



Community of Christ

COMMUNITY OF CHRIST LESSONS

YOUTH

8 JANUARY – 26 FEBRUARY 2017

COMMUNITY OF CHRIST LESSONS



Lifelong Disciple Formation in Community of Christ is the shaping of persons in the likeness of Christ at all stages of life. It begins with our response to the grace of God in loving community and continues as we help others learn, grow, and serve in the mission of Jesus Christ. Ultimately, discipleship is expressed as one lives the mission initiatives of the church through service, generosity, witness, and invitation.

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 and Class Helps, Year A: New Testament* (with focus on the gospel according to Matthew).

Lessons are available for three age groups. Recognizing each age group represents multiple stages of development, the instructor is encouraged to adapt lessons to best meet the needs of the class or group. When possible, optional activities are provided to help adapt lessons for diverse settings.

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 youth in scripture study and provocative questions about identity, mission, message, 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.

1 GATHER

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

Begin with an activity that is symbolic of baptism. On a table, place a bowl of water, dirt or finger paint, and a towel. Have the students apply dirt or paint to their hands and then wash them in the bowl of water.

- How did it feel to be covered in the dirt?
- How do you feel while washing your hands?

Ask class members to share memories of their baptismal services or services they have attended.

2 ENGAGE

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

Read Matthew 3:13–17. Ask the students to imagine the details of the scene; feel the sand on the shore as though they are watching Jesus' baptism.

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

- What questions would you ask as Jesus arrived?
- What would you think as you listened to Jesus and John discuss who should be baptizing whom?
- What questions would you ask after Jesus came up out of the water?

Today's scripture story is a decisive point in Jesus' life that marks the beginning of his ministry. In the act of his baptism, Jesus modeled for his followers how to begin the journey of discipleship. A person seeking to be baptized "into Christ" becomes a "new creature" and recognizes God's personal love and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. Those baptized make lifelong covenants or promises to follow Jesus. We are immersed in water to symbolize death to sin and are raised out of the water to begin a new life. Paul, an early convert to Christianity, wrote how baptism symbolizes a dramatic change of life as one chooses to follow Jesus: "...when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God..." (Colossians 2:12).

LESSON 7
8 January 2017

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

BAPTISM OF THE LORD

Focus Scripture Passage

Matthew 3:13–17/ 3:41–46 IV

Lesson Focus: Baptism and confirmation are essential to forming disciples in the body of Christ.

Objectives

The learners will...

- identify key details of Jesus' baptismal story. (coming to river, talking to John, water, heavens opening, dove descending, God speaking)
- describe how baptism marks the beginning of Jesus' ministry and our discipleship.
- share feelings about the dialogue between John and Jesus regarding the necessity of Jesus' baptism.
- understand the importance of baptism as a starting point for those choosing to follow Jesus today.

Supplies

- Bibles (NRSV recommended)
- Bowl filled with water
- Finger paint or dirt
- Paper
- Towel
- Markers, pens, or pencils

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Matthew 3:13–17 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 31, available through Herald House.

Explore the importance of baptism in Community of Christ using the following excerpt from "OFFICIAL POLICY: Baptism, Confirmation, and Church Membership" (<https://www.cofchrist.org/common/cms/resources/Documents/Official-Policy-on-Baptism-Confirmation-and-Church-Membership.pdf>).

Baptism and confirmation are fundamentally important in Community of Christ. They are essential steps in lifelong disciple formation and growth. We believe:

Baptism is how we initially express our commitment to lifelong discipleship. As we yield our lives to Christ in baptism we enter Christian community (the body of Christ) and have the promise of salvation.

Baptism has several significant meanings in Community of Christ. Through baptism, God's generous grace and eternal purposes, revealed in Jesus Christ, are made evident in human lives. In response, we

- choose in faith to accept God's invitation to enter a covenant relationship.
- evidence our commitment to follow Jesus Christ in a life of active Christian discipleship.
- display an attitude of repentance and receive the promise of forgiveness.
- receive the promise of salvation and new life through symbolically engaging in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Which statements most reflect the importance of baptism to you? Explain.

Which statement reflects a new understanding for you about baptism?

Using the excerpt and your own ideas, create a list of statements about baptism in the order of importance for you.

3 RESPOND

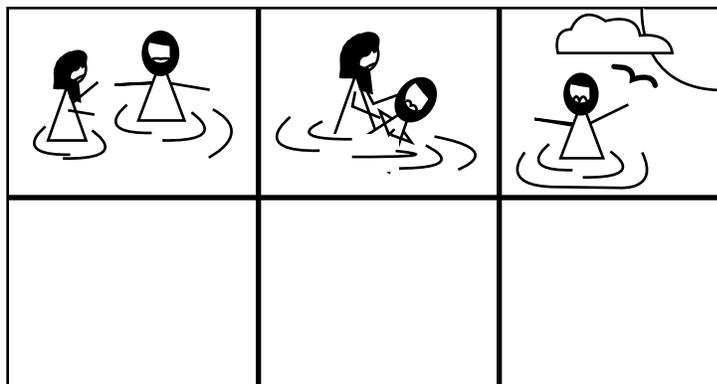
Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of total lesson time)

Telling and Retelling the Story

Knowing the stories of Jesus guides a disciple's journey and helps disciples invite others to be a part of the Christian community. Choose actors to play Jesus and John. Have a narrator read Matthew 3:13–17 as the actors interpret the feelings and actions of the characters. Choose two more actors to play a modern-day disciple and his friend. The actors will role play a discussion of Jesus' baptism and its importance for disciples today.

Telling the Story in Pictures

Give each student a blank piece of paper. Instruct them to fold the paper in half lengthwise. With the paper lying "landscape" style, create boxes for comic strip frames. On the top half, have the students draw the story of Jesus' baptism from Matthew 3:13–17 as a comic strip. On the bottom half, draw another comic strip depicting a modern-day disciple and her friend discussing the importance of baptism.



4 SEND

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

Ask the class to review today's lesson. What is one idea you will take with you from this lesson? How has your reflection on Jesus' baptism helped prepare you for more effective discipleship? How will you respond when asked about the importance of baptism?

5 BLESS

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

Close with the following prayer. You may choose to have individuals or small groups read each line.

God of grace and glory,
you call us with your voice of flame
to be your people, faithful and courageous.

As your beloved Son
embraced his mission in the waters of baptism,
inspire us with the fire of your Spirit
to join in his transforming work.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

—The Revised Common Lectionary,
© 2002 Consultation on Common Texts,
Augsburg Fortress

1 GATHER

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

Begin the lesson by singing or reading the first verse of "I Have Called You by Your Name" CCS 636.

Read today's scripture passage, John 1:29–42. Assign individuals or pairs to read the parts of narrator, John, Jesus, the disciples, and Andrew.

Narrator: The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and declared,

John: Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, "After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me." I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel.

Narrator: And John testified,

John: I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, "He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit." And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.

Narrator: The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed,

John: Look, here is the Lamb of God!

Narrator: The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following he asked,

Jesus: What are you looking for?

Disciples: Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are you staying?

Jesus: Come and see.

Narrator: They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his brother Simon and said to him,

Andrew: We have found the Messiah (which is translated Anointed).

Narrator: He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said,

Jesus: You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas (SEE-fuhs) (which is translated Peter).

LESSON 8
15 January 2017

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

Focus Scripture Passage

John 1:29–42

Lesson Focus: Witness, invitation, and hospitality are the primary methods of inviting people to Christ.

Objectives

The learners will...

- consider John's testimony of Jesus' baptism and his announcement of Jesus as the Lamb of God.
- examine the importance of names, including Simon being called Peter by Jesus.
- connect the concepts of witness, invitation, and proclaiming Jesus by Inviting People to Christ.

Supplies

- Bibles (NRSV recommended)
- *Community of Christ Sings*
- Resources on the meaning of names
- Paper
- Markers

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for John 1:29–42 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 33, available through Herald House.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Note to teacher: Before class, gather books about name origin (etymology), or provide internet access so group members can search online for their name origins. If you know the names of all group members, come prepared with the meanings of their names.

What's in a Name?

In today's passage, Jesus gives Simon the name Cephas, which means rock. Jesus is also given names such as Lamb of God, Rabbi, and Messiah. Names hold great importance. For example, Community of Christ. This isn't just a name; it is a description of who we are and who we are called to be. What does your name mean? Where does your name come from? Maybe you're named after your great-grand father, or you're the first in your family with your name.

- What other names have you heard for Jesus?
- What other names have you been called? (follower, learner, student, listener, Christian)
- What expectations come with a name?
- If you could choose a name for yourself, what would it be? Explain.

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing

(35% of total lesson time)

Read or sing the second verse of "I Have Called You by Your Name" CCS 636.

Building on Our Names

(optional game for smaller groups)

Have group stand in circle. The first person says, "I'm [Laura] and I like to [read]" while acting out reading, and everyone else joins in the action. The second person says, "This is [Laura] and she likes to [read] (while everyone does action), and I'm [Amy] and I like to [sing];" then everyone acts out singing. This continues around the circle until everyone has had a turn.

Invite People to Christ

Jesus' call for Christians is more than just giving them a name; it is a lifelong journey and includes welcoming others into community. For example, Peter is called Cephas, which means rock, a word that describes how Jesus sees Peter: strong, steadfast, solid, enduring. We are called to be Christians—to invite, witness, and practice hospitality. What do you think those words mean?

One example of inviting, witnessing, and practicing hospitality is asking someone to play a game, teaching them the rules, and then playing it together.

Instruct the class that the following activity will be done without talking. Silently invite one student to come forward (invitation). Demonstrate to the person the hand gestures for the game Rock, Paper, Scissors. (Rock is a closed fist. Paper is a flat hand. Scissors is made with two fingers mimicking a pair of scissors.) Indicate (without talking) how to play the game by bouncing fists three times, then displaying Rock, Paper, or Scissors (witness). When the other person demonstrates they understand, give him or her a hug, high five, or fist bump (hospitality). Have that student invite another student to come up and repeat the process while you do the same with a third student.

- What did this teach you about invitation, witness, and hospitality? (It doesn't require words, only actions. It's easy. It begins with one person and grows to include many.)
- When have you witnessed invitation, witness, and hospitality without words, only actions?

Invite People to Christ Trifold Flyer

Provide paper and markers to group members so they can create a trifold flyer titled "Invite People to Christ" with sections for invitation, witness, and hospitality. What would they include in this flyer to invite others to Christ? What words or pictures might appeal to their friends in response to the invitation?

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived

(10% of total lesson time)

Action Challenge: Pass the Rock

Peter was called the Rock and spent his life as a disciple inviting people to Christ just as he was invited to Christ. Pass a rock around the group. When group members have the rock, invite them to share the name of a person they can invite to Christ.

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope

(5% of total lesson time)

Close the lesson by singing or reading verse four of "I Have Called You by Your Name" CCS 636.

1 GATHER

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

Sing or read together “You Have Come Down to the Lakeshore” CCS 582. If reading, have different students read each stanza.

2 ENGAGE

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

Dwelling in the Word

Read Matthew 4:12–23 two times. As you read it the first time, ask students to listen for a word or phrase that catches their attention. Share responses with the group.

Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the lake, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

‘Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.’

From that time Jesus began to proclaim, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.’

As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen. And he said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.’ Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

As you read the passage again, invite students to imagine they are Andrew or Simon.

Think about how you would respond if Jesus looked at you on the shore of Galilee and said, “Follow me.” Read Matthew 4:12–23 again and ask the students to share how they would respond.

LESSON 9
22 January 2017

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPHIPHANY

RACIAL JUSTICE DAY

Focus Scripture Passage

Matthew 4:12–23/ 4:11–22 IV

Lesson Focus: Discipleship begins by hearing God’s call and saying Yes! (*Walking with Jesus*, p. 36)

Objectives

The learners will...

- create a story where Jesus met disciples who were involved in other careers (not fisherman) and how that might have changed this scripture.
- explain that Jesus models the Enduring Principle All Are Called by inviting people to stop what they are doing and follow him, becoming disciples who share his life and ministry.
- describe the story of Jesus meeting four of his disciples and his instructions to them.

Supplies

- Bibles (NRSV recommended)
- *Community of Christ Sings*
- Note pads for interviews
- *Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd edition
- Pens
- Flip chart and markers

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 4:12–23 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 34, available through Herald House.

In today's passage we hear Jesus calling his first disciples and witness the beginning of the church. During this historical period, a rabbi (which means teacher) did not seek out students. Those hoping to be students were responsible for seeking out a teacher who would accept them. In the passage, however, Jesus takes the initiative coming to Andrew and Simon and inviting them, "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people." As Jesus continued down the shore, he called out to James and John. Like Andrew and Simon they immediately followed, leaving their nets, boats, and family. They had seen no miracles, heard no sermons, and yet they followed without hesitation. This passage in Matthew demonstrates how Jesus seeks us, disrupts our lives, and calls us to follow him. These fishermen, like us, do not know where Jesus is leading, but trust and learn along the way.

- If you were one of the disciples along the shore, what questions would you have asked when Jesus said, "Follow me"?

3 RESPOND

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

What was true for these early disciples is true for all who say yes to follow Jesus. We are all called to fish for people. Who has fished for you? Who have you noticed fishing for others?

From its earliest days, Community of Christ has upheld the principle that "All are called according to the gifts of God unto them; and to that intent that all may labor together" (Doctrine and Covenants 119:8b).

Read the following statements describing the Enduring Principle All Are Called. (**Note:** Write on a flip chart or poster paper before class.)

- God graciously gives people gifts and opportunities to do good and to share in God's purposes.
- Jesus Christ invites people to follow him by becoming disciples who share his life and ministry.
- Some disciples are called and ordained to particular priesthood responsibilities and ministries for the sake of the community, the congregation, and the world.
- We respond faithfully, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to our best understanding of God's call.

Send the students in small groups to interview adults in the congregation, or invite adult guests to come to the class to be interviewed.

Use the following questions in the interviews:

- What do you think about when you hear the phrase All Are Called ("...according to the gifts of God unto them; and to that intent that all may labor together" Doctrine and Covenants 119:8b)?
- Why is this Enduring Principle important for Community of Christ?
- How have you experienced the Enduring Principle All Are Called in your life?

Compare the responses from the interviews.

- How has talking with others changed your understanding of All Are Called?
- How would you share with a friend the importance of our Enduring Principle All Are Called?

4 SEND

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

As disciples we are to fish for people. Fishing takes a pole, line, bait, and other items. Give each person a piece of paper and a pen or pencil. Set a timer for 30 seconds and have them write down all the items they would need to fish for people. On a flip chart or poster paper, compile a list of their ideas. What is the most surprising item listed? What do you think is the most important item listed? Why? (*Bible, a cell phone or means of communication, items to care for others, coats, food*)

5 BLESS

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

We, the church, the body of Christ, are called to proclaim the gospel until Christ comes again. It is he who forgives us in baptism and feeds us at his table. As disciples of Christ, we are all called to conform our lives to his by living in loving community with others, seeing Jesus in the faces of the least of God's children, and serving those whom the world has forgotten. It is to Christ and to his gospel that we declare our loyalty and by which we will be judged. May we drop the nets of our day and, without a word, follow. Amen.

—adapted from *Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition, p. 23

1 GATHER

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

Place copies of the Bible and *Sharing in Community of Christ*, along with 20 note cards, on the table. Give each member of the class a pen or pencil. Have the class members work together to create an index card for each Beatitude contained in Matthew 5:1–12 and for each Enduring Principle described in *Sharing in Community of Christ*, pp. 12–14.

- Have the students share their thoughts about the Beatitude or Enduring Principle they copied to the cards.
- Share a time when you experienced one of the Beatitudes as Jesus describes.

2 ENGAGE

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

Have the students place the Beatitude cards in the same order as the scripture is written. The teacher will then read Matthew 5:1–2, followed by the students reading the Beatitudes.

The Beatitudes set the stage for the Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus gives nine Beatitudes on the mountain. Each one comes with a pronouncement followed by a promised blessing. Through his words, Jesus makes clear to the disciples what the good news of the kingdom is about. He offers comfort to the various groups of people lifted up in each blessing, turning the social structures of the world around. Scholars agree that the Beatitudes go back to the historical Jesus who reversed the expectations of a social system where money, strength, and power ruled by blessing the poor, the hungry, and those who suffered. These prophetic declarations were opposites of common sense back then and continue today. The Beatitudes point to the present and coming kingdom of God, preparing the early disciples, and disciples today, for life in community with Christ.

- How would your classmates respond to you reading these Beatitudes at school?
- How might the culture of your school change if people embraced blessing the poor, hungry, meek, abused, unclean, lonely, or struggling learners?
- What other groups in your school need to be blessed?
- In what ways do you need blessing?
- How can you offer blessing to those mentioned?

LESSON 10
29 January 2017

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

Focus Scripture Passage Matthew 5:1–12

Lesson Focus: Like Jesus, we are called to offer blessing for those who are powerless in our world, upholding the Worth of All Persons.

Objectives

The learners will...

- connect the Beatitudes to Community of Christ Enduring Principles and explain the similarities.
- relate the Beatitudes to examples in their lives and understand that Jesus said “they” are “blessed.”
- identify groups of people that Jesus said are blessed.

Supplies

- Bibles (NRSV recommended)
- *Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd edition
- Index cards
- Pens or pencils
- Paper
- Flip chart or large writing surface
- Marker

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 5:1–12 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 35, available through Herald House.

3 RESPOND

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

Community of Christ Enduring Principles define the essence, heart, or soul of church identity, mission, and message (*Sharing in Community of Christ*, p. 12). Like the Beatitudes, the Enduring Principles offer a clear vision to disciples of what the good news of God's kingdom is about. Review the statements for each principle listed in *Sharing in Community of Christ*, pp. 12–14.

Using the index cards with the Beatitudes and Enduring Principles created at the beginning of the lesson, compare and contrast the two sets.

- Which Beatitudes and Enduring Principles are similar?
- What do the Enduring Principles tell us about God's kingdom?
- Why are the Enduring Principles important for the church today?

4 SEND

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

Using the format below, write three beatitudes on index cards for persons you know who need to hear and experience God's blessing.

Blessed is (are the) _____ for they will _____
_____.

Action challenge: Be the blessing you wish for someone else!

5 BLESS

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

Form the group in a circle. As a prayer of blessing, go around the circle and have the students read their beatitudes either aloud or silently. Continue until all beatitudes are read.

1 GATHER

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

Before the class begins, prepare a display including a picture of Jesus, salt, and a candle (or battery-operated candle). Give each student several colorful index cards and a pen or pencil. Have the students write the names of people who have been a light in their lives. (examples: parents, teachers, youth ministers, coaches, or friends) Write one name per card.

Invite students to read aloud the following passages.

Matthew 5:13 "You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot."

- Take the salt from the display and have each student taste it.

Matthew 5:14–16 "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

- Light the candle or turn on the battery-operated candle.
- Invite students to share, if they wish, whose names are on their cards and add them to the display.
- Offer a prayer of gratitude for the people who are a light to all youth. Begin the prayer and invite all who wish to add their statements of gratitude for those who have been a light in their lives.

2 ENGAGE

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

Today's text immediately follows the Beatitudes we studied last week. Jesus continues to explain the life of a disciple. He begins by using salt as a metaphor.

- Ask students to brainstorm different uses for salt. Write responses on a flip chart or large writing surface.

In the first century salt had many uses and meanings. Salt was a preservative, a seasoning; it was used in purification; eating together was called "sharing salt"; and it expressed binding relationships, covenants, and loyalty. (Add these to the students' list above.)

The value of salt is clear when used with other elements. To be "salt of the earth" means disciples as a community

LESSON 11
5 February 2017

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPHIPANY

Focus Scripture Passage

Matthew 5:13–20/ 5:15–22 IV

Lesson Focus: Jesus identifies disciples who live the principles of God's kingdom as salt and light.

Objectives

The learners will...

- describe the images of salt and light.
- identify ways they are being "salt and light" and how they can increase their capacity.
- make connections between Jesus' call to be "salt and light" and living the Enduring Principles and Mission Initiatives.

Supplies

- Bibles (NRSV recommended)
- Slips of paper with Enduring Principles and Mission Initiatives
- *Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition
- Display with a picture of Jesus, salt, candle, or battery-operated candle
- Colorful index cards
- Pens or pencils
- Chart paper
- Markers
- Bowl or basket

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Matthew 5:13–20 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 36, available through Herald House.

are to bring their unique giftedness, or flavor, to enhance what would otherwise be bland and without taste. Being salt requires disciples to be engaged with people who are outside the community so God’s flavor can influence the world. Disciples are defined as being that salt. But when one is persecuted it may be hard to remain effective—and salt may lose its taste.

Using the list created earlier, discuss how each use for salt is similar to the life of a disciple as “salt of the earth.” (examples: preserving the worth of persons, or seasoning relationships with kindness and generosity)

- What does it mean to “lose your saltiness” as a disciple?
- Select one of the names you wrote on the index cards at the beginning of the lesson; use the metaphor of salt to describe their influence in your life.

Jesus then shares the metaphor of light to describe the life of a disciple. As light allows us to see, disciples illuminate the world. Disciples reveal God’s grace and generosity so all people may know the peace of Christ. This revealing light can also draw attention to disciples who live in fear of persecution and may want to hide the light, but there is no hiding a city on a hill. Everyone sees it. Through these metaphors Jesus clearly shows that being a disciple is not purely personal and private. The faithful community is to be a beacon of hope and a signal to the world of God’s kingdom. Disciples are called to active mission of letting their light shine in their families, congregations, schools, and communities.

- Invite students to share examples of disciples being a light to others in their family, at school, in their neighborhood, or in the world.
- On a flip chart or large writing surface, make four columns titled Home, School, Church, and Community or World. In each column, list examples of how Christ’s light is needed. (examples: home—family relationships, school—addressing issues of bullying, church—helping youth feel included in congregation life, community—issues of justice)

3 RESPOND

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

Before class begins, prepare slips of paper with one Enduring Principle or Mission Initiative written on each paper. Fold and place in a bowl or basket.

In the scripture passage, Jesus doesn’t say disciples are supposed to be “like” salt or light or a city on a hill. He says, “You are to BE...” He identifies them as a community who live the principles of God’s kingdom on Earth.

Have each student draw a slip of paper with an Enduring Principle or Mission Initiative. Form pairs or small groups

and have them discuss the following questions.

- What does the Enduring Principle or Mission Initiative say about this community of disciples (youth group, congregation, or Community of Christ)?
- How does the Enduring Principle or Mission Initiative describe God’s kingdom on Earth?
- How is living the Enduring Principle or Mission Initiative like being “salt of the earth” or “light for the world”?

Share responses with the larger group. Discuss how living each Enduring Principle or Mission Initiative can bring light to the needs listed in the Engage section.

Give each student a piece of paper and have them write or draw a response to one or more of the following statements:

- “In my home I can shine God’s light by...”
- “In my school I can shine God’s light by...”
- “In my church I can shine God’s light by...”
- “In my community I can shine God’s light by...”

After they have completed their responses, have them pass their papers to the person on their left. Invite students to write words of encouragement to the person whose paper they have received. Continue passing the papers until everyone has the opportunity to add their encouragement to each student’s paper.

4 SEND

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

Invite students to respond to the following action challenges.

- In the coming week, I will help _____ by adding my salt (gift) of _____.
- In the coming week, I will help _____ by shining God’s light of _____.

5 BLESS

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

Close by having half of the group read Matthew 5:13 followed by the other half of the group reading Matthew 5:14–15. Offer a prayer of blessing and encouragement as each one becomes “salt of the earth” and “light to the world.”

1 GATHER

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

Invite each person in the group to place one object they own on a large table. The objects can be anything they have with them at the time. You may choose to provide objects such as a cell phone, car or house keys, coins, wallet, notebook, or pencil. Have paper and markers or crayons available for people to draw something they own that can't be placed on the table. Blindfold one person at a time, turn them around, mix up the table objects, and have them pick up the first object they touch. Have them identify the object and, with the blindfold off, describe an irresponsible use of that object in relation to another person (such as lending your car keys to an underage driver), and then a responsible use of that object. After everyone has had a chance, discuss responsible choices in relationships.

2 ENGAGE

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

Today we continue our study of the Sermon on the Mount. This week and next we will read six ethical teachings of Jesus. His listeners are challenged to a "greater righteousness" than the Law alone. Matthew begins each of the six teachings with, "You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times..." and completes the teaching with, "But I say to you..." This format is unique to Matthew. It does not answer all the ethical issues, but challenges the reader to think about the issues. The teachings deal with interaction between people. Matthew shares these examples so his listeners can understand how being a disciple is different from the lives they lived before. Jesus teaches a new way of living in God's kingdom.

Form the group into small groups of two or three. Assign each small group one of the following passages. Discuss the following questions and share responses with the larger group.

- What is the original law or commandment in this teaching?
- What is the teaching of greater righteousness?
- In your own words, how would you explain this teaching to a friend?

Concerning Anger (Matthew 5:21–26)

"You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not murder;' and 'whoever murders shall be liable to judgement.' But I say to you that if you are angry

LESSON 12
12 February 2017

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

YOUTH MINISTRY SUNDAY

Focus Scripture Passage

Matthew 5:21–37

Lesson Focus: Jesus challenges us to look beyond the letter of the law, to evaluate the ethical issues, and think more deeply about the matters at hand.

Objectives

The learners will...

- evaluate how responsible choices contribute to the purposes of God.
- recognize that relationships are determined by choices and consequences.
- express that God wants shalom for all of creation.

Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition
- Blindfolds
- *Community of Christ Sings*
- Pens
- Chart paper and markers

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Matthew 5:21–37 in *Sermon & Class Helps*, Year A: New Testament, p. 38, available through Herald House.

with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgement; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, 'You fool,' you will be liable to the hell of fire. So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

Concerning Adultery (Matthew 5:27–30)

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell.

Concerning Divorce (Matthew 5:31–32)

"It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Concerning Oaths (Matthew 5:33–37)

"Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord.' But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let your word be 'Yes, Yes' or 'No, No;' anything more than this comes from the evil one.

The first teaching (vv. 21–26) addresses the commandment not to murder. The teaching of higher righteousness is to reconcile when you are angry with someone. To be angry with a brother or sister leads to a judge, to insult leads to the council, and to say "you fool" (even worse offensive language) leads to final judgment. Instead of letting anger control our relationships, we should focus on reconciling, or making the relationship right, with another.

- Do you agree with this teaching? Why or why not?
- What does this teaching say about relationships with others?

The second teaching (vv. 27–30) concerns adultery and instructs the reader not even to look with lust at another person. This is followed by some harsh sayings pointing

out the seriousness of this teaching. It is not just about what one does, but what someone thinks or intends.

- Do you agree with this teaching? Why or why not?
- What does this teaching say about how we treat others?

The third teaching (vv. 31–32) is about divorce. At the time of this teaching, only a man could divorce a woman. Jesus teaches that a man should not divorce a woman (leave her without protection or income) for reasons other than unfaithfulness or immorality.

- Do you agree with this teaching? Why or why not?
- What does this teaching say about covenant relationships?

The fourth teaching (vv. 33–37) is about oaths and interpersonal relationships. A person's "yes" or "no" should be enough for us. We question the integrity of another if we require an oath. These ethical explanations point to a higher righteousness, to right relationships.

- Do you agree with this teaching? Why or why not?
- What does this teaching say about trusting others?

3 RESPOND

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

Community of Christ values the worth of all persons and upholds the importance of right relationships. Jesus' teachings in the Sermon on the Mount, and throughout the Gospels, focus on right relationships with God, with others, and with creation. Jesus teaches us to live God's kingdom on Earth, which is different than what the world teaches. One Enduring Principle of Community of Christ is Responsible Choices.

With the same small groups, assign each group one of the following statements about Responsible Choices to discuss. What is important to understand about the statement? How would you describe the statement to a friend?

- God gives humans the ability to make choices about whom or what they will serve. Some people experience conditions that diminish their ability to make choices.
- Human choices contribute to good or evil in our lives and in the world.
- Many aspects of creation need redemption because of irresponsible and sinful human choices.
- We are called to make responsible choices within the circumstances of our lives that contribute to the purposes of God.

Ask for a show of hands of everyone who has made a major decision in the last year. Invite those who are willing to share their decision and record responses on a flip chart or large writing surface. Discuss the following questions:

- Whom do you ask for guidance with a major decision?
- How do you determine if a decision is a responsible choice or not?
- What are the similarities and differences between a "responsible choice" and a "greater righteousness"?

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived

(10% of total lesson time)

Making Responsible Choices requires thinking about all the possible choices, praying, weighing the consequences of each choice, and evaluating how the decision contributes to right relationships with God, others, and creation.

Provide each student with a piece of paper and pen or pencil. Invite students to make lists according to the following categories; allow one minute for each category.

- Easy choices you make each day
- Difficult choices that have clear answers
- Difficult choices that have unclear answers

Circle a choice from each category that challenges you. Commit to praying about this decision in the coming week; ask a friend or mentor to support you (pray with you or pray for you) in making responsible choices.

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope

(5% of total lesson time)

Close with a circle prayer. Begin the prayer below, and as you go around the circle, invite students to add their statements aloud or silently and touch the shoulder of the next person to share.

Gracious God,

Thank you for the freedom of choice.

Guide me when I am faced with the choice of _____

_____.

Help us support each other in making responsible choices. Amen.

1 GATHER

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

Play a well-known game. This might include tag, duck-duck-goose, or a relay race. Form two teams. Have one team write a list of rules for the game. Rules describe what you need to know to play the game. Have the other team write a list of principles for the game. (For ideas on principles, begin with Community of Christ Enduring Principles found in *Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd edition, or www.CofChrist.org/ourfaith/enduring-principles.asp.) Principles describe how to play the game with integrity. Have the two teams play the game using the rules first, and then with only the principles. Be sure to read them aloud before each game.

After playing the game both ways, discuss the difference between playing a rule-based game and a principle-based game.

- What were the differences between the two games?
- What happens if someone doesn't follow the rules? What happens if someone doesn't follow a principle?

Explain that sometimes rules are necessary (such as in games), but sometimes in our lives principles are a better guide.

Disciples are called to live the ethics of Christ's peace. While helpful in many ways, principle-based ethics are challenging to carry out. This approach involves the willingness to listen carefully, to act selflessly, and to put the needs of the community above individuals. It requires spiritual maturity to seek and respond to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and to offer love and peace even in response to disagreement, negativity, and persecution.

2 ENGAGE

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

We continue our study of the Sermon on the Mount. This week we are reading two familiar teachings of Jesus. His listeners are challenged to apply an ethical principle rather than the rules of the Law alone.

Read Matthew 5:38–48.

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you

LESSON 13
19 February 2017

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

Focus Scripture Passage

Matthew 5:38–48

Lesson Focus: Disciples are called to love and pray for others.

Objectives

The learners will...

- identify "enemies" and how we are called to love them.
- explain actions that promote just and peaceful responses to conflict.
- explore connections between the focus scripture passage and the Enduring Principle Pursuit of Peace (Shalom).

Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition
- Doctrine and Covenants
- Paper or pens
- Chart paper
- Markers

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Matthew 5:38–48 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 39, available through Herald House.

to go one mile, go also the second mile. Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Jesus states a general principle here: do not resist an evildoer. In Greek, the word is *antistenai*. This can best be interpreted as “do not return evil with evil.” In the first century, Israel was occupied by Rome. Understanding this setting, the teaching is not encouraging disciples to be passive and submissive or to excuse the actions of the Roman oppressors. Rather, it calls disciples to love their enemies and use alternate ways to address persecution that hinders the reign of God.

People today often misunderstand Jesus’ direction to “turn the other cheek”. In Jesus’ time a hit on the right cheek was given to subordinates with a backhand stroke of the right hand, and the left hand was used only for unclean tasks. A hit on the left cheek would require an open palm and would only be used with someone of equal status. Turning the other cheek then would not lead to another blow; it would turn the oppressed into an equal.

Indebtedness was widespread in the time of Jesus’ teaching. Jewish law provided that garments could be taken from a debtor as payment under the condition the outer garment was returned by night so people had something to sleep under. Asking for the undergarment, and being given the outer garment, would bring the requestor trouble. He not only had to bring back the outer garment every night, but he and all around him would see the debtor naked, something shameful in Jewish tradition. The offer would be refused and put the requestor to shame.

Roman military code made it possible for soldiers to force subjects to carry their baggage. However, soldiers could only require them to carry it for one mile. Again Jesus calls for a positive act in response to what was being done. Go the other mile and show them you cannot be oppressed. The final words remind us of higher righteousness and call us to love others and find peaceful solutions to conflict.

- How does each response from Jesus’ teaching promote justice and peace?

- Make a list of conflicts students experience. Apply one of Jesus’ teachings to each example listed and discuss appropriate responses that promote peace.

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing

(35% of total lesson time)

Community of Christ upholds the Pursuit of Peace as both an Enduring Principle and a Mission Initiative. It describes who we are called to be, and how we are called to live, as disciples of Jesus Christ. Read the following statements about the Enduring Principle Pursuit of Peace (Shalom).

- God wants shalom (justice, reconciliation, well-being, wholeness, and peace) for all of creation.
- Jesus Christ, the embodiment of God’s shalom (peace), reveals the meaning of God’s peace in all aspects of life.
- The vision of Zion is to promote God’s reign on Earth, as proclaimed by Jesus Christ, through the leavening influence of just and peaceful communities.
- We courageously and generously share the peace of Jesus Christ with others.
- Led by the Holy Spirit, we work with God and others to restore peace (shalom) to creation.
- We celebrate God’s peace wherever it appears or is being pursued by people of good will.

Before class begins, write each of the above statements on slips of paper. Form the group into pairs. Assign each pair one of the statements and have them discuss the following questions. Share responses with the larger group.

- How does the statement reflect Jesus’ teaching from today’s focus passage?
- Where do you see examples of this statement in home, school, congregation, or community?

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived

(10% of total lesson time)

Loving your enemies is difficult in any time or place. It must be difficult living in a place occupied by foreign forces, but it would also be difficult living in a neighborhood trapped by violence and gangs. Jesus tells us, “But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven.”

Read Doctrine and Covenants 161:3b–c.

Do not be fearful of one another. Respect each life journey, even in its brokenness and uncertainty, for each person has walked alone at times. Be ready to listen and slow to criticize, lest judgments be unrighteous and unredemptive.

Be patient with one another, for creating sacred community is arduous and even painful. But it is to loving community such as this that each is called. Be courageous and visionary, believing in the power of just a few vibrant witnesses to transform the world. Be assured that love will overcome the voices of fear, division, and deceit.

Have each student select a phrase or sentence from the above passage to practice during the coming week and to help them respond peacefully to conflict. Write the statement on a piece of paper to keep in a place where they will be reminded of it throughout the week.

5 BLESS

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

Invite all to complete the following prayer. As the prayer is read together, invite all to add their completed statement.

God of Shalom and Prince of Peace,

We pray for _____
_____ (those who oppose us).

Through the Holy Spirit, help us work for justice that brings true and lasting peace.

Amen.

1 GATHER

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

Significant spiritual, or life-changing, events are sometimes called mountaintop experiences. Ask students to describe their own mountaintop experience.

- Where were you?
- How did it feel?
- Why is it memorable?

Note to teacher: It is possible that students may not have had such experiences. If students have not had what they would consider a mountaintop experience, ask them to imagine what one might be like and describe or draw what they imagine.

Offer a prayer of gratitude for life-changing encounters with the divine. Pray also for openness to such encounters in the future.

2 ENGAGE

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

Read Matthew 17:1–9. Read the passage a second time and invite students to act out the actions of Peter, James, John, Jesus, Moses, and Elijah.

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. Then Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, “This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!” When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Get up and do not be afraid.” And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, “Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.”

Moses and Elijah had encounters with God on mountaintops. These stories are recorded in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament). In this passage they represent the Law and the Prophets. This is an important connection the Gospel writer wanted to highlight. Matthew uses

LESSON 14
26 February 2017

TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY

Focus Scripture Passage

Matthew 17:1–9

Lesson Focus: The story of the Transfiguration reveals the importance of Jesus as the Messiah and challenges us to see Jesus in new ways.

Objectives

The learners will...

- compare personal experiences similar to the Transfiguration story.
- state their feelings on witnessing the Transfigured Jesus, Elijah, and Moses.
- explore affirmations from “Scripture in Community of Christ.”

Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition
- Copies of “Scripture in Community of Christ” (*Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition, pp. 25–26)
- Markers
- Paper and pens or pencils
- Chart paper

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 17:1–9 in *Sermon & Class Helps*, Year A: New Testament, p. 43, available through Herald House.

features from the Moses story to tell us about Jesus. Moses had an experience with God on top of Mount Sinai, including a cloud that accompanied Moses on his journey. The prophet Elijah also encountered God on a mountain. Having these representatives of the Law and Prophets brings importance to Jesus for the writer of Matthew and his early Jewish readers.

The transfiguration event confirms that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. He is more than Moses (the Law) and more than Elijah (the Prophets); he is the Messiah. But this is a Messiah who will face suffering and death. Like at Jesus' baptism, God's voice again confirms that Jesus is God's Son, the beloved. A voice in this passage also tells the disciples to listen to Jesus. The disciples fall to the ground in fear. Jesus comes over to them, touches them, and tells them to get up and not be afraid. So far in this Gospel others have always come to Jesus. An important distinction in this story is Jesus goes to them to touch them and encourage them to get up and go on.

The passage ends with the four descending the mountain and Jesus telling them not to tell others about what happened until he has been raised from the dead. In other words, Matthew's listeners are made to understand that what happened on the mountain was something that could only be fully understood after Jesus had died and been resurrected.

- Imagine you are one of the disciples witnessing the Transfiguration. What words describe how you think or feel as you watch the scene?
- What is your response when Jesus approaches, touches your arm, and says, "Get up and do not be afraid"?

3 RESPOND

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

Some Christians view scripture as literal, that all stories contained in the Bible are factual. Others understand scripture as a collection of writings containing many literary styles including history, metaphor, poetry, genealogy, letters, law, parables, prophecy, and wisdom literature.

Community of Christ affirms scripture as a library of works containing writings from diverse times, places, cultures, and authors. In the statement "Scripture in Community of Christ" (*Sharing in Community of Christ*, p. 25) we read, "Scripture provides divine guidance and inspired insight for life when responsibly interpreted and faithfully applied. Scripture helps us believe in Jesus Christ. Its witness guides us to eternal life and enables us to grow spiritually, to transform our lives, and to participate actively in the life and ministry of the church."

Distribute copies of "Scripture in Community of Christ" (*Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition, pp. 25–26). Review together the nine affirmations of scripture in Community of Christ.

- Which affirmation provides a new understanding for you about scripture? Explain.
- Assign an affirmation to each student to rewrite in their own words. How would they explain this affirmation to a friend? **Note:** This may be challenging for many students. You may choose to have older youth work on this in pairs or small groups. With younger youth, you may choose one of the affirmations to work on together.

4 SEND

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

The story of the Transfiguration of Jesus is not a scientifically testable event, especially two millennia later. Affirmation Five reads, "Scripture is vital and essential to the church, but not because it is inerrant (in the sense that every detail is historically or scientifically correct). Scripture makes no such claim for itself. Rather, generations of Christians have found scripture simply to be trustworthy in keeping them anchored in revelation, in promoting faith in Christ, and in nurturing the life of discipleship. For these purposes, scripture is unfailingly reliable."

Evaluate the text of the Transfiguration through the lens of Affirmation Five.

- What truth exists whether or not the account is literal?
- What are we challenged to understand from this story?

5 BLESS

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

Close with a group prayer. Invite students to complete each prayer statement aloud or silently.

Creator God, thank you for mountaintop experiences such as...

Thank you for lessons in scripture that teach us...

Thank you for a new understanding of...

Bless us as we...

Amen.