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Note: Unless otherwise noted, all hymns herein are from Community of Christ Sings (CCS), and all Bible scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible (NRSV), copyright 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, and are used by permission. All rights reserved. Lessons created by Barb Harmon.
Introduction

The children’s reunion class material explores the theme “Fully Awake and Ready to Respond.” It uses content appropriate for children ages 6–11 with suggestions for younger children ages 3–5. Lessons include scripture passages that relate to each theme, music, art, games, spiritual practices, and snack suggestions.

Each lesson provides suggestions for preparing and teaching the class. Also included are possible questions you might use to engage students; however, you may think of other questions or ways to phrase questions that are more appropriate for the students in your class.

An estimated time to complete each activity is included to assist in your planning. The lessons are written with the realization that class times vary. Select activities to fit your allotted class time. Time to complete activities will also vary based on the number of children in the class.

Note that Lesson 1 (beginning on page 5) suggests sending an invitation to children prior to the class. A reproducible invitation is included on page 47.

For snacks, model healthy relationships with the earth (Doctrine and Covenants 163:2b) by avoiding use of plastic (unless recycling is available) and Styrofoam. As much as possible, serve snacks using reusable or paper plates and paper cups, preferably those that are compostable or contain recycled content. If your schedule allows, let children help prepare, serve, and clean up snacks. Be aware of food allergies. Where possible, avoid such foods or ingredients.

Each lesson introduces children to a spiritual practice. Included at the end of these lessons on page 43 is a reproducible resource to send with children to encourage families to continue these practices at home.
Doctrine and Covenants 163:4c invites us to

Let the educational and community development endeavors of 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.

Thank you for your willingness to prepare these lessons and build important relationships that will help form children in their discipleship.

Teachers please note:

- Instructions are italicized.
- Bold letters are learning activities.
- Semi-bold letters indicate words to read.
Lesson Focus
To explore how we are invited to receive and share Christ’s peace

Focus Scripture Passage
Luke 5:1–11

Objectives
The learners will...

- be introduced to each other and the teachers.
- hear the story of Jesus’ invitation to his first disciples.
- explore the Mission Initiative of Invite People to Christ.
- discover what it means to receive and share God’s invitation.

Supplies
- Prior to class: Copy and send reproducible invitations (see page 47)
- Community of Christ Sings (CCS)
- Recorded lively instrumental music and sound dock or CD player to play music
- Bible (NRSV)
- Doctrine and Covenants
- Dictionary
- Journal for each child—Journals can be small spiral notebooks purchased for each child or simple handmade journals with construction paper covers. Journals should have enough pages for each day of class and for children to continue their journals when they go home.
- Optional: Stickers to decorate journal cover
- Markers, crayons, and pencils
- Art supplies: Copy of invitation for each child (see page 48); card stock or construction paper, scissors, glue sticks
- Snack supplies: Prepackaged healthy snack (such as whole grain cereal bar or box of raisins); Provide enough for each child to have one during class and one to share.
Gather (10 minutes)
Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson

PRIOR TO CLASS: If you have a list of children who may participate in the class, mail or give them a personal invitation to attend (see reproducible invitation on page 47). Include an extra invitation and suggest children invite a friend to join them. Include a personal note and sign the invitation. On the first day of class, have extra invitations available to provide to children who attend that had not been sent an invitation. In the teacher space, write a simple note of welcome, such as “I am so glad you are here!”

Welcome to class! Everyone is invited to be here.
(If children have not received an invitation prior to class, give them one now.) Gather children with a greeting song and prayer.

Sing: CCS 71, “Jesu, Tawa Pano/Jesus, We are Here.”
Use this song to introduce children to each other and the teacher(s). Sing through one time. Ask children to stand one at a time and replace “we are here” with each child’s and teacher’s name. After each person has been named, introduce the verse in one of the other languages.

Pray: Invite children to join in word or sentence prayer.
Teacher: “Thank you, God, for inviting us to come to (camp/church/class).”
Go around the circle and ask children to tell one thing they are looking forward to at camp/church/class.

Ask: Have you ever gotten an invitation to a party? How did you feel?
Invite children to share about when they have received an invitation to a birthday party or other event. When we receive an invitation, we are excited about what will happen when we get there.

We are invited to follow Jesus and have God’s peace, and to invite other people to follow Jesus and have God’s peace. Today we are going to think about what it means to Awaken to God’s Invitation.

Engage
Invites exploration and interaction

Awaken to God’s Invitation (3–5 minutes)

Ask: How do you feel when you first wake up on the morning? Is it sometimes hard to do what you are supposed to when you first wake up? If your (parent/grandparent/guardian) asks you to get dressed, you might lie in bed for a while because you are not quite awake yet. It’s hard to listen when you are not fully awake.

To awaken to God’s invitation means to pay attention and listen for God so that we can follow Jesus. Let’s practice waking up, and then we will learn more about how we can follow Jesus and be awake to God’s invitation.
**Game: “Wake Up”** (3–5 minutes)
*Note: Use this game at the start of each class to emphasize the theme of awakening*

**Materials:** Recorded lively instrumental music and sound dock or CD player to play music

Ask children to lie on the ground and pretend to be asleep. Tell children that when the music is playing, they are to wake up and dance or move around, but must lie down and “go back to sleep” as soon as the music stops. Play and then pause the music. Have the intervals between waking and sleeping become shorter and shorter until children are “fully awake.” After the game, ask children to sit down. Tell children: Now that we are fully awake, we are ready to hear about how Jesus invited people to follow him. Lead children in taking several deep breaths to calm down and prepare to hear the scripture passage.

**Focus Scripture Passage: Luke 5:1–11** (10 minutes)
*Read the scripture passage as printed or use the paraphrase, depending on ages of children.*
*Ask reflection questions about the scripture passage (included in the paraphrased text below).*

Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.” Simon answered, “Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.” When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!” For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.” When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

**Paraphrase:**

Jesus was standing on the shore beside the lake called Gennesaret. Crowds of people were getting close to him because they wanted to hear what Jesus had to say about God.

**Ask:** Can you tell about a time you were in a big crowd of people? How did you feel about being around so many people?

Jesus saw two boats near the shore. The fishermen got out of their boats and were washing the nets they used to catch fish. Jesus got in one of the
boats and asked a fisherman, Simon, to take him out into the lake. Simon put the boat out in the water, and Jesus told the crowds of people about God from the boat.

Ask: Jesus was telling people about God. Can you think of a time you told someone about something important?

When Jesus was done talking to the people about God, he told Simon to go deeper in the water and put his nets back in the water to catch some fish. Simon was very tired from fishing all night long. He hadn’t caught any fish, and he had already cleaned his nets to put them away.

Ask: Have you ever tried really hard to do something and it didn’t work out?

Simon told Jesus, "We fished all night and didn’t catch any fish, but if you say so, I will put my nets back in the water.”

When they put the nets in the water, they caught so many fish that the nets began to break. Simon called another boat to help, and the fish they caught filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

Simon and all the fishermen were amazed at how many fish they caught. Simon was afraid and said to Jesus, “Go away, Jesus. I have made bad choices and you shouldn’t be helping me.”

Ask: Why do you think Simon was afraid?

Then Jesus said to Simon, “Don’t be afraid. From now on, you won’t be catching fish. You will follow me and help people.”

When Simon and the other fishermen brought the boats back to the shore, they left the boats and the nets and the fish and followed Jesus.

Jesus invited Simon and the other fishermen to follow him. He said from now on, they would be inviting and helping people.

Jesus invites us to follow him, too. Let’s think about how we can follow Jesus and invite other people to follow Jesus.

Music (10 minutes)
Sing: CCS 499, “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus.”

Ask children to stand in a circle and follow what you do. Sing verse 1, walking in a circle with teacher as the leader and children following. If children are not familiar with the song, teach as a call and response. After verse 1, ask for children’s ideas about how they can follow Jesus. Insert children’s ideas to sing verse: “I have decided to (love) like Jesus.” If children’s ideas are action words, use motions to act them out. (Example: love—hug the person next to you). Continue until each child has a chance to share an idea. End with verse 1.

Option for Young Children (ages 3–5): Replace “I” have decided to follow Jesus with “Child’s name has decided to follow Jesus.”
Respond
Takes the learners from hearing to doing

Exploring the Mission Initiative of Invite People to Christ (10 minutes)
In Community of Christ, we share Mission Initiatives to help us follow Jesus. The Mission Initiative of Invite People to Christ helps us think about how we can share God’s invitation with people who need to hear good news.

Children (ages 6–11)
Read Doctrine and Covenants 163:2:

2 a. 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.

b. Generously share the invitation, ministries, and sacraments through which people can encounter the Living Christ who heals and reconciles through redemptive relationships in sacred community. The restoring of persons to healthy or righteous relationships with God, others, themselves, and the earth is at the heart of the purpose of your journey as a people of faith.

Using a dictionary, look up words children may not know.

Ask: What are ministries of the church? (Help children think of ideas, such as worship, Sunday school, camps, Bible School, visiting the sick, etc.)

Ask: What are sacraments of the church? (Help children name the sacraments)

Ask: How can inviting people to share the ministries and sacraments of the church help them follow Jesus and have peace?

Young Children (ages 3–5)
Read Paraphrase Doctrine and Covenants 163:2:

Jesus Christ, who shows us God’s peace, invites all people to come and have peace. God gives peace all the time, especially when people have tough questions or hard times. Follow Jesus in the way that leads to God’s peace!

Share the invitation to follow Jesus and have peace!

Jesus invites us to receive peace.
Jesus invites us (like his first disciples) to follow him.
Jesus asks us to share the invitation to follow him and have peace.

Art: Make Invitations (10 minutes)
Cut cardstock or construction paper in half and fold to make cards. Copy the reproducible sheet on page 48 and cut to provide an invitation for each child.
Read the text to the children and tell them we are making cards to give to people to invite them to receive peace and follow Jesus.

Ask children to glue the invitation inside the card and sign their names. Assist younger children to write their names as needed. Provide markers or crayons for
children to draw a picture or color the front of the card. Tell children they can give the invitation and a snack to someone in their family, someone at camp or church, a friend, or a neighbor.

**Game: Follow the Leader** (5–10 minutes)
Ask children one at a time to be the leader and think of an action. Ask the leader to act out the action and the other children follow to do the same action. Continue until each child has had a chance to be the leader.

After playing the game, invite conversation about what it means to follow Jesus. How can we follow Jesus and act like he acts?

**Spiritual Practice: Journals** (10 minutes)
Journals will be used each day to help children think about the concepts being explored in class.

Children (ages 6–11): Give each child a journal. Invite children to decorate the cover with crayons, markers, and stickers. Ask children to write their names on the front cover of their journals. Ask children each day to respond to the journal question. Assist as needed with spelling words.

Young Children (ages 3–5): Give each child a journal. Invite children to decorate the cover with crayons, markers, and stickers. Assist children with writing their names as needed. Ask children each day to draw pictures to respond to the journal question. Ask them to tell you about their picture and write their words in their journal.

Journal question: How can you invite people to follow Jesus and have peace? (5 minutes)

**Snack suggestion:** (10 minutes)
Invitation Snack: Provide a healthy snack that children can enjoy during class and also have an extra serving to share along with their invitation. Suggestions: Prepackaged snack such as whole grain cereal bar or box of raisins.

Ask if a child (or children) would like to say a prayer thanking God for the snack. (If no one offers, say a brief prayer of thanks.)
Send and Bless (5 minutes)

Send
Explores how the lesson might be lived

Ask children to take the invitation and snack to share with someone. If at camp, ask children, with an adult, to give the invitation to someone they may not know very well. If at home, ask children to give the invitation to a friend or neighbor. Tell children they will have a chance during the next class to share to whom they gave the invitation.

Bless
Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope

Teacher starts a sentence prayer: “God, thank you for the invitation to follow you and have peace.” Ask children to think about whom they might invite and complete the sentence: “I want to invite __________ to follow you and have peace.”

Sing the goodbye song, CCS 612, “Go with Us, Lord,” through once, and then insert each child's name (for example, “Go with child's name, Lord…”).
Lesson Focus
To explore spiritual transformation by learning about plants and animals in creation that change

Focus Scripture Passage
2 Corinthians 5:16–20

Objectives
The learners will...
- discover that Jesus changes us into new creations.
- participate in object lessons, games, and art to learn about transformation.
- explore how we treat others when we are transformed.

Supplies
- Community of Christ Sings (CCS)
- Dictionary
- Recorded lively instrumental music and sound dock or CD player to play music
- Bible (NRSV and The Message)
- Variety of seeds (examples: pinecone, acorn, apple seed, watermelon seed)
- Small pot or cup, potting soil, seeds, pitcher of water or watering can
- Markers, crayons, and pencils
- Modeling clay
- Journals
- Snack supplies: Popcorn kernels, hot air popper, large bowl
- Copy of Transformation Testimony (page 17) for each child
Gather (10 minutes)
Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson

Gather children with a greeting song and prayer.

Sing: CCS 84, “Uyai Mose/Come All You People”
If children are unfamiliar with the hymn, teach as a call and response. After singing one time, insert each child’s name one at a time in place of “all you people.” After each child has been named, try singing the hymn in a different language.

Pray: Invite children to join in word/sentence prayer.
Teacher: “God, we praise you that you made each of us and you made all of creation.”
Invite children to think of a person they love, animal, or something in nature and complete the sentence, “Thank you for creating...”

Ask: Who wants to tell about giving someone your invitation?

Engage
Invites exploration and interaction

Awaken to Spiritual Transformation (3–5 minutes)
Our theme today is Awaken to Spiritual Transformation. We learned yesterday what it means to awaken or wake up.

Ask: Does anyone have an idea about how we can wake up to God?
(Give time for children to share their ideas.)
We also learned that Jesus wants us to follow him and share peace. When we follow Jesus, we are changed on the inside, in our hearts and minds, and in how we act and treat people. This is spiritual transformation. Let’s “wake up” so we can be ready to learn about spiritual transformation.

Game: “Wake Up” (3–5 minutes)
Materials: Recorded lively instrumental music and sound dock or CD player to play music

Ask children to lie on the ground and pretend to be asleep. Tell children that when the music is playing, they are to wake up and dance or move around, but must lie down and “go back to sleep” as soon as the music stops. Play and then pause the music. Have the intervals between waking and sleeping become shorter and shorter until children are “fully awake.” After the game, ask children to sit down. Tell children: Now that we are fully awake, we are ready to learn more about spiritual transformation. Lead children in taking several deep breaths to calm down and prepare to hear the scripture passage.

Focus Scripture Passage: 2 Corinthians 5:16–20 (3–5 minutes)
Read the scripture passage as printed or use the paraphrase, depending on ages of children.

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation:
everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 5:16–20 (The Message, paraphrased)
From now on, we don’t judge people by what they have or how they look. We looked at Jesus that way once. But we don’t look at him that way anymore. Now we look on the inside, in our hearts, and we can see that anyone who follows Jesus is a new creation. The old life changes; a new life starts! All this comes from the God who wants to be our friend and wants us to be friends with each other. God invites us to tell everyone! We’re speaking for Jesus: Become friends with God!

Becoming a new creation is spiritual transformation. When Jesus changes us, we see and treat people differently. We see people as God sees them and we treat them with love.

Object Lesson (10-15 minutes)
Using a dictionary, look up the word transformation. Talk about the different definitions (new appearance, life cycle of an animal, etc.)

Ask: What kinds of things can be transformed into a new creation? (Examples: Butterfly, seed, egg)

Show a variety of seeds (examples: pinecone, acorn, apple seed, watermelon seed). Ask if children know what the seed will become when it is planted and transformed.
Like these seeds, Jesus wants to transform us, or make us a new creation, by helping us to change how we see and treat each other.

Let’s think about how Jesus can help us change our feelings and actions.
Present several situations to children. Help them think about how they might want to act, and how they could act if they are awake to Jesus.
Examples:

- You are angry because someone calls you a name. How could you respond? You could call the person a name back, or you could follow Jesus and share peace by saying something kind instead. (Help children think of examples of something they could say to someone who is being unkind.)

- Someone (a friend or brother or sister) is angry and hits you. How could you respond? You could hit back, or you could follow Jesus and share peace by telling the person you don’t like that he or she hit you, and Jesus wants us to love each other. What could you say to the person who hit you instead of hitting back?

- You see someone picking on one of your friends at school. How could you respond? How could you follow Jesus and share peace?
Plant Seeds
Provide each child a small cup or pot, potting soil, and seeds. Plant the seeds and gently water. Tell the children to take the pot home and care for it with water and sunlight so it will be transformed and grow, as God cares for us with love and transforms us to grow and follow Jesus.

Optional Story (10 minutes)
Read: The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle

Circle Transformation Story (10 minutes)
(Children ages 6–11)
Children will create a story together, one line at a time. Ask children to sit in a circle. Give directions to think about what we have learned about transformation, how things can change, as they create their story. A teacher starts the opening sentence, such as: "Once upon a time, there was a seed." One by one, each child adds a line to build the story, going around the circle as many times as needed. Have one teacher be a scribe to write down the story. Since there are different storytellers, the story may be silly, and that’s okay. When it seems like the story is complete, say, “The End.” Read the story back to the class. Ask how the story helps children think about transformation, even if the story ends up not making any sense.

Game for Young Children (10 minutes)
(Children ages 3–5)
Transformation Tag: Play like “Duck, Duck, Goose.” Ask children to sit in a circle. Ask the youngest child to be the first “transformer.” The “transformer” will decide what words to use to tag the children in the circle. Encourage children to think of words that represent transformation to a new creation, such as “Seed, Seed, Flower”; “Caterpillar, Caterpillar, Butterfly”; “Acorn, Acorn, Tree”; “Egg, Egg, Bird.” (Teacher can help if child needs an idea.)

The “transformer” will gently tag the children going around the circle until he or she tags a child with the transformed word. It is okay if a child repeats an idea that has already been used. The tagged child will safely chase the “transformer” around the circle until he or she sits down in an open space. Play until each child has had a chance to be the “transformer.” Encourage gentle tags and safe running.

Respond
Takes the learners from hearing to doing

Music: CCS 498, “Yo quiero ser/I Want to Be” (5 minutes)

Read: Isaiah 64:8, adapted
O Lord, you are our God; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.

Teach the hymn as a call and response. Try to sing the hymn in all three languages.
**Art: Modeling-clay Creations** (10 minutes)
Give each child a piece of modeling clay. Ask them to transform the clay into a new creation. Children do not need to create a specific object but can tell a story about their clay. Put their creations on a piece of paper to dry. Write their names and ideas and descriptions of their creations on the paper.

**Spiritual Practice: Walking in Nature** (10 minutes)
Go for a walk outside. Ask children, as much as possible, to listen and “be awake” (pay attention) to what they see and hear around them. Tell them to let you know when they see something that transforms or changes.

**Journal question:** What did you see or hear on our walk that transforms or changes? (5 minutes)

**Snack Suggestion** (10 minutes)
Transforming Snack: Show children popcorn kernels and ask if they know what kind of seed it is. Ask for ideas about how the kernels can be transformed or changed into popcorn. Use a hot air popper to pop the kernels. Ask children for their ideas and observations as the kernels are popping.

Ask if a child (or children) would like to say a prayer thanking God for our snack. (If no one offers, say a brief prayer of thanks.)

**Send and Bless** (5 minutes)

**Send**
Explores how the lesson might be lived

**Transformation Testimony:** Give each child a copy of page 17.

Ask them to ask an adult (parent, grandparent, friend) to answer the questions and write down the answers to share a testimony of transformation. Ask children to bring the paper back to the next class.

**Bless**
Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope

*Teacher starts a sentence prayer:*
“God, thank you for changing us into new creations.”

*Invite children to complete the sentence:*
“Help us to change how we treat people by __________.”

*Sing the goodbye song, CCS 612, “Go with Us, Lord,” through once, and then insert each child’s name (for example, “Go with (child’s name), Lord…”*)
Awaken to Spiritual Transformation

We are learning in class how God transforms and changes us. Please tell me a story of a time you experienced God’s presence and how it changed you and write it down for me to share with the class.

Child’s name: 

Adult’s name: 

1. When have you experienced God’s presence?

2. Where were you?

3. What did you feel?

4. How did God change you?

(Please bring completed paper to the next class)
Lesson Focus
To discover how we can follow Jesus in his mission

Focus Scripture

Objectives
The learners will...
- hear Jesus describe his mission.
- discover Community of Christ Mission Initiatives.
- explore ways to follow Jesus in his mission.

Supplies
- Community of Christ Sings (CCS) or Audio Recording, available through Herald Publishing House
- Recorded lively instrumental music and sound dock or CD player to play music
- Dictionary
- Bible
- Optional video: Open Your Eyes found at http://www.missionalleaders.org/videos-az/
- Copy of Mission Prayer handout (page 24) for each child. Optional: print on parchment color paper
- Yarn or ribbon
- Markers, crayons, and pencils
- Copy of Unfolding Mission Treasure Hunt (Children ages 6–11 on page 25/Young Children ages 3–5 on page 27)
- Box or Treasure Chest
• Small take-home object for each child that represents an idea from the Mission Prayer. (Suggestions: small compass, heart-shaped eraser, stone with the word “peace” inscribed, peace or love stickers, etc.). For young children ages 3–5, ensure the take-home object is not a swallowing or choking hazard.
• Journals
• Snack suggestion: fruits and vegetables children may not have tried before (suggestions: papaya, pomegranate seeds, rainbow carrots, jicama)

Gather (10 minutes)
Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson

Gather children with a greeting song and prayer.

Sing: CCS 338, “Kanisa Litajengwa/Oh, Who Will Build the Church Now?”
After singing verse 1, ask children one at a time what they would use to build the church. Tell children answers can be physical materials (wood, bricks) or ways to live (love, peace, joy, sharing). Insert child’s name into the first phrase and what they would build the church with in the second phrase. (Example: Oh, Jenna will build the church now. With bricks she will build it.) Continue until each child has been named.

Pray: Offer a brief prayer that God will help us learn about how we can follow Jesus in his mission.

Ask: Who has a transformation story to share?
Ask children to share the story they were told or read stories from sheets children return to class.

Engage
Invites exploration and interaction

Awaken to Unfolding Mission (3–5 minutes)
Today we are going to learn about Jesus’ mission and how we can “awaken” or follow Jesus in his mission.

Ask: Have you heard the word mission? Do you have an idea what the word mission means?
Use a dictionary to look up the word mission and decide which definition describes what we mean by Jesus’ mission. Let’s “wake up” so that we will be ready to learn how we can follow Jesus in his mission.

Game: “Wake Up” (3–5 minutes)
Materials: Recorded lively instrumental music and sound dock or CD player to play music
Ask children to lie on the ground and pretend to be asleep. Tell children that when the music is playing, they are to wake up and dance or move around, but must lie down and “go back to sleep” as soon as the music stops. Play and then pause the music. Have the intervals between waking and sleeping become shorter and shorter until children are “fully awake.” After the game, ask children to sit down.

Tell children: Now that we are fully awake, we are ready to hear what Jesus says his mission is and how we can follow Jesus in his mission. Lead children in taking several deep breaths to calm down and prepare to hear the scripture passage.

Jesus tells us throughout scripture what his mission is, what he came to do. Let’s hear one of those passages.

Read the scripture passage as printed or use the paraphrase, depending on ages of children. Ask reflection questions about the scripture passage (included in the paraphrased text below).

Focus Scripture Passage: Luke 4:16–22 (10 minutes)

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

“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.”

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.” All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth.


Jesus came to Nazareth where he had grown up.

Ask: Do you still live in the place where you were born? Has anyone moved away from where you were born? Have you ever gone back to visit? Who did you see?

As he always did on the Sabbath, he went to the synagogue.

Tell children a synagogue is a meeting place, a place of worship.

Ask: Where do we meet? Where do we worship?

When he stood up to read, he was handed the scroll of the prophet Isaiah.

Tell children a scroll is a roll of paper that books and scriptures were written on.
Unrolling the scroll, he found the place where it was written: God’s Spirit is on me; God has chosen me to preach good news to the poor, Sent me to set the prisoners free, To help the blind see and help the sick, To give hope to the hurt and lonely, To announce, “This is God’s time to act!”

In our first lesson, we learned about God’s invitation to have peace, follow Jesus, and share peace, and that God’s invitation is for all people. Jesus tells the people listening that this is his mission—to help people have peace by taking care of the poor, people in prison, and people who are sick, hurt, and lonely.

Jesus rolled up the scroll, handed it back, and sat down. Everyone in the synagogue was looking at him. Then he said, “You’ve just heard scripture made real in this place.” All who were listening were amazed at what Jesus said. They were surprised at how much he knew about the scriptures, since they remembered him when he was a little boy.

The people were surprised that Jesus, who they had know since he was a little boy, knew so much about the scriptures. They didn’t really understand that he was telling them this was his mission. Even today, we are trying to learn how to follow Jesus in his mission and be like Jesus.

Music: CCS 596, “Fanana” (10 minutes)
Tell children “Fanana” means “be like Jesus.” Teach children the hymn in Chichewa. Teacher sings the main text; children respond with “Fanana,” for the first line, and then sing the second line together. After children understand the flow of the song, sing verses 2–6. Tell children what each line means before it is sung and ask them to act out motions to walk, sleep, sing, dance, and talk like Jesus.

Optional: Sing along with the Audio Recording, available from Herald Publishing House.

Spiritual Practice: Mission Prayer (10 minutes)
Tell children many people throughout Community of Christ are using this prayer to listen for God and to follow Jesus in his mission. The Mission Prayer is currently translated in nine languages.

Read: God, where will your Spirit lead today?

Ask: The Holy Spirit helps us listen for God and make choices. What does lead mean? How do you think the Holy Spirit can lead us?

Read: Help me be fully awake and ready to respond.

Ask: Do you remember when we talked about what it means to “awaken” on the first day of class? (Let children share ideas they remember.) It’s hard to listen and respond when you are not fully awake.

Read: Grant me courage to risk something new
Ask: Do you know what courage means? Have you ever been afraid to try something new, like go to a new school, or swim underwater? Courage is when you decide to try even when you are not sure what will happen. When have you had courage to try something new?

Read: ...and become a blessing of your love and peace.

Ask: Have you heard the word “blessing”? Sometimes, when we pray over our meals, we call it the “blessing.” We say thank you to God and ask God to bless our food so that we can be strong and follow Jesus. Blessing can also mean saying something good about someone. How can we bless people? How can we share peace?

Optional Video: Open Your Eyes (10 minutes)
Find the video at http://www.missionalleaders.org/videos-az/

Ask:
- What did the jogger do to be “fully awake?”
- What did the jogger do that took courage?
- How was the jogger a blessing of love and peace?
- What else happened in the video that showed being a blessing of love and peace?

Art: Mission Scroll (10 minutes)
Give each child a copy of the reproducible Mission Prayer sheet on page 24.

Children (ages 6–11): Ask children to write in the areas around the prayer ways they can show courage, risk something new, share love, and share peace. Roll the paper into a scroll and tie with yarn or ribbon.

Young Children (ages 3–5): Ask children to draw pictures or share words of how they can share love. Write children’s ideas on their paper. Roll the paper into a scroll and tie with yarn or ribbon.

Respond
Takes the learners from hearing to doing

Game: Unfolding Mission Treasure Hunt (10–15 minutes)
Tell children: Community of Christ follows Jesus in his mission through five Mission Initiatives.

Help children learn about the Mission Initiatives with a “treasure hunt.” Copy the Unfolding Mission Treasure Hunt scriptures on pages 25–26 (Children ages 6–11) or pages 27–28 (Young Children ages 3–5). Cut the scriptures on the dotted lines and create a treasure hunt by writing a clue to the location of the next scripture and hiding the scriptures in various places. When the scripture is found, ask a child to read the scripture. Ask for ideas about how we can practice living this Mission Initiative. Ask another child to read the next clue. For young children, read the scripture and clue to them. At the end of the treasure hunt, have a box
or treasure chest with the Mission Prayer attached to the top and a take home object inside for each child that represents an idea from the Mission Prayer. (Suggestions: small compass to represent “where will your Spirit lead today”; heart-shaped eraser to represent “become a blessing of your love”; stone with the word “peace” inscribed to represent “become a blessing of your...peace”; peace or love stickers, etc.). For young children ages 3–5, ensure the take-home object is not a swallowing or choking hazard.

Optional Story: We Share by Monica Bradford (10 minutes)
We Share introduces Community of Christ Enduring Principles in easy-to-understand language.

Read each page. Ask children what they see in the illustrations. Ask questions to help children understand how the Enduring Principles help us engage in God’s unfolding mission. What actions can children take? Sample questions:
- pg. 8  Ask: What words can we say to share peace with people?
- pg. 10  Ask: Community is people we know or live near. Who are people we know or live near?
- pg. 16  Ask: How can we help take care of the Earth?
- pg. 20  Ask: How are people the same and different?
- pg. 32  Ask: What can you share with people?

Journal question: What can you do to follow Jesus in his mission? (5 minutes)

Snack Suggestion (10 minutes)
“Risk Something New” Snack—Provide opportunity for children to sample fruits and vegetables they may not have tried before (suggestions: papaya, pomegranate seeds, rainbow carrots, jicama)

Ask if a child (or children) would like to say a prayer thanking God for our snack. (If no one offers, say a brief prayer of thanks.)

Send and Bless (5 minutes)

Send
Explores how the lesson might be lived

Ask children for ideas of how they can show love to someone today. Invite them to take action to share love with another person and tell about it tomorrow in class.

Bless
Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope

Teacher starts a sentence prayer: “Jesus, help us follow you in your mission.” Invite children to complete the sentence: “I want to share love by ________.”

Sing the goodbye song, CCS 612, “Go with Us, Lord,” through once, and then insert each child’s name (for example, “Go with (child’s name), Lord...”)

23
MISSION PRAYER

God, where will your Spirit lead today?
Help me be fully awake and ready to respond.
Grant me courage to risk something new
and become a blessing of your love and peace.
Amen.
Unfolding Mission Treasure Hunt (Children ages 6–11)

Clue:

Invite People to Christ
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...Generously share the invitation...Lovingly invite others to experience the good news of new life in community with Christ. Opportunities abound in your daily lives if you choose to see them.

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:2a–b, 3a–b; 165:1c

Abolish Poverty, End Suffering
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...Undertake compassionate and just actions to abolish poverty and end needless suffering.

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:4a, 165:1d
Pursue Peace on Earth

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...
Pursue peace on and for the Earth. Let nothing separate you from this mission.

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:4b, 165:1d–e

Clue:

Develop Disciples to Serve

Let the educational and community development endeavors of 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...Follow your soul’s yearning to come home to God’s grace and generosity. Let gratitude show you the way. Remember, a basic discipleship principle is growing Christ’s mission through local and world mission tithes according to true capacity.

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:4c, 165:2b–c

Clue:

Experience Congregations in Mission

God is calling for a prophetic community to emerge, drawn from the nations of the world, that is characterized by uncommon devotion to the compassion and peace of God revealed in Jesus Christ. Through divine grace and wisdom, this faith community has been given abundant gifts, resources, and opportunities to equip it to become such a people. Chief among these is the power of community in Christ expressed locally in distinctive fashions while upholding a unity of vision, foundational beliefs, and mission throughout the world...As a spiritual venture, boldly follow the initiatives into the heart of God’s vision for the church and creation. Then, in response to growing insight about God’s nature and will, continue to shape communities that live Christ’s love and mission.

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:11a, 165:1b

Clue:
Unfolding Mission Treasure Hunt (Children ages 3–5)

CLUE:

Invite People to Christ
Jesus Christ, who shows us God’s peace, invites all people to come… Invite others to hear the good news…

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:2a–b, 3a–b; 165:1c, adapted

CLUE:

Abolish Poverty, End Suffering
God weeps for the poor, lonely, and sick… Be kind! Help the poor, lonely, and sick…

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:4a, 165:1d, adapted
Pursue Peace on Earth
The earth is tired because people are greedy and fight each other. People can’t keep using too much of what the earth gives us to live or there won’t be enough for everyone...Pursue peace on and for the Earth. Don’t let anything stop you from this mission!

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:4b, 165:1d–e, adapted

CLUE:

Develop Disciples to Serve
Learn about Christ’s peace and how we can help people who are poor and sick, how we can stop wars and fights, and how we can help the earth. Be generous. Share what you have!

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:4c, 165:2b–c, adapted

CLUE:

Experience Congregations in Mission
God gives us gifts to help us be kind and share peace. We share these gifts in church and with people around the world...We share Christ’s love and mission.

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:11a, 165:1b, adapted

CLUE:
Lesson Focus
To learn that the ordinary things we see and do every day show us God’s love

Focus Scripture
Romans 12:1–2 (The Message)

Objectives
The learners will...
• understand how sacraments show God’s love.
• discover that all of life is sacramental.
• explore sacramental living by how we see and live God’s love.

Supplies
• Community of Christ Sings (CCS)
• Sharing in Community of Christ, 3rd edition, pages 17–18, available in print
• Recorded lively instrumental music and sound dock or CD player to play music
• Bible (The Message)
• Optional video: Holy Now by Peter Mayer (www.youtube.com/watch?v=KipYaURysz4 or other version available on YouTube; play with permission) [Uploaded on December 2, 2009. Peter Mayer’s sacred science song,
with captioned lyrics. Note: This video, by Connie Barlow, is authorized by Peter Mayer for public use on a donations basis. Organizations may play this video publicly by downloading the mp4 and donating at http://thegreatstory.org/order-mayer.html

• Markers, crayons, and pencils
• Bag or box with objects used everyday (examples: spoon, key, toothbrush, comb, pen, sock, etc.). Provide enough objects that there is one for each child.
• Art supplies: White construction paper, washable paint (various colors), variety of ordinary household objects (examples: whisk, spatula, sponge, toothbrush, cotton swab)
• Several pairs of shoes
• Journals
• Snack supplies: Whole grain bread (or gluten-free bread), grape juice

**Gather** (10 minutes)

**Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson**

*Gather children with a greeting song and prayer.*

**Sing:** CCS 602, “In My Life, Lord.”

Before singing, tell children the word glorify means to praise God or show God to people. People can see God in you by how you act. After singing all three verses, insert each child’s name in place of “my” life. End with “In our lives...”

**Pray:** Offer a brief prayer that we will see God in all things and that we will show God to people in all we do.

**Ask:** Who did you show love to yesterday?

**Engage**

**Invites exploration and interaction**

**Awaken to Sacramental Living** (5 minutes)

Today we are going to talk about awakening to sacramental living. Have you heard the word sacrament? Ask children to share their ideas about what a sacrament is and name sacraments of the church they may know.

**Briefly define the purpose of a sacrament:**

**Children (ages 6–11):** “A sacrament is a symbol of or ritual expressing God’s love for us. Each sacrament expresses God’s love in covenant community and was modeled by Jesus Christ. All sacraments involve symbols (such as water or oil), and include touch—laying on of hands, ordaining, blessing—representing Jesus’ personal touch and care for us through blessing.” (Of Water and Spirit, page 52)

**Young children (ages 3–5):** Sacraments shows us God’s love. We share sacraments at church. Sacraments use everyday things—like water, oil, bread, juice, and hands—to show us God’s love.
Show children pages 17–18 in Sharing in Community of Christ, 3rd edition. Name and briefly describe the sacraments of the church. Ask children to share when they have participated in or observed the sacraments. Optional: Simple descriptions of each of the sacraments are listed in Of Water and Spirit Facilitator’s Guide, pages 52–53 and 58–60.

Sacraments show us God’s love. Sacramental living means we see God’s love all around us everyday and the way we live shows people God’s love. Let’s “wake up” so we can be ready to learn about sacramental living.

Game: “Wake Up” (3–5 minutes)
Materials: Recorded lively instrumental music and sound dock or CD player to play music

Ask children to lie on the ground and pretend to be asleep. Tell children that when the music is playing, they are to wake up and dance or move around, but must lie down and “go back to sleep” as soon as the music stops. Play and then pause the music. Have the intervals between waking and sleeping become shorter and shorter until children are “fully awake.” After the game, ask children to sit down.

Tell children: Now that we are fully awake, we are ready to learn about how we can awaken to sacramental living. Lead children in taking several deep breaths to calm down and prepare to hear the scripture passage.

Focus scripture passage: Romans 12:1–2, The Message, adapted (10 minutes)
Read the scripture passage as printed or use the paraphrase, depending on ages of children. Ask reflection questions about the scripture passage (included in the paraphrased text below).

So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for God. Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what God wants from you, and quickly respond to it.

Paraphrase:
So here’s what I want you to do, and God will help you: Take the ordinary things you do everyday—sleeping, eating, going to school, and playing—and think about God as you do them.

Ask: What kinds of things do you do every day? (Wake up, get ready for the day, brush teeth, eat meals, go to school, play, etc.)

Ask: How can we think about God when we are doing the normal, ordinary things we do everyday? (Say the Mission Prayer, say thank you for whatever we are doing, think about what God created, think about how we can share what we have with others, etc.)

Thinking about what God does for you is the best thing you can do. Don’t get so used to what everyone else is doing that you do the same things without even thinking about it.
Ask: What kinds of things might take our attention off of God that everyone else is probably doing? (Watching a lot of TV or spending a lot of time with other electronic devices, judging people based on how they look, being selfish and trying to get our own way, treating people unkindly, fighting, littering or not taking care of the Earth, etc.)

Instead, focus your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. Think about what God wants you to do, and do it quickly!

Ask: How can we focus our attention on God? (Praying, going to church or Sunday school, looking for what God created in nature, etc.)

Ask: Do you remember when we talked about spiritual transformation? How can God change us from the inside out? (Let children share ideas they remember)

Ask: What does God want us to do? (Follow Jesus, share love and peace, share what we have—generosity, invite other people to follow Jesus and have peace, etc.)

When we are changed from the inside out, we start to see that even the ordinary things we do everyday are important. God shows us love when we share the sacraments of the church, and God shows us love when we recognize that what we do everyday is sacramental or important. Another word for sacramental or important is holy.

Optional—Music Video: Holy Now by Peter Mayer (5 minutes)

Object Lesson: Thankful for Everyday Objects (10 minutes)
Materials: Bag or box with objects used everyday (examples: spoon, key, toothbrush, comb, pen, sock, etc.). Provide enough objects that there is at least one for each child. If using a box, cut a hole large enough for children to put their hand in the box. If using a bag, hold the bag closed at the top (or use a drawstring bag).

There are things we use every day that we don’t even think about; we are so used to using them. Ask children one at a time to put their hand in the box or bag and touch an object without looking at it. Ask if they can name the object. When they have taken a guess, ask them to pull the object out of the box or bag. Ask if their guess was correct.

Ask: What do we use this (object) for? What wouldn’t we be able to do if this (object) didn’t exist?

Part of sacramental living is being thankful for everything we see and use, even the things we see or use everyday that might not seem important. After each child has had a turn, ask them to name something they see or use everyday and why they are thankful.

Respond
Takes the learners from hearing to doing

Art Activity: Ordinary Objects Art (10 minutes)
Give each child a sheet of white construction paper. Using several colors of washable paint and a variety of ordinary household objects (examples: whisk, spatula, sponge, toothbrush, cotton swab), invite children to create a painting. Ask children to describe their ideas or feelings about their paintings and write their words on their paper.

**Game: Cooperative Shoe Pile Relay** (10 minutes)

*Children (ages 6–11)*

**Ask:** Why do we wear shoes? Shoes are something we wear every day without thinking about it!

Ask children to take off their shoes and put them in a pile at one end of the room and mix them up. Include extra shoes in the pile so that there are more pairs of shoes than children. Assign each child a partner. If there are an uneven number of children, a teacher can be a partner. Give directions that each pair of partners will go to the shoe pile and, without talking to each other, find their partner’s shoes and put them on their feet. They can nod yes or no to their partner if he or she picks up a shoe, but they can’t point to or pick up their own shoes.

**Variation for Young children (ages 3–5):** Ask partners to go to the shoe pile together. Children can help pick out their own shoes and then their partner puts the shoes on their feet for them.

**Ask:** How can our shoes be sacramental? (We can be thankful that we have shoes to keep our feet safe and warm; we can donate our shoes when we outgrow them to a homeless shelter; etc.)

**Spiritual Practice: Dwelling in the Word** (5–10 minutes)

Dwelling in the Word invites us to listen to God and one another to hear and discover God’s direction by reading scripture and asking questions. Dwelling in the Word is a practice based on our understanding that God continues to speak to us in the context of our day and calling. This practice is not about gaining information about scripture. Dwelling in the Word is about imagining how God is calling and sending us to embody and live the concerns and passion of Christ in our communities and the world.

Tell children today we will be reading a scripture passage to listen for God and to hear what we can do to awaken to sacramental living. Read the scripture passage as printed or use the paraphrase, depending on ages of children. Read the scripture passage aloud and pause in silence for a moment or two. Read the scripture passage again, and then ask one of the following questions or pose your own questions for conversation.

After reading the scripture passage, ask one or more questions:

- As you listen to the scripture passage, what do you think or feel?
- Is there a word or idea in the scripture passage that catches your attention?
- What do you think God is saying to you in this scripture passage?
- What can you do to awaken to sacramental living?
Doctrine and Covenants 164:9b-c:
When your willingness to live in sacred community as Christ's new creation exceeds your natural fear of spiritual and relational transformation, you will become who you are called to be. The rise of Zion the beautiful, the peaceful reign of Christ, awaits your wholehearted response to the call to make and steadfastly hold to God's covenant of peace in Jesus Christ.

This covenant entails sacramental living that respects and reveals God's presence and reconciling activity in creation. It requires whole-life stewardship dedicated to expanding the church's restoring ministries, especially those devoted to asserting the worth of persons, protecting the sacredness of creation, and relieving physical and spiritual suffering.

Paraphrase:
When you are ready to live in sacred community as Christ's new creation, you won't be afraid of God or each other. You will become who God calls you to be. Zion, God's community of peace for all people, waits for you to give your whole life to live and act on God's promise of peace in Jesus.

This promise asks for sacramental living that shows God's love and peace. It means giving your whole life to help people feel loved, take care of the earth, and serve people who are sick, in pain, sad, or lonely.

Journal question: How can you take care of the earth or help people who are sick or lonely? (5 minutes)

Snack Suggestion (10 minutes)
Sacramental Snack: Whole grain bread and grape juice (Note: If anyone has a gluten allergy, provide gluten-free bread.)

Bread and juice are part of what we eat every day. When the church shares together the sacrament of the Lord's Supper (Communion), the ordinary bread and juice become a special symbol of God's love for us. We can remember God's love for us any time we eat food as we “awaken to sacramental living” and we are thankful.

Ask if a child (or children) would like to say a prayer thanking God for our snack. (If no one offers, say a brief prayer of thanks for bread to share.)

Send and Bless (5 minutes)

Send
Explores how the lesson might be lived

Ask children to look for something ordinary (something in nature, something they own, or something they see or find). Ask them to think about how they see God in it. Have them bring the object to the next class. Or, if the object is too large or they are unable to bring it to class, they can write about it or draw a picture of what they see.
Bless
Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope

**Teacher starts a sentence prayer:** “God, help us to see you in the ordinary things we see and do. Help us to awaken to sacramental living every day.”
*Invite children to complete the sentence:* “I want to see __________.”

**Sing the goodbye song, CCS 612, “Go with Us, Lord,”** through once, and then insert each child’s name (for example, “Go with (child’s name), Lord...”)
Lesson Focus
To discover what it means to become a living sanctuary

Focus Scripture
Matthew 25:34–40

Objectives
The learners will...
- discover sanctuary can be a place and a feeling of love and safety.
- hear Jesus’ words about how he asks us to treat people.
- explore ways we can welcome and include all people.

Supplies
- Community of Christ Sings (CCS)
- Dictionary
- Recorded lively instrumental music and sound dock or CD player to play music
- Bible
- Markers, crayons, and pencils
- Poster board or large sheet of paper
- Recent headlines cut from newspapers, magazines, or online news sources where people may be hungry, thirsty, a stranger or immigrant, sick, in prison, or otherwise one of “the least of these” or from marginalized populations
- Optional for Young Children (ages 3–5): cut pictures from newspapers or magazines that illustrate people who are sick, lonely, immigrants, in prison, etc.
- Copy of the picture of the Temple in Independence, Missouri, on page 46
- Art supplies: paper, magazines or catalogs with pictures of diverse people, scissors, glue sticks
Gather (10 minutes)
Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson

Gather children with a greeting song and prayer.

Sing: CCS 273, "Draw the Circle Wide."
Ask children to stand in a circle and hold hands. While walking in a circle, sing the Refrain. If children are unfamiliar with the song, teach as a call and response. After singing one time, ask one child to stand in the center of the circle. Walking in a circle around the child, sing the Refrain again, this time replacing “no one stands alone” with “(Child’s name) is not alone, we’re standing side by side.” Open hands for child to rejoin the circle. Repeat until each child has had a chance to “stand alone” and be invited back into the circle.

Pray: Offer a brief prayer that we will learn today what it means to be included and safe in God’s love.

Ask: What did you find or see yesterday that was ordinary? How did you see God?

Engage
Invites exploration and interaction

Awaken to Living Sanctuary (3–5 minutes)
Have you heard the word “sanctuary?” Let children share their ideas about what sanctuary means. When we hear the word “sanctuary” we might think of the place in our church where we have worship services. This is one meaning of sanctuary.

Use the dictionary to look up the word “sanctuary.”
A sanctuary also means a safe place where we are loved and accepted and how we treat people so that they will feel safe and loved. Let’s “wake up” so we can be ready to learn about becoming a living sanctuary.
**Game: “Wake Up”** (3–5 minutes)
**Materials:** Recorded lively instrumental music and sound dock or CD player to play music

Ask children to lie on the ground and pretend to be asleep. Tell children that when the music is playing, they are to wake up and dance or move around, but must lie down and “go back to sleep” as soon as the music stops. Play and then pause the music. Have the intervals between waking and sleeping become shorter and shorter until children are “fully awake.” After the game, ask children to sit down. Tell children: Now that we are fully awake, we are ready to learn about how we can become a living sanctuary. Lead children in taking several deep breaths to calm down and prepare to hear the scripture passage.

**Focus Scripture Passage: Matthew 25:34-40** (10 minutes)

*Read the scripture passage as printed or use the paraphrase, depending on ages of children.*

*Ask reflection questions about the scripture passage (included in the paraphrased text below).*

Then the king will say to those at his right hand, “Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.” Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing?” And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?” And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”

**Paraphrase:**

Jesus said:  
One day I will tell you, “Come in! You are blessed by God! I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you gave me clothes. I was sick and you took care of me. I was in prison and you visited me.”

And you will say, “Jesus, when did we see you hungry and give you food, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and give you clothes? When did we see you sick or in prison and visited you?”  

Jesus answered, “I tell you, whatever you do for someone who is hungry, thirsty, lonely, cold, sick, or in prison, it is the same as doing it for me.”

**Ask:** What does Jesus want us to do? Why do you think Jesus says if we do these things it is the same as doing it for Jesus?

**Music:** CCS 280, “Lord, Prepare Me” (5 minutes)  
*Sing song one time. If children are unfamiliar with the song, teach as a call and response.*
This song asks Jesus to prepare each of us to be a living sanctuary. We are learning that sanctuary means a safe place where we are loved and accepted and how we treat people to help them feel loved and safe.

**Ask:** How can we prepare ourselves—or get ready—to be a living sanctuary?  
*Let children share their ideas. If they need help, suggestions might include: prayer, paying attention to people, noticing when people are sick, lonely, treated unkindly (such as a child who is left out or bullied at school, a neighbor who lives alone, a person from church who is sick, etc.)*

How can we do what Jesus wants us to do? *Let children share their ideas. If they need help, suggestions might include: stand up for someone, invite someone who is left out to our house to play, visit a neighbor with an adult, take a card to someone who is sick, etc.*

Tell children we will sing the song again, this time thinking about it as a prayer to Jesus.

**Object Lesson: Headlines** (10 minutes)  
*Children (ages 6–11)*  
*Before class, cut out headlines from newspapers, magazines, or online news sources of recent events where people may be hungry, thirsty, a stranger/immi-grant, sick, in prison, or otherwise one of “the least of these” or marginalized. Ask each child to read a headline. Glue the headlines on poster board or large paper. Ask children to think of ideas of how we can be living sanctuary—how we can love, serve, and welcome people. Let children write their ideas under the headlines or help them write their ideas.*

*Young Children (ages 3–5)*  
*Ask children if they have heard stories on the news or heard people talk at home or church about people who might be hungry, thirsty, a stranger or person from another country, in prison. Ask each child to draw a picture on the poster board to represent a person. Write their words on the poster board. Optional: cut pictures from newspapers or magazines that illustrate people who are sick, lonely, in prison, etc. Talk with the children about the pictures and glue on the poster board.*

**Respond**  
*Takes the learners from hearing to doing*

**The Temple** (3–5 minutes)  
*Copy the picture of the Temple on page 46 to show children.*  
*We are learning that sanctuary means a safe place where we are loved and accepted and how we treat people to help them feel loved and safe. This is especially important as we think about how we can invite people we know and people we don’t know to receive Christ’s peace. As we learned in Lesson 1, friends, family, neighbors, and strangers are all invited to come!*

The Temple in Independence, Missouri, is dedicated to the pursuit of peace and helping people learn how to become living sanctuaries. Ministries of the Temple, including the Daily Prayer for Peace, retreats, gatherings of people from around
the world (including World Conference), and disciple formation materials, like our Sunday school and reunion lessons, invite all people and congregations to learn about how to awaken to living sanctuary.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 163:8c or paraphrase (below):

Vital to this awakening is the understanding that the Temple calls the entire church to become a sanctuary of Christ's peace, where people from all nations, ethnicities, and life circumstances can be gathered into a spiritual home without dividing walls, as a fulfillment of the vision for which Jesus Christ sacrificed his life.

Paraphrase:
The Temple asks all of us to become a living sanctuary, so all people, no matter where they live, what they look like, or what is happening in their lives, can be loved, safe, and accepted. This is what Jesus came to teach us.

Game: Diversity Game (10 minutes)
Play this game to see how children in the class are the same and different.

We are all people, but we are different in many ways, from how we look to where we live to what we like to do. Ask children to stand when they hear something about themselves.

Suggestions:
- We all have an age. But we are all different ages. Who is (age) years old? (Include teacher ages)
- Some people have hair, but our hair is different. Who has curly hair? Straight hair? Long hair? Short hair? Brown hair? Do you know someone with no hair?
- We all have eyes, but our eyes are different colors. Who has blue eyes? Brown eyes? Etc.
- We all wear clothes, but we wear different colors. Who is wearing red? Blue? Green? Etc.
- We all wear shoes, but we have different kinds of shoes. Who is wearing flip-flops? Tennis shoes? Etc.
- We all play, but we like to play different things. Who likes to play soccer, ride bikes, play video games?
- Add other ideas as time allows.

Variation for Children ages 6–11:
Ask children to separate themselves into groups by one of the categories above (age, hair color, eye color, etc.). Observe if any of the groups only have one person. Ask how it feels to be the only one in a group. Give everyone a sticker except the one person. Ask how it feels to be left out. Ask the rest of the groups how it feels to leave one person out.

Ask: What does Jesus ask us to do? How can we include the person left out? Does the person have to become like us to be included?

Music: CCS 276, “All Are Welcome” (5 minutes)
Teach verse 1 as a call and response.
Story: *Whoever You Are* by Mem Fox (10 minutes)
Read the story.

**Ask:**
- How are people the same?
- How are people different?
- What do all people need?
- How can we act to be living sanctuaries to people who are hurt, lonely, in pain?

**Art: Sanctuary Collage** (10 minutes)

*Children ages 6–11:* Give each child a sheet of paper. Ask children to cut pictures from the magazines of diverse people (young, older, differing skin tones, nationalities, etc.) and glue onto the paper.

*Young Children ages 3–5:* Have magazine or catalog pictures pre-cut. Ask children to pick pictures to glue on their paper.

**Spiritual Practice: Holding in the Light** (5 minutes)

Light a candle or battery-operated candle. Ask children to think about people they know who may be sick or lonely, or to think about one of the situations from the headlines. Ask children to write the person’s name or the situation on a Post-it note or index card and place the prayer concerns around the candle. (Help children as needed to write their prayer concern). Ask children to silently hold the concern in the light of God’s love as they look at the candle. After a few minutes, say a brief prayer that we will all be aware of people who need God’s love and peace and that we will act as living sanctuaries.

Optional: Give each child a battery-operated tea candle for the prayer practice. Ask them to take the candle home to continue to pray for this concern and other needs.

**Journal question:** *How can we be a living sanctuary for someone?* (5 minutes)

**Snack Suggestion** (10 minutes)

Diversity Snack—Provide several varieties of the same kind of food Examples: apples—red, green, yellow, and dried apples; pretzels—pretzel sticks, sourdough nubs, pretzel twists, flavored pretzels (such as honey mustard); carrots—baby carrots, rainbow carrots, carrots with leaves attached, baby food or pureed carrots. Talk about variety among the same kinds of food, just like there is diversity among people, as children eat their snack.

Ask if a child (or children) would like to say a prayer thanking God for our snack. (If no one offers, say a brief prayer of thanks.)

**Send and Bless** (5 minutes)

**Send**

Explores how the lesson might be lived
Review that we have learned in this class that we are invited to have peace, follow Jesus, and share God’s love with all people. Give each child a sticker to share with someone when they leave the class.

**Bless**

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope

**Pray:** Read CCS 280, “Lord, Prepare Me” as a prayer, substituting “us” and “we’ll” for “me” and “I’ll.” After reading the song once, name each child: Lord, prepare (child’s name) to be a sanctuary.” After each child is named, say Amen.

**Sing the goodbye song, CCS 612, “Go with Us, Lord,”** through once, and then insert each child’s name (for example, “Go with child’s name, Lord…”)

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In class, children were introduced to simple spiritual practices. Spiritual practices are intentional and repetitive actions that cultivate new understandings and ways of living Christ’s mission. You are invited to continue these practices at home and explore other practices with your child to encourage deepening discipleship. Links to additional practices are included at the end of this resource.

**Journaling**

Encourage your child to add to the journal he or she started in class. Ask children to write down or draw pictures of ideas, questions, prayers, and significant experiences. Assist children in writing their words as needed. These early records of journeying with God will be appreciated as children become teenagers and adults.

*Extend the practice:*

Start a family spiritual journal. The journal can contain daily events, prayers, questions, and ideas as well as recording significant spiritual events, such as sacraments (baptisms, confirmations, blessings), congregational events, and family traditions. Write down the date and summary of the event. Ask children to be the scribe and write down or draw pictures of their understandings and feelings. Include photographs of sacraments, congregational events, important family events, and daily encounters, such as discovering God in nature. A family spiritual journal will become a treasured family keepsake.

**Walking in Nature**

Take time to walk outside together in your neighborhood, at a park, on a nature trail, etc. Invite children simply to pay attention to what they see and hear around them. Encourage awareness of the sacredness of creation. Invite children to write, draw pictures, or take photographs of what they see and hear in nature to include in their journal or family journal.

*Extend the practice:*

- Sacredness of Creation—Take along two bags when you go for a walk. In one bag, pick up trash. In the other bag, pick up objects that can be recycled.
- Walking the Neighborhood—Walk in your neighborhood or the neighborhood where your congregation is located. Pray together for people you see...
and people who live in the homes you pass. Risk a new relationship by saying hello or stopping to introduce yourself to a neighbor you may not know. Notice if there is anything in the neighborhood that might need attention or make the neighborhood unsafe, such as broken glass or a streetlight that is burned out. Work together to find a solution, such as bringing back a broom and dustpan to clean up broken glass, contacting the neighborhood association to repair a streetlight, etc. Notice if there is a neighbor who might need help (carrying groceries, yard work, etc.) and offer to help.

**Mission Prayer**
People throughout Community of Christ are using this prayer to listen for God and to follow Jesus in his mission. The Mission Prayer is currently translated in nine languages throughout the church.

God, where will your Spirit lead today?  
Help me be fully awake and ready to respond.  
Grant me courage to risk something new  
And become a blessing of your love and peace.  
Amen.

Post the Mission Prayer somewhere everyone in the house can see it (refrigerator, bathroom mirror, bulletin board). Make a practice of praying the Mission Prayer together each morning before everyone leaves home. Use the Mission Prayer to ask your child questions about their day at dinner or bedtime. Was there a situation that required courage? Was there a chance to risk something new? Was there an opportunity to share love? Where are you noticing the need to pray for peace (family, extended family, friends, neighbors, situations around the world)?

**Extend the practice:**
Order Mission Prayer cards from Herald House (pack of 25/US$8.95). Give a Mission Prayer card to each person to carry in his or her wallet, purse, planner, lunch box, or backpack. Share prayer cards with friends, other family members, or congregation members and invite them to join you in this prayer practice.  
[www.heraldhouse.org/custom/web/list.asp?k=mission+prayer+cards &searchaction.x=13&searchaction.y=0](http://www.heraldhouse.org/custom/web/list.asp?k=mission+prayer+cards &searchaction.x=13&searchaction.y=0)

**Dwelling in the Word**
Dwelling in the Word invites us to listen to God and one another to hear and discover God’s direction by reading scripture and asking questions. This is a practice based on our understanding that God continues to speak to us in the context of our day and calling. This practice is not about gaining information about scripture. Dwelling in the Word is about imagining how God is calling and sending us to embody and live the concerns and passion of Christ in our communities and the world.

Choose a passage of scripture. Read the scripture passage aloud and pause in silence for a moment or two. Read the scripture passage again, and then ask one of the following questions or pose your own questions for conversation:
• As you listen to the scripture passage, what do you think or feel?
• Is there a word or idea in the scripture passage that catches your attention?
• What do you think God is saying to you in this scripture passage?
• How does this scripture passage invite us as a family to live Christ’s mission? What can we do?

**Holding in the Light**

Designate a family prayer candle. Light the candle (or use a battery-operated candle). Ask each person to say or write down names of people or situations (such as family members, people at work or school, friends, neighbors, and local or world events and conflicts) that need prayer. Imagine holding the person or situation in the light of God’s love and peace. Say prayers aloud or hold the concerns silently.

**Additional resources**

Spiritual Practices for Children:

Spiritual Formation:

Leading Congregations in Mission Practices:
[https://missionalleaders.org/missional-practices/](https://missionalleaders.org/missional-practices/)
You are invited!

DATE:
TIME:
PLACE:

We are going to make new friends and have games, songs, stories, art, snacks, and more. Invite a friend!

“Jesus Christ, who shows us God’s peace, invites all to come...”
You are invited!

“Jesus Christ, who shows us God’s peace, invites all to come...”

WHAT: To have God’s peace and follow Jesus
WHEN: Every day!
WHERE: Everywhere!
WHY: Because God loves you and I love you!