up by shouting and moving around them, but sheep will only follow the voice of their shepherd. We must listen for the voice of our shepherd.

- How do we learn to recognize God’s voice?

ACTION CHARADES

Look back at the scripture passage for today. How did Jesus respond to the question, “Are you the Messiah?” The way we live our lives, including our actions and the choices we make every day, helps others know who we are and who we follow.

On slips of paper write names of people who are known by what they do. (firefighter, teacher, preacher, doctor, nurse, carpenter, news reporter, bus driver) Have children draw slips of paper and act out for others to guess. If the class is large, divide into teams.

Discuss.

- By your actions and choices, who would people say you are? (child, student, friend, follower of Jesus, soccer player, musician)
- Do your actions reflect who you are?

SING TOGETHER THE SONG “TAKWABA UWABANGA YESU! (THERE’S NO ONE LIKE JESUS)”

Sing together the song “Takwaba Uwabanga Yesu! (There’s No One Like Jesus!)” CCS 121. Read through the words. Explain that this song was first taught to youth attending the International Youth Forum. It speaks of searching for Jesus wherever you are, wherever you go. Sing with the beat of drums and other rhythm instruments. Add clapping, walking, searching (hand over eyes), and turning around.

SHARE IN A GROUP PRAYER, THANKING GOD FOR PEOPLE IN THE LIVES OF THE CHILDREN WHOSE ACTIONS SPEAK WITH THE VOICE OF JESUS.
**FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER**

**LESSON 22**

24 April 2016

**Focus Scripture Passage:** John 13:31–35

**Lesson Focus:** Worth of All Persons, Love One Another

**Objectives**

The learners will...

- study Jesus' message of love.
- look at ways Jesus showed love to others.
- talk about ways they can show love.

**Supplies**

- Bibles
- Jesus Loves All card game (end of lesson) one set for each child, scissors
- Plain paper, red construction paper for red heart cutouts, markers, scissors, transparent tape or stapler
- Community of Christ Sings (CCS)

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for John 13:31–35 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, available through Herald House.

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**1 GATHER**

Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson (15% of total lesson time)

Sing songs about love as defined by Jesus:

- “Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love” CCS 367
- “Jesus Loves Me” CCS 251
- “All Are Welcome” CCS 276
- “Jesus Loves the Little Children”
- “Make New Friends but Keep the Old”

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**2 ENGAGE**

Invites exploration and interaction (35% of lesson time)

Throughout Jesus’ teachings was the message of love: love God, love your friends and family, even love your enemies. Help children look up references where Jesus talked about love. Read each one aloud and discuss the love Jesus was teaching and how the message speaks to their lives.

**Supplies**

- Matthew 7:12 Golden rule
- Matthew 22:34–40, Mark 12:28–33 The greatest commandment
- John 3:16 God so loved the world
- John 13:31–35 New commandment
- John 14:15, 21 Promise of Holy Spirit
- John 15:9–17 Love as I have loved you

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**3 RESPOND**

Takes the learners from hearing to doing (35% of lesson time)

**Jesus Loves All**

Jesus not only taught his followers about love, he showed them how to love. Play the Jesus Loves All card game (end of lesson) to discover examples of how Jesus showed love to others. Photocopy one set for each child. Cut on dotted lines and follow rules as explained on the rule card.
Discuss:

- What do the drawings on the cards show us about Jesus and those he loved?
- Do you remember the stories surrounding any of the pictures?

Let everyone take home a set of cards so they can share today's lesson with others.

Tree of Love

1. Roll up a sheet of paper and tape around the bottom to hold in place.
2. Cut slits around the top.
3. Stick a finger in the middle of the tube and twist to slide the inside layers upward in a spiral. Spread out slits to create tree branches.
4. Cut red hearts from construction paper. Write names of people you love on the hearts and tape them to the branches.

Jesus healed a soldier who came to arrest him.
Jesus ate with the tax collector Zaccheus.
Jesus healed the sick.
Jesus fed 5000 with the lunch of a child.
Jesus shared living water with a Samaritan woman.
Jesus taught all who would listen.
Jesus loved the children.

**SEND**

Explores how the lesson might be lived out (10% of lesson time)

Review today’s lesson by reading John 13:34–35. Give each child a heart cutout. Ask everyone to write on the heart one way to show God’s love this week.

**BLESS**

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope (5% of lesson time)

Close with a popcorn prayer. Children add to the prayer by popping up and saying a name of someone they love or someone who loves them.
Jesus healed a soldier who came to arrest him.

Jesus ate with the tax collector Zaccheus.

Jesus healed the sick.

Jesus shared living water with a Samaritan woman.

Jesus shared with friends.

Jesus fed 5000 with the lunch of a child.

Jesus taught all who would listen.

Jesus shared living water with a Samaritan woman.

Jesus loves the children.

Jesus loves all Card Game
1. One complete set of cards per person.
2. Shuffle all cards together (4 players use 4 sets of cards)
3. Deal each player 8 cards.
4. Play begins left of the dealer. Player discards one card face down.
5. Next player picks it up, adds it to their hand, and discards one card.
6. Continue play until a player has a complete set of all 8 cards. Play can continue until everyone has a set.

Focus Scripture Passage: John 14:23–29

Lesson Focus: Pursuit of Peace, Peace of Jesus Christ

Objectives
The learners will...
• learn the song “Peace, Salaam, Shalom.”
• explore the scripture passage: John 14:23–29.
• examine how Jesus’ peace is different from world peace.

Supplies
• Computer with Internet access or Community of Christ Sings (CCS)
• Bibles
• Eye of the storm picture
• Plain paper, pencils


GATHER
Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson
(15% of total lesson time)

Show the video Peace through All People which is a beautiful version of the song “Peace, Salaam, Shalom” written by Emma’s Revolution. Discuss how they feel while watching the video and listening to the words of the song. (http://www.CofChrist.org/resources search for Peace through All People) If Internet connection is not available, sing or read CCS 310. This video is not available for download. You can purchase it from Herald House: http://www.heraldhouse.org/cart/edit.asp?p=345048.

ENGAGE
Invites exploration and interaction
(35% of lesson time)

In today's scripture passage, Jesus calls us to continue his work. Let children read John 14:23–29 together.

Jesus answered him, “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me.

“I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I am coming to you.’ If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe.

Remind the class that Jesus is saying this to his disciples as he tries to prepare them for the time after he ascends into heaven. Discuss the major points of the passage and how they relate to their lives.
1. Continue to love Jesus and follow the teachings he shared during his ministry.
   • What are some of the teachings Jesus wants you to follow?
   • How are they different from what he taught the disciples?
2. Expect the Holy Spirit to comfort and guide you.
   • Can you expect the Holy Spirit to comfort and guide you?
   • Can you share a time when you have felt the Holy Spirit?
3. Through the Spirit I leave with you my peace.
   • How is the peace of Jesus different from the peace of the world?
4. Rejoice and believe.

3 RESPOND
   Takes the learners from hearing to doing
   (35% of lesson time)

Eye of the Storm
Pursuit of Peace calls us to a way of living, but the promise of God’s peace does not mean we live without pain, conflict, loss, or distress. Rather, it assures us that Christ’s peace comforts us even when our lives are distressed. A visual of this would be the eye of a tropical storm (end of lesson). The area in the middle of these storms is calm with clear skies even though the storm rages on around the eye.

Give each member of the group a piece of paper. Tell them to draw a circle in the middle of the paper. The circle represents the “eye” of their lives and everything outside the circle is what threatens their peace. Have them write words or draw pictures in the circle representing that which threatens their peace. Have them write words or draw pictures in the circle representing that which brings peace to their lives (family, friends, Holy Spirit, nature, reading). Outside the circle, have them write or draw their struggles, that which makes peace in their lives difficult (homework, fights with loved ones, illness). When the group is done, allow them to share what they’ve written or drawn.

Pursuit of Peace
Jesus Christ, the embodiment of God’s shalom, invites all people to come and receive divine peace in the midst of the difficult questions and struggles of life. Follow Christ in the way that leads to God’s peace and discover the blessings of all of the dimensions of salvation.
—Doctrine and Covenants 163: 2a

Start a discussion with the children about peace. Use their eye-of-the-storm papers to lead the discussion.
   • What does peace mean?
   • How can we bring peace to others?
   • When are times in your lives that you’ve known peace? That you haven’t known peace?
   • How do you find peace in your storm?

4 SEND
   Explores how the lesson might be lived out
   (10% of lesson time)

Guide the class through a centering prayer.
   • Find a comfortable sitting position. Close your eyes and focus on your breath. Use your breath to create a sense of peace. Breathe deeply, slowly, calmly. As you fill your lungs and breathe out, feel the tension in your muscles—your entire body—flow out with the air. Continue to breathe in a regular, natural rhythm.
   • Focus on breathing God in, breathing all else out until you feel calm and centered.
   • Continue paying attention to your breath as you focus your body, mind, and spirit on the reality that God is present and that you are here with the intent of loving and being loved by God. Add words as you breathe in and out.

Breathe in: Peace...
Breathe out: ...Salaam, Shalom

When the time for prayer has elapsed, offer a brief word of thanks to God, and take several more deep breaths. Become aware of the room around you, move or stretch in your chair, and open your eyes when you are ready.

For more detail on the centering prayer go to www.CofChrist.org/spiritual-practice-centering-prayer.

5 BLESS
   Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
   (5% of lesson time)

Use the video, Peace through All People as a closing. Encourage everyone to sing along. If available, children may add drums and rhythmic instruments. (If Internet connection is not available, sing CCS 310. This video is not available for download.)
SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER—ASCENSION OF THE LORD

LESSON 24
8 May 2016


Lesson Focus: Proclaim Jesus Christ by sharing the gospel message.

Objectives
The learners will...

- review stories from Jesus’ ministry.
- discuss how they can be witnesses that proclaim Jesus Christ.
- learn the Community of Christ mission statement.

Supplies
- Newsprint or large sheets of plain paper, crayons
- Bibles
- Jam, crackers (or alternative snack), knife, flip chart
- Mission statement posters (one for each child)
- Community of Christ Sings (CCS)
- Doctrine and Covenants


1 GATHER
Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson (15% of total lesson time)

Cover table with plain paper or make a banner on the wall. Ask children to draw or write pictures and words that describe stories they remember from Jesus’ ministry and teachings.

2 ENGAGE
Invites exploration and interaction (35% of lesson time)

Create the setting for the focus scripture passage: The disciples were gathered in Jerusalem. It was after the events of Holy Week and Easter. Help children remember what happened.

Jesus had already appeared to the disciples several times. Remember when he cooked breakfast for them on the shores of the Sea of Galilee? Let’s see what happens in today’s story from Luke 24:44–53.

Read Luke 24:44–53 (adapted from NRSV), using the questions provided to promote discussion (or ask questions you create).

Jesus said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.”

Do you remember which part of the Bible the Jews studied as scripture? The Hebrew Scriptures are the books in our Bible known as the Old Testament. Let children find the Old and New Testaments in the Bible. Remind them that the New Testament is where the stories of Jesus and his followers are found.

Then Jesus opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.”

Ask the children what this is referring to.

You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

Who were the witnesses?

Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

When Jesus returned to his disciples and friends after the Resurrection, he told them he would only be with them for a short time before ascending into heaven. Imagine you are there with the others. What would it have been like to witness the ascension of Jesus?

Are You a Witness?

Before Jesus went to heaven, he told the disciples to be witnesses. What does it mean to be a witness?

Show a jar of jam (or other food that can be served on crackers or an alternative snack). If class is large enough, divide into teams of two or three; smaller classes can work as one group. Ask the children to share their witness of the jam. What would they say to help others understand the wonder of the jam? Write responses on a flip chart or board.

Now spread the jam on the crackers and let the class taste the snack. Have them try again to give witness to the goodness of the jam. Was it easier the second time? When we witness through actions as well as words, we engage all our senses, giving us a greater opportunity to share the message with others.

You can tell friends and family, even strangers, about Jesus, but how can you increase the witness of Jesus through your actions?

RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of lesson time)

Proclaim Jesus Christ

The church’s mission statement is “We proclaim Jesus Christ and promote communities of joy, hope, love, and peace.”

As children color their mission statement post- ers end of lesson) discuss what the mission statement means for our church and the witness they are called to bring to the world.

SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived out
(10% of lesson time)

Challenge children to witness to at least one person this week, showing others they are followers of Jesus.

BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
(5% of lesson time)

Sing or read the hymn “In My Life, Lord” CCS 602. Read Doctrine and Covenants 161:3c.

Be courageous and visionary, believing in the power of just a few vibrant witnesses to transform the world.
We proclaim Jesus Christ and promote communities of joy, hope, love, and peace.
DAY OF PENTECOST: ENDOWMENT SUNDAY

LESSON 25
15 May 2016

Focus Scripture Passage: Acts 2:1–21
Lesson Focus: The Holy Spirit will come to you.

Objectives
The learners will...
• learn about Pentecost and the day the Holy Spirit came to the followers of Christ.
• listen to and speak several languages.
• explore descriptions of the Holy Spirit.

Supplies
• Construction paper, scissors, flame pattern, tape
• Fan
• Holy Spirit die created from provided pattern
• Word scramble—one copy for each child, pencils
• Community of Christ Sings (CCS)


1 GATHER
Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson (15% of total lesson time)

Provide a flame pattern (end of lesson) for children to color with orange, yellow, and red crayons. Cut headbands for children, long enough to fit around their heads, and fasten. Have children cut out the flame and add it to their headbands with tape or staples. These will symbolize the coming of the Holy Spirit like a flame as described in the story of Pentecost.

Older children may prefer to wave the flames instead of creating headbands. Staple or tape several flames together to create fans.

2 ENGAGE
Invites exploration and interaction (35% of lesson time)

Pentecost comes fifty days after Passover; “pente” means fifty in Greek. It was the spring harvest celebration, but it took on new meaning for Christians when the Holy Spirit came on the gathering and everyone spoke the wonders of God in his or her own language.

Read the story “The Birthday of the Church” from the Lectionary Story Bible, Year C, page 146. To liven the story, let children wear their fire headbands and create a breeze with a fan.

3 RESPOND
Takes the learners from hearing to doing (35% of lesson time)

Holy Spirit Game
Photocopy or trace the Holy Spirit Game die pattern (end of lesson). Cut and fold on dotted lines and tape

together. Before taping the last flap, stuff tissues inside the box to give it substance.

Invite children into a circle to play. Take turns rolling the die. Everyone should practice saying, “Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me” in whatever language the die lands on. If it lands on “Choose a language” the person who rolled the die gets to choose the language.

**Holy Spirit Scramble**

The Spirit is described in scripture by many names. Use the word scramble puzzle (end of lesson) to review ways the Holy Spirit brings ministry to us. Discuss the meaning of these words in relation to the Holy Spirit.

Answers:

1-guide
2-helper
3-love
4-God in us
5-breath
6-Trinity
7-comforter
8-witness
9-truth
10-teacher
11-advocate
12-peace

**SEND**

Explores how the lesson might be lived out (10% of lesson time)

Read or sing the song “Spirit of the Living God” CCS 567. This song is translated into five languages, and when sung in all five, it sounds like it might have sounded at Pentecost. Encourage children to try singing the verses in languages besides their own.

**BLESS**

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope (5% of lesson time)

Close with the following prayer.

Creator,

Thank you for sending the Holy Spirit to warm our hearts and guide our choices. We thank you for the witness of Jesus Christ and your message of love and peace. We thank you for the opportunity to be part of Community of Christ—a worldwide family. This is a community of faith where we find many languages and ways of living, but all are bound by the same Spirit of oneness. In the name of Jesus we pray.

Amen.
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Saint Esprit du Dieu vivant, entre dans mon cœur.

Choose a language.

Geist der Freude, heil’ger Geist, fall auf uns herab.

Ven, Espíritu de Dios, cae de nuevo en mí.

Sara kyeshin ju sŏng nyŏng naege osoŏs.
Holy Spirit Word Scramble

Unscramble the words below to discover words that describe the Holy Spirit.

ueigd
elhrpe
eolv
dGo ni su
ebrah
yinriT
otemcrfor
tsnwesi
hurt
creaeth
dvocatea
epcage
Focus Scripture Passage: John 16:12–15

Lesson Focus: God, Christ, Holy Spirit

Objectives

* The learners will...
  * explore the idea and mystery of the Trinity.
  * learn about the eternal community of God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit.


Supplies

* Bibles
* Plain paper, crayons or markers, pens or pencils
* Pre-cut disks with holes (see instructions for Trinity Twirlers), string, permanent markers
* Community of Christ Sings (CCS)

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson (15% of total lesson time)

Can three be one or one be three? Give children the three definitions to these words and see if they can guess the word that represents them all:

Club
* wooden stick used to hit objects
* suit in a deck of playing cards
* group that meets

Deck
* to hit something
* a porch on the side of a building
* planks of a boat where people walk

Fair
* lovely, beautiful
* light complexioned
* equitable, reasonable

Kid
* a baby goat
* a child
* to tease someone

Match
* wooden fire starter
* to go together
* a part of a game such as in tennis

Mug
* a drinking cup
* to attack
* a snapshot of a person’s face

Range
* cooking stove
* large area of grassy land
* line of mountains

Seal
* a fur-coated mammal
* to close something tightly
* a stamp that makes something official

Spell
* mythical words with mystical powers
* put letters together to make word
* a measurement of time

Trinity
* God
* Jesus Christ
* Holy Spirit
Read the focus scripture passage from John 16:12–15 (adapted from The Message):

“I still have many things to tell you, but you can’t handle them now. But when the Friend comes, the Spirit of the Truth, he will take you by the hand and guide you into all the truth there is. The Spirit won’t draw attention, but will make sense out of what is about to happen and, indeed, out of all that I have done and said. The Spirit will honor me; he will take from me and deliver to you. Everything the Father has is also mine. That is why I’ve said, ‘He take from me and delivers to you.’

Remind the class of the events that took place during Pentecost. Because they have already talked about the Holy Spirit coming to the disciples and followers, this will read like a flashback. Put the scripture passage in perspective. Jesus said this to the disciples before he went up into heaven. Use it as an introduction to the idea of Trinity.

The word Trinity is never mentioned in the Bible; however, God, Jesus, and Holy Spirit are used interchangeably. Can you find reference to God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit all within this scripture passage? But how can three be one and one be three? This idea can be confusing for adults and children alike.

We believe in one Living God who is revealed in Jesus Christ and moves through all creation as the Holy Spirit. We affirm the Trinity—God who is a community of three persons.

As adults we recognize this as the Trinity. Most important for the children to remember is that no matter which name they use, the eternal community of God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit will always be with them.

Using scripture references listed below, challenge children to create a list of names or descriptions for God, Jesus Christ, and Holy Spirit.

Start with the scripture reading for today then let the children look for more (see examples).

- Genesis 1:1 (creator)
- Isaiah 66:13 (comforting mother)
- Deuteronomy 32:11–12 (eagle, protector, guide)
- Isaiah 9:6 (counselor)
- John 15:26 (Holy Spirit)
- Matthew 1:21 (Jesus)
- John 8:12 (light of the world)
- 1 John 4:8 (love)
- John 4:25 (Messiah)
- Luke 2:11 (Savior)
- John 13:13 (teacher)
- John 1:1 (word)
- Matthew 11:19 (friend)
- Revelations 22:13 (alpha and omega)
- Ephesians 2:14 (peace)

Unraveling the Mystery of You

Understanding who we are can also be a mystery. Like God, Jesus, and Holy Spirit, no single word can describe everything about us. Give each person a piece of paper and crayon or marker. Have them trace around their hands. Then ask them to write different descriptions of who they are and how they are known by other people on the fingers. (sister, brother, piano player, soccer player, student, reader, happy, singer) Let the children help one another if someone struggles with ideas.

Trinity Spinner

Follow directions to make Trinity spinners found on the next page. As children work, review the concept of Trinity.

To work the spinner, hold the string in each hand with the disk in the middle. Twirl the string like a jump rope. When the string is wound fairly tight, stretch hands outward to make the disk spin. Pull strings apart hard, then relax and repeat. This will keep disk spinning. Notice how the three sections of the disk—God, Jesus, Spirit—blend into one.
Ask children to discuss today’s lesson. Did they have any “aha” moments? What is one idea they will take with them from the lesson? Challenge children to use their spinners to talk with friends and family about the eternal community of God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

**Instructions for Trinity Spinners**

1. Each child will need one circle (about 3 in/7.62 cm in diameter) cut from heavy poster board, foam core board, sturdy cardboard, wood, plastic lids, or empty milk cartons.

2. Punch two small holes in the center of each disk. A button can be glued to the center to reinforce the holes.

3. Using markers, divide the circle into three equal sections.

4. Have children write God in one section, Jesus in one, and Spirit in the third section.

5. Fill in each section a different color.

6. Thread a string (about 3 ft/1 m long) through one hole and back through the other, creating a loop with the disk in the middle. Tie together.

Sing the song “We Are One in the Spirit” CCS 359. This song is often sung in camp and youth settings so children may already know it. Make sure the fourth verse is sung, even if other verses are skipped. This verse highlights the Trinity. Alternate song: “Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow” CCS 53.

**SEND**

Explores how the lesson might be lived out (10% of lesson time)

**BLESS**

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope (5% of lesson time)