



Ages 3-5  
Children's Lessons

Sharing in Community of Christ

## Faith Formation

“Individual learning styles, group dynamics, outside environment, and personal needs are important elements to consider when planning formation ministry. In order to create appropriate learning environments, be aware of variations in development and stages of faith formation. These stages are not rigid and individual development is not always linear” (“Faith Development,” in Seasons of the Spirit [Kelowna, British Columbia: Wood Lake Publishing, 2010], 18).

### Ages 3–5

“Routine and ritual are important at this age. Motor skills are improving and these little ones are able to accomplish tasks. Fertile and creative imagination is taking hold. Young children have an innate sense of awe and wonder about their surroundings, which is the beginning of spiritual growth. The world is constructed by what they can see and understand, as well as imagine. Allow children to freely share their thoughts, ideas, and creativity. Finger-plays, encouraging a child’s own ability to do things, role modeling of behavior, changes of pace and movement, concrete and simple storytelling, singing, and lots of affirmation are important ingredients of ministry with this age group” (“From Start to Finish,” in Seasons of the Spirit, 18).

### Lessons for Ages 3–5 Created by

Tiffany Jackson  
Northview Congregation  
Rockford, Michigan, USA



Sharing in Community of Christ  
Ages 3-5

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# 1 Sharing God's Vision for Creation



## Focus Scripture(s)

Isaiah 11:6, 9  
Doctrine and Covenants 163:1

## Purpose

The first lesson focuses on building a small community with your group of children. You will get to know their names, foster friendships, and guide their sharing behaviors for these classes.

## Objectives

The learners will:

- share their name with new friends
- learn the names of others in the Peaceable Kingdom
- create a unique name plate showing God's creation

## Materials

- Markers and crayons
- Glue
- Scissors
- Several 3 x 5 cards for each student
- One each of white and blue construction paper for each student
- Pictures of several different animals for display
- One cloth or plastic bag per student for collecting items from nature
- One 8 ½ x 11 (or larger) sheet of paper for each child with their name written in bubble letters
- Magazines with nature pictures

## Resources

- Doctrine and Covenants, including Section 163.
- *Little Cloud* by Eric Carle, Penguin Group, 1996, ISBN: 978-0-698-11830-0



## Gather

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson.

### Find Your Name

On 3 x 5 cards write the name of each student. Have them find their own name somewhere around the room. (You may add their names around the room more than once, but tell them how many total cards with their name on it they should find.) When they have found their name(s) gather in a circle to share names.

### Hello Neighbor

Chant “Hello Neighbor”\* or sing a getting-to-know-you song.

Hello Neighbor (wave to one friend)  
 What do you say (move both hands like they're talking)  
 It's going to be a happy day (clap hands together)  
 Greet your neighbor (give each other high fives)  
 Boogie on down (do the twist)  
 Give a bump (bump hips together)  
 And turn yourself around (turn around and sit down)

### Who Are You?

Play “Who Are You.” Have children sit in a circle. Talk briefly with them about their identity. Ask the question “Who are you?” The children will answer by giving their name. You may want to go around the circle several times. Each time have the children answer a different way (by gender, age, brother, daughter, sister, friend).

Ask the following questions as time and attention span allows,

- Who gave you your name?
- Do you have a nickname or a love name your mom and dad call you by?
- Why don't we all have the same name?
- Do you know what the name of our church is?



## Engage

Invites exploration and interaction

Hold the **Doctrine and Covenants** in your hand as you tell the children the name of the book and explain how it helps us understand better what God is like. Then read the following excerpt from Doctrine and Covenants 163:1

“Community of Christ, your name, given as a divine blessing, is your identity and calling... You will become a blessing to the whole creation.”

Explain that God wants all of us to take care of all creation—nature and people.

Show pictures of different animals and discuss what else they might be called. For example, why is a zebra called zebra? Shouldn't a giraffe be called long-neck?

Read the story by Eric Carle, **Little Cloud**. (A little cloud becomes all sorts of things—sheep, an airplane, trees, a hat—before joining other clouds and raining.)



# Respond

Takes the learners from hearing to doing.



1. Give each student a piece of white construction paper and a piece of blue construction paper. Ask them to create a cloud by tearing the white paper into cloud shapes. Glue the clouds onto the blue construction paper. Discuss how the clouds are part of nature and that God created them. Even when smaller clouds join together to make a bigger cloud, it is still a cloud.
2. Take the class on a cloud watch walk.
3. While on your walk, have students gather nature items from the campgrounds.



4. On one 8 ½ x 11 (or larger) sheet of paper for each child, use bubble letters to write the child's name. (Using bubble letters allows space for pictures to be drawn or items to be glued inside the letters.) Have each child create a nature collage on their sheet of paper using either the nature they collected or pictures, cut out of magazines, which show God's creation.

Explores how the lesson might be lived out.

# Send



Sing "God Made"\* (Tune: Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star)

Close by encouraging each student to learn the names of two people attending reunion who they don't yet know.

God made the land, and God made the sea. (hold hands out, palms down)  
 God made it all, and God loves me. (arms wide, then point to self)  
 God made day and the sun so bright. (touch fingertips overhead)  
 God made the moon and the stars at night. (wiggle fingers for twinkling stars)  
 God made the land, and God made the sea. (hold hands out, palms down)  
 God made it all, and God loves me. (arms wide, then point to self)

# Bless

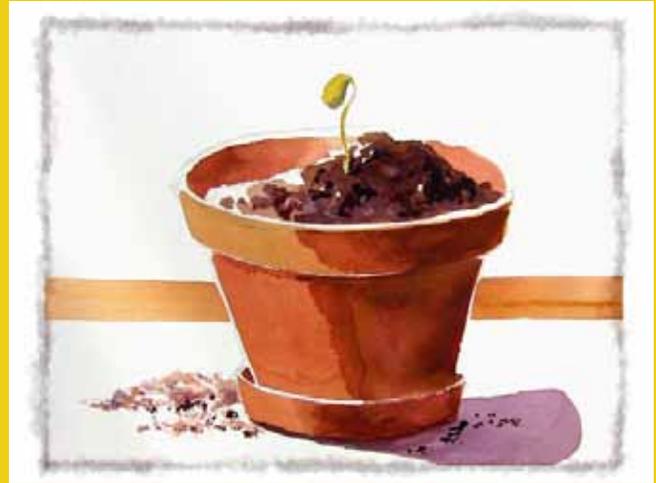
Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope.



Close the class with a prayer.

"Dear Lord, thank you for new friends who can help you and me build your Peaceable Kingdom. Amen."

# 2 Sharing the Peace of Jesus Christ



## Focus Scripture(s)

Ephesians 2:13–14

“Peace for me; Peace for us; Peace for everyone; Peace for the planet” – Children’s Peace Pavilion

## Purpose

In this lesson, we know our community and it is now time to share with them. We are working on who we can share with and where we need to share peace in our world.

## Objectives

The learners will:

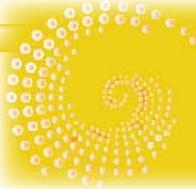
- share equally a cracker with someone in the community
- identify when peace happens to them and the class
- find examples of peace in the world
- show acts of kindness

## Materials

- Four large newsprint sheets (one each labeled: Peace for Me, Peace for Us, Peace for Everyone, Peace for the Planet)
- Markers
- Magazines
- Glue
- Props for role-playing peace activities (For example, trash to pick up or recycle, toy to share, book to read)
- Small plastic bags for sharing graham crackers outside of the class
- Graham crackers (enough for every person to get 1 ½)

## Resources

- Hymn, “Put Peace into Each Other’s Hands” – #15, *Sing for Peace*



## Gather

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson.

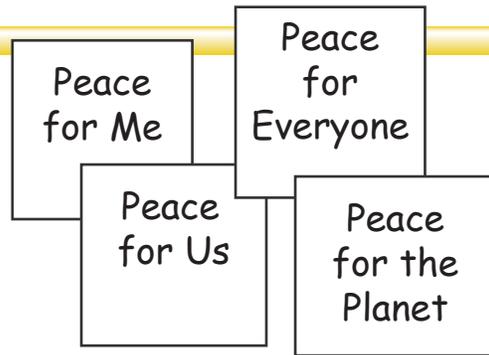
Sing “This Little Light of Mine” or “I’ve Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy Down in My Heart.”



## Engage

Invites exploration and interaction

Take the four newsprint sheets that you prepared before class, with the headings: Peace for Me, Peace for Us, Peace for Everyone, Peace for the Planet. Talk about what each heading means before beginning this activity.



Ask a student(s) to act out what peace looks like. (Have props ready.) Examples: recycling or picking up trash (peace for the planet), sharing a special toy or game with someone (peace for us), giving hugs, handshakes, and smiles to all (peace for everyone), praying or reading a book (peace for me). Then ask students into which category the peaceful act falls.

Look through magazines and have students cut out pictures that show acts of peace. Have them glue them onto the appropriately labeled newsprint.



## Respond

Takes the learners from hearing to doing.

### Graham Cracker Ministry

Ask a friend to help demonstrate this activity.

- Hold up a full graham cracker.
- Break off a small corner and hand it your friend. Say, “I have the same amount that you do. Now, let’s eat it!”

The kids will claim that it isn’t fair and stop you.

- Break off  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the cracker and then again say that you have equal parts, “Let’s eat it!” They will hopefully stop you again.
- Finally give your friend  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the cracker by breaking it on the  $\frac{1}{2}$  mark. (You may want to use a different cracker.)

Discuss what made it fair and unfair. (One person has more or less; their belly will still be hungry, sad.)

Give each child a partner and give the pair a full graham cracker. Explain that they must share equally with that person.

When they are eating their results, talk about how Jesus Christ wants us to share his love equally with everyone we meet. What does that look like?



# 3 Sharing the Sacred Story



## Focus Scripture(s)

Psalm 78:4

“Listen closely and tell the sacred story.”  
—Doctrine and Covenants 161 (adapted)

## Purpose

Allowing the children in the community to tell their story about a time when they helped someone or made someone feel good is a great start to sharing our sacred stories.

This lesson encourages children to share good things about themselves and others.

## Objectives

The learners will:

- share a good news moment
- listen to a story where different voices remind us of all that God is
- illustrate a time when they listened or helped someone in need
- recognize why it is good to have many stories to hear and tell

## Materials

- One brown grocery bag per student
- Copy of the turtle outline for each child (A sheet for you to photocopy is provided at the end of this lesson.)
- Markers and crayons
- Scissors
- Yarn or ribbon long enough to make backpack straps for each student
- Hole punch
- White paper cut into 8” x 8” squares for quilt
- Story Stick (Decorate a stick with ribbon tied at the top and dangled all around. You can spray paint the stick gold or silver before adding the ribbon.)
- One small bag of M & M’s® per student

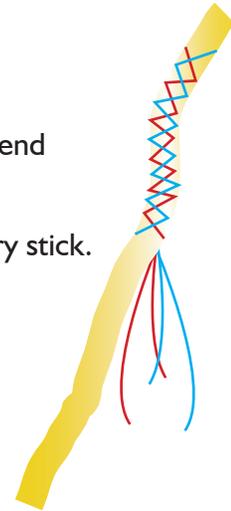
## Resources

*Old Turtle* by Douglas Wood, Scholastic Press, 1992, ISBN: 0-439-30908-5

## Gather

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson.

- While holding your story stick, tell a story about a time when you and a friend shared together—a song, a story, a toy, a moment.
- Invite a guest storyteller to come and tell their story while holding the story stick.
- Ask the children to share their time while holding the story stick.



## Engage

Invites exploration and interaction

### Old Turtle

Read, *Old Turtle* by Douglas Wood. (All of nature argues about the forms of God, so people are sent a reminder of all that God is, although they do not seem to understand the message themselves.) If your group is made up of mostly three-year-olds, you may decide to use the pictures to summarize the story. If mostly older children, decide ahead of time where you will stop to talk about the details, the pictures, or what might happen next in the story.

- Ask “*Why was there an argument? Why did the animals listen to Old Turtle? What did you hear in the story? Why do we need to share stories about Jesus? Who should we tell Jesus’ stories to?*”

### Play the M & M’s® game

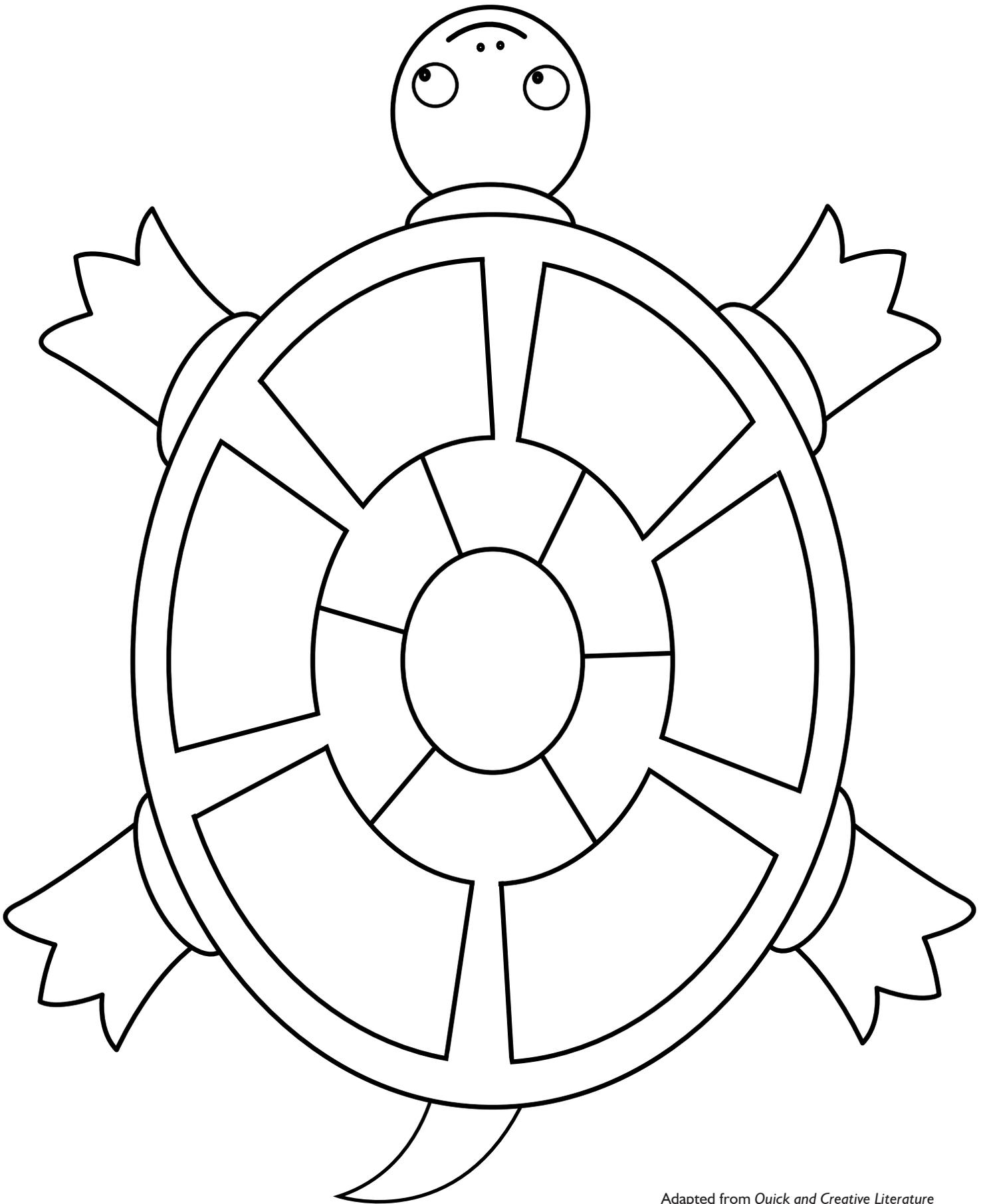
Give each child an individual bag of M & M’s® candies and ask them to sort them by color into different piles. Describe one color (brown). Tell them that they can only eat the brown ones. Talk about what it would be like if there was only one story to be told or heard in the entire world? What would it be like to hear the same story told by the same person over and over again? Help the children understand how much more we learn and grow when there are lots of stories to hear and tell—just like the bag of M & M’s® is better with lots of different colors in it. Let the children eat the rest of the candies.

## Respond

Takes the learners from hearing to doing.

- On an 8” x 8” paper square, have each student illustrate a story about a time when they helped someone. (The teacher should write a summarizing sentence on each student’s illustration so others will understand what the picture is showing.)
- Create a class quilt using the 8” x 8” paper squares. Use a hole punch and yarn to tie the stories together. (Linking all their stories together and displaying the quilt helps make the classroom a more sacred space.)
- Hang the quilt on the classroom wall.





Adapted from *Quick and Creative Literature Response Activities*, ISBN: 0-590-59926-7

# 4 Sharing Our Enduring Principles



## Focus Scripture(s)

Acts 4:32–35

## Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is for the children to discover ways God wants them to live their lives. The world becomes a better place when we listen and respond to God’s call—both individually and in community.

## Objectives

The learners will:

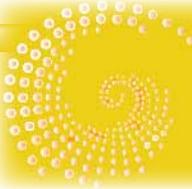
- identify with others in the ways they are alike and the ways they are different
- understand better how to answer God’s call to see and do

## Materials

- Several assorted color buttons or large beads for each child (plus a few in a plastic bag to send home with each child)
- Shoelace or yarn for each student (with tape on one end to allow for easier stringing)
- One piece of light colored construction paper per child
- Scissors
- Glue
- Individual plastic bags (for the extra buttons or beads)

## Resources

*The Memory String* by Eve Bunting, Clarion Books, 2000, ISBN: 0-395-86146-2



# Gather

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson.

## I Am Thinking

Play the “I Am Thinking” game. Start out by giving clues that describe you, the teacher. For example, “I am thinking of the oldest person in the room...who has brown hair and brown eyes.”

When a child correctly guesses, move on to describe a group of children or an individual child in the class.

Finish by describing the whole group of children so that everyone is included in the final question. Make the point that even though we are all different, we still have things in common. For example, we are all part of this class, we are all children of God, Jesus loves us all, we belong to the same church, we are all attending reunion.



# Engage

Invites exploration and interaction

Read or retell the story *The Memory String* by Eve Bunting (While grieving for her mother and unable to accept her stepmother, a girl clings to the memories represented by 43 buttons on a string.) If your group is made up of mostly three-year-olds, you may decide to use the pictures to summarize the story. If mostly older children, decide ahead of time where you will stop to talk about the details, the pictures, or what might happen next in the story.

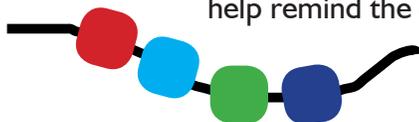


# Respond

Takes the learners from hearing to doing.

## Memory Beads

Have the children thread large beads or buttons on shoelaces or yarn. Explain that, instead of memories, each of their beads or buttons will represent one way God wants them to live. For example, blue might symbolize sharing with a friend. White could mean loving their family. Green might represent saying their prayers. Yellow might mean learning something new like writing their name. Red might represent helping to clean up around the house. When they wear or hold the bracelet or necklace it will help remind the children to see and do what God wants them to.



## Hands Wreath

Using construction paper, trace and cut out the hand of each child. Assemble all the hands to make a wreath. (Make sure the fingers touch in some way symbolizing that together we can make a difference in the world.)



# 5 Sharing God's Mission in the World



## Focus Scripture(s)

John 21:17

## Purpose

Sometimes little ones think they are too young to help. During this lesson encourage them to see that God needs all ages to use their helping hands in the world—just like Jesus did. The younger they start to understand how to be part of God's mission for the world, the more it forms them as disciples.

## Objectives

The learners will:

- better understand that people, just like chains, are stronger when linked together.
- discover ways to belong to Jesus' helping chain

## Materials

- Multi-colored construction paper cut into strips one inch wide and about seven or eight inches long (at least one per student)
- A link from a chain
- Glue
- Paint smocks to protect clothing
- One white washcloth for each child

(Before class, use a fabric marker to write I Am a Helper on the top of each cloth.)

- Any color acrylic paint
- One pie tin
- One fabric marker
- Wet wipes (use for hand cleanup)

## Resources

*Herman the Helper* by Robert Kraus, Aladdin, 1987, ISBN: 0-671-66270-8

## Gather

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson.

Show one link from a chain and ask the following questions: “Is this piece of the chain strong? What can this one link do by itself? What do you think would happen if I added a couple of links to it? Would it be able to hold or pull more? Where are some places you have seen a chain? (their bike, on a boat anchor, a necklace) What makes them so strong?”

## Engage

Invites exploration and interaction

### Helping Chain

Explain that we can build a Helping Chain for Jesus. Brainstorm with them ways they can be part of this chain: smile at people, help a friend, be a good listener, pick up trash that is messing up the world.

### Herman the Helper

Read the story *Herman the Helper* by Robert Kraus. (Herman the helpful octopus is always willing to assist anyone who needs his help—old or young, friend or enemy.) Have the students pay attention to the ways Herman finds to be part of our Helping Chain for Jesus.

## Respond

Takes the learners from hearing to doing.

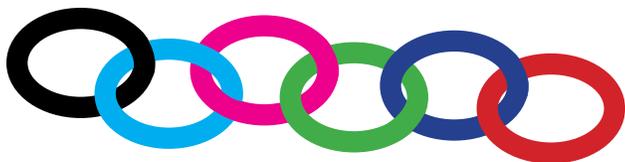
### Helping Chain for Jesus

On one of the paper strips, have each child draw a picture of something they can do to be part of our Helping Chain for Jesus. Have the children explain their picture as they join their link to the class paper chain. Hang the chain in your space.



### I Am a Helper

Make sure to protect the children’s clothes from paint. Pour a small amount of paint into a pie tin. Have a child lightly cover their palms and fingers with acrylic paint. Then have the child press their hands onto a white washcloth that already has the phrase I Am a Helper printed on it with a fabric marker. Allow it to dry.





# 6 Sharing as a Generous Disciple



## Focus Scripture

Mark 12:41-44

## Purpose

Jesus used every opportunity to teach his disciples how to follow his ways. When he saw a widow come into the treasury at the temple, and humbly give all that she had, barely a “penny’s worth” (Mark 12:42 NRSV), he used this to teach his disciples about generosity.

We give in response to God’s grace to us. God wants us to give to our “true capacity.”

*Having received God’s generous grace we can respond generously. Children have experienced this too, through the love of their parents and other caregivers. Children are eager to give of themselves, to share with others.*

## Objectives

The learner will:

- Know that God’s grace is always available to us
- Respond to God’s grace by generously giving and receiving
- Give money and help to others; receive money and help from others

## Materials

- Crayons, washable markers, colored pencils, blank paper (1 sheet for each child)
- Several copies of the pictures of the widow’s two small copper coins—copy and cut out from this page
- A copy of the can wrapper page for each child
- One empty, clean food can (4in/10cm tall, with 2.5in/6.5cm diameter) for each child.
- Transparent tape
- Lectionary Story Bible, Year B, page 225
- Mission Tithes envelopes for children (available from your Congregational or Mission Center Financial Officer). See an example of the envelopes at [www.CofChrist.org/generosity/kids-envelopes.asp](http://www.CofChrist.org/generosity/kids-envelopes.asp)

## Resources

Lectionary Story Bible, Year B, or another children’s Bible with the story of the widow’s two copper coins



Mites, smaller than a dime. Two are worth one penny. Ancient mites can be purchased from coin dealers today.

# Gather

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson.

Invite children to sit in a close circle. Talk about what they own, what they have that's very valuable or special to them. It may be money, or a pet, or book, or whatever.

Now ask if they would be willing to give everything they have to God. In today's story, there was a poor woman who did.

*Pause, and ask if any child wishes to offer a prayer about sharing.*

# Engage

Invites exploration and interaction

## Story: The Widow's Two Copper Coins

Read this story from the Lectionary Story Bible, Year B, page 225. Mark 12:41–44 NRSV.

<sup>41</sup> He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums.

<sup>42</sup> A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. <sup>43</sup> Then he called his disciples and said to them, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. <sup>44</sup> For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

Spread the copies of the widow's two small copper coins in the center of the circle. Say that it would take two of these to equal less than one of the smallest coins we have today. (Note to teacher: show an example of whatever the smallest coin is in the currency of your country, and explain this is what is meant by the reading from Mark when he writes about a "penny"). Even during the time of Jesus in Jerusalem, a copper coin was worth very little.

Discuss:

1. Do you have any coins that are worth less than a penny? (Note to teacher: use the smallest coin in the currency of your country). What coins do you have?
2. The widow gave God all the money she had to live on. Why did she give everything she had? How do you think she felt about God?
3. Think about how many things you have. Would you give that all to God today? Would you give it to someone who really needs it?

Explain that in our church, Community of Christ, we believe that God has given everything we need.

We can give to others because God blesses us with what we need. God gives so much, we probably can never give as much as God gives. What are some things God gives us?



# Respond

Takes the learners from hearing to doing.

## I “Can” Give

Give each child a copy of the can wrapper page to color, and washable markers or crayons. Invite them to color and, if they choose, they may draw a picture of themselves standing next to Jesus. Help them write their name on the can wrapper for their Mission Tithes can.

After they have colored their wrapper page, cut them out, then tape the wrapper around the empty food can. Attach the “lid” according to instructions on the can wrapper.

When finished, have them put some of the coins that were used earlier in their Mission Tithes can. Let them take their cans home to collect their Mission Tithes.



Explores how the lesson might be lived out.

# Send

Show children the Mission Tithes envelopes for children provided by your Congregational or Mission Center Financial Officer. These are for them to put their money in, if they would like to use them. (Information on these envelopes is at [www.CofChrist.org/generosity/kids-envelopes.asp](http://www.CofChrist.org/generosity/kids-envelopes.asp))

 <b>Mission Tithes</b> 548	
Congregation Ministries \$ _____	World Ministries \$ _____
_____ \$ _____	Oblation (generosity with the poor) \$ _____
_____ \$ _____	World Hunger \$ _____
_____ \$ _____	_____ \$ _____
<b>MY CHURCH AT HOME</b>	<b>MY CHURCH IN THE WORLD</b>

# Bless

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope.

Sing the song “Jesus Loves Me, This I Know.” Close with a circle prayer, asking each child to finish the sentence, “Thank you God for giving me \_\_\_\_\_.”

1. Color this can wrapper, or make one of your own! Draw yourself with the other kids and Jesus.

2. Cut out can wrapper. Cut all tabs at top and fold in.

3. Tape around clean aluminum can (soup can size).

4. Cut out circle top. Cut out rectangle to drop coins into can.

5. Add tape or glue to top of tabs. Tape or glue circle to sit on these tabs.

6. Save your giving money in here. On slips of paper, write what you can give: your time, your talent, your treasure.

