



Community of Christ

# COMMUNITY OF CHRIST LESSONS

CHILDREN

1 December 2019 — 22 November 2020

# COMMUNITY OF CHRIST LESSONS

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

We invite you to use these lessons for your class, group, or congregation.

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

**Quick, easy:** The lessons are designed for approximately 45-minute class sessions with two to three pages of ideas, discussion starters, and activities. Additional preparation help may be found in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament* (with focus on the Gospel according to Matthew) and *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament* (semi-continuous readings).

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

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

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

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

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

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LESSON 1  
1 December 2019

# FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT (HOPE)

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Matthew 24:36–44

**Lesson Focus:** God is with us in this life and wants us to prepare for the kingdom of God on Earth.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- discuss what it means to be prepared.
- explore the difference between hope and worry.
- focus on the theme of hope for the first Sunday of Advent.

## Supplies

- Bible (NRSV)
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*
- Advent wreath with candles or a picture of an Advent wreath, matches or lighter
- Timer, a bag or suitcase, various items to pack (for example: clothing, toothpaste and toothbrush, books, snack items, or toys)
- Large sheets of newsprint, markers or crayons
- Empty glass jars of any size (one for each child), various colors of tissue paper, glue, paintbrushes, newspaper to cover work area, paper cups or plates for glue, battery-operated votive candles

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 24:36–44 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 18, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Greet children by name and invite them into the classroom. Show the class an Advent wreath (or a picture of an Advent wreath). Share with the class that today is the first Sunday of Advent and on this Sunday we focus on the theme of hope. Explain there are five candles in an Advent wreath, one for each of the four Sundays before Christmas and one for Christmas Day. Each Sunday we will add the light of one more candle until all five are lit on Christmas Day. Light the first candle in the wreath together and echo-sing verse one of “Hope Is a Light” CCS 398.

Hope is a light,

(Hope is a light.)

Hope is a light to show the way,

(Hope is a light to show the way.)

Light the candle of hope,  
(Light the candle of hope.)

—Daniel Charles Damon, © 2007 Hope Publishing Company

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Have children imagine they are getting ready to go on a trip. Ask them what they might pack in their bags or suitcases. Is there anything they absolutely could not leave behind? What items could they leave out?

Invite the class to play the packing game. Before class set out a bag or suitcase and various items to pack. Have children take turns packing the bag, setting the timer before each child begins. For each child, pick a different amount of time. For example, give the first child two minutes, the second child 30 seconds, and the third child 90 seconds. Do not tell them how much time they will have; they must stop packing when the timer rings. Allow each child to have at least one opportunity to pack the bag.

Discuss with the class how it felt not knowing how much time they would have. Did they find it frustrating? What was difficult about it? Did they pack everything they needed in the time allowed? How did they decide what to pack and what to leave out?

Today's scripture passage reminds us to prepare for Jesus, here and now, by the way we live and the choices we make.

Read Matthew 24:36–44. What did the scripture passage say we needed to prepare for? (the coming of Jesus)

**Note:** When reading this passage with children, they may focus on the idea that some people will be left behind and some will be taken away. Such mistaken theology can be frightening to young children. Older children may know this idea from popular culture as the Rapture. Community of Christ theology of scripture understands the ideas presented by the Rapture or the popular series of books and movies entitled *Left Behind* are without sound theological basis. Community of Christ theology supports the idea that what matters most is the mission of Christ—building of the kingdom of God on Earth in this life. Older children are able to explore this idea more deeply.

There are many ways we prepare to meet Jesus and share his love with others. Today we are going to explore some of those ways.

Lay a long sheet of newsprint on the floor for each child. Have the children choose partners. Children take turns lying on their sheets of newsprint while their partners trace their outlines on the paper. Working together, have them write on their body outlines ways they can prepare to meet and share Jesus. For example, on the head they might write “study the Bible” or “read good books.” For the eyes they might write “watching positive movies” or “look for opportunities to help others.” For the hands they might write something about planting flowers for an elderly neighbor or playing the piano. For the feet, they might write about joining a walk for charity or collecting food for a local food bank. When their outlines are filled in with ideas, have the children share a few ideas with the class.

**Note:** If large sheets of newsprint are not available, each child could draw an outline of a person on a single sheet of paper, or you could create one large outline and complete it as a class. You could also name a body part and have the children act out ways to prepare each part instead of writing the ideas down.

# 3 RESPOND

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

In Jesus' time, people expected the Messiah would come soon to save them from difficulties they faced each day. They lived in fear of what others might do to them. They had hope the Messiah would deliver them from hardship at any moment. They spent more time focused on the future than on what they could do to prepare for Jesus in the present.

This is the first Sunday of Advent. Advent is a special time of waiting for Jesus' birth. We live in hope and believe that Jesus came to be with us on Earth.

Sometimes we spend so much time and energy worrying about all that can go wrong in our lives (like making a mistake, getting bad grades, or getting into an accident) that we forget to live in hope. What is something that worries you? What is something that makes you feel hopeful?

Today we are going to talk about our worries and brainstorm ways to find hope amid those worries.

Pass out a paper and pen or pencil to each child (or do the activity together as a class on a large sheet of paper or a chalkboard). Make two columns. Label the first column WORRIES and the second column HOPES. Write something in the WORRIES column that you worry about or are afraid of. In the column labeled HOPES, write something that would ease your worry. An example of a worry might be sleeping in the dark. A matching hope might be to have an adult check in on you or have a nightlight. Another example of a worry might be failing a math test. The hope could be that it is an opportunity to learn from mistakes and do better next time. Fill each column with several examples. Ask the children the following:

- What was difficult about this activity?
- Could you find hope for each item you listed in the WORRIES column?
- With whom could you share your worries and fears?
- Who helps you feel hope?

Today we are going to make a lantern to remind us that even though our worries and fears cause us to feel we are in the dark, our hope is in the light of Jesus.

Give an empty glass jar of any size to each child. Pass out various colors of tissue paper, glue, and clean paintbrushes. Have children tear the tissue paper into shapes of various sizes. Lay pieces of paper on the outside the jars and coat them thoroughly with glue using paintbrushes. When the surface of the jar is completely covered, place a battery-operated votive candle inside the jar and light.



**Note:** An alternate object lesson is to have each child create a picture of a light source like a lantern, a flashlight, or a candle. The idea is to represent the light of hope.

# 4 SEND

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

Gather in a circle. Sing together “If You’re Ready to Serve Jesus” to the tune of “If You’re Happy and You Know It.” (Tune is found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=71hqRT9U0wq>.)

If you’re ready to serve Jesus, clap your hands.  
If you’re ready to serve Jesus, clap your hands.  
If you’re ready to serve Jesus, you will live in hope that frees us.  
If you’re ready to serve Jesus, clap your hands.

If you’re ready to serve Jesus, stomp your feet...

If you’re ready to serve Jesus, shout, “Amen”...

If you’re ready to serve Jesus, do all three...

Create a living Advent wreath by having the students sit in a circle and take turns sharing how they can represent the hope of Jesus in the coming week.

# 5 BLESS

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

Close with the following prayer:

Dear God,  
Help us to be ready to serve you,  
And to live in hope each day.  
Amen.

LESSON 2  
8 December 2019

# SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (PEACE)

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Isaiah 11:1–10

**Lesson Focus:** Jesus' birth brings the promise of peace, or God's Shalom. When we mirror God's love and peace to others we help build Shalom here on Earth.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- explore the examples of peace mentioned in the scripture passage.
- identify ways Community of Christ focuses on peace.
- brainstorm and discuss how to pursue peace by showing compassion.

## Supplies

- Bible (NRSV) or *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- Edward Hicks' painting of the Peaceable Kingdom, which can be downloaded in different sizes from the Vanderbilt Divinity School library: <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=53085>
- A Community of Christ church seal, either a physical sculpture or a picture
- Difficult situation charade cards (end of lesson)
- Advent wreath, candle for hope, and candle for peace
- Butcher paper and marker or dry erase board and marker
- Paper and crayons or markers
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Isaiah 11:1–10 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament*, pp. 20–21, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge,  
prepares and motivates for lesson

*(15% of total lesson time)*

Greet students by name and remind them that last Sunday was the first Sunday of Advent—the Sunday of *hope*. Invite students to share with the class one time they felt hope over the last week or one time they helped someone else feel hopeful.

Share with the class that this week they will add another candle to the Advent wreath, the candle of peace. Explain that the coming of Jesus' birth is a promise of peace here on Earth—God's shalom.

As you add the peace candle to your wreath, have the class echo-sing stanza two of “Hope Is a Light” CCS 398. Sing it through several times.

Peace is a prayer,  
(peace is a prayer.)  
Peace is a prayer that starts with me,  
(Peace is a prayer that starts with me.)  
Light the candle of peace,  
(Light the candle of peace.)

—Daniel Charles Damon © 2007 Hope Publishing Company

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Show the class a picture of Edward Hicks’ painting of the Peaceable Kingdom. Ask the students to look at the painting and then share their observations. Help them notice the animals standing with each other that would normally be predator-prey. Tell them that when this painting was created around 1834, Native Americans and white settlers were at war. Therefore the people sitting together in the background also represent groups that do not get along.

**Ask:** Where do you see examples of peace in this picture? Write their responses under the word “PEACE” on a piece of butcher paper or white board.

**Say:** In today’s scripture we will learn about God’s vision for peace.

Read together Isaiah 11:1–10, or “God’s Beautiful Dream” from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, pp. 21–23.

**Ask:** What is mentioned in the scripture story that we need to add to our ideas of peace? (Add the additional ideas to the list on the butcher paper or dry erase board.) What other examples can you think of? (Examples include sun and snowman, hunter and deer, sports opponents, fire and water, etc.)

Instruct the children to draw their own version of the Peaceable Kingdom where everyone and everything can live peaceably together in God’s Shalom. They can use examples on your class list or make up their own.

## 3 RESPOND

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

If possible, locate and visit a Community of Christ church seal in your building. If one is not available, many pictures are available at the [www.CofChrist.org](http://www.CofChrist.org). Ask the children what they notice about the church seal. (It has the same lion, lamb, and young child mentioned in the Isaiah scripture.)

**Say:** Peace, or God’s shalom, is very important in Community of Christ. You can see it shown on the church seal, or the symbol of our church. It is mentioned in our mission statement, which is the formal statement of our values: “We proclaim Jesus Christ and promote communities of joy, hope, love, and peace.” Pursuit of Peace is included as one of our eight Enduring Principles, which are what we will stand for forever. Pursue Peace on Earth is one of our five Mission Initiatives, overall missional goals for our church.



- What does *Pursuit of Peace* mean to you?

**Say:** In Edward Hicks' painting and in our Peaceable Kingdom drawings we see examples of peace meaning getting along with others. But shalom means more than the absence of fighting.

- What are some other examples of peace or where do you see a need for peace?

God created us and the world with love and compassion so we can share that love and compassion with others. We can help create shalom.

- What does compassion mean? (To care about other people and creation.) "Because we care [about] others, we may notice something they need and then we can help" (*Of Water and Spirit*, Herald Publishing House, p. 32).

Have students take turn acting out through charades the disappointing situations at the end of the lesson. Once the class guesses what situation the child is acting out, brainstorm together how they could react if they see something like that happen. Repeat until all children have had a chance to act, or as time allows. Students can make up their own scenarios if they wish.

## 4 SEND

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

Have students take turns reading the following scriptures:

- Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled. Do not be afraid" (John 14:27).
- Jesus also said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9).
- Let the peace that Christ gives control your thinking. You were all called together in one body to have peace (Colossians 3:15).
- And God's peace will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. The peace that God gives is so great that we cannot understand it (Philippians 4:7).
- So let us try to do what makes peace and helps one another (Romans 14:19).

Create a living Advent wreath by having the students sit in a circle and take turns sharing how they can represent the peace of Jesus in the coming week.

## 5 BLESS

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

Sing stanza one of "Prayer of Peace" CCS 164.

Peace before us, peace behind us, peace under our feet.

Peace within us, peace over us, let all around us be peace.

—David Haas, © 1987 GIA. Publications, Inc.

# Difficult Situation Charades

<p>You fell on the playground and skinned your knee.</p>	<p>You didn't understand your school work and you failed a test.</p>
<p>You forgot your sack lunch or lunch money.</p>	<p>You are being teased by another student at school.</p>
<p>You missed a shot that would have made your team win the game.</p>	<p>You spilled your food all over yourself, ruining your brand-new shirt.</p>
<p>You weren't invited to a birthday party that most of your friends are attending.</p>	<p>You were placed in a different class from your friends who have the same teacher.</p>
<p>You forgot to do your chores and consequently are not able to attend an event.</p>	<p>You wrecked your bicycle and now you can't ride it.</p>

## LESSON 3

15 December 2019

# THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (JOY)

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Isaiah 35:1–10

**Lesson Focus:** God promises transformation and renewal through discipleship.

### Objectives

*The learners will...*

- explore the transformations mentioned in the Isaiah scripture passage.
- discuss how we can be transformed.
- brainstorm ways to use our talents to serve others as disciples.

### Supplies

- Isaiah 35:1–10, cut into sections (see the Engage section)
- *The Curious Garden* by Peter Brown, (Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2009, ISBN-13: 978-0316015479)
- Advent wreath, candle for hope, candle for peace, and candle for joy
- Paper and crayons or markers
- Small (sticky-note size) piece of colored paper and a pen for each student
- A shallow dish filled with water
- Large sheet of paper, paint, and brushes or construction paper, markers or crayons, pens or pencils
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Isaiah 35:1–10 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament*, pp. 22–23, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Greet students by name and remind them we are currently celebrating Advent. The past two Sundays we focused on *hope* and *peace*. Invite students to share with the class one time they were able to share peace with others over the last week.

Share with the class that this week they will add another candle to the Advent wreath, the candle of *joy*. Explain that this candle represents the joy people felt knowing Christ was born.

As you add the joy candle to your wreath, have the class echo-sing stanza three of “Hope Is a Light” CCS 398. Sing it through several times.

Joy is a song. (Joy is a song.)  
Joy is a song for all to sing. (Joy is a song for all to sing.)  
Light the candle of joy. (Light the candle of joy.)

—Daniel Charles Damon, © 2007 Hope Publishing Company

## 2

### ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Divide and cut the text of Isaiah 35:1–10 into sections (end of lesson). The size and number of sections can be determined by your class size, but an example might be:

The desert and dry land will become happy.  
The desert will be glad and will produce flowers.  
Like a flower, it will have many blooms.  
It will show its happiness, as if it is shouting with joy.  
It will be beautiful like the forest of Lebanon.  
It will be as beautiful as the hill of Carmel and the Plain of Sharon.  
All people will see the glory of the Lord.  
They will see the splendor of our God.

—Isaiah 35:1–2

Distribute a scripture section and blank paper and crayons or markers to each student. Instruct them to read their portion of scripture and create a before-and-after drawing on paper. When the children are finished invite them to share their pictures with the class and summarize their scripture selection.

**Say:** When this passage was written the Jewish people were being held captive in Babylon. They were imprisoned against their will. Life was not wonderful. However the scripture in Isaiah promised that with God all “creation will blossom like a luxurious garden.” “God will be with” those “who are weak, oppressed and fearful ... to save and comfort them.” “A clear, [safe,] and inviting road will point the way back home for all the exiles.” The exiled Jews “longed to return to their own land [and] found this image ... comforting. They rejoiced to think that soon they would be released from captivity... Once they returned home, Jerusalem would rise again, the garden would blossom, and the nation would be great” (*Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament, p. 22*)

Give each child a small piece of colored paper, sticky-note size will work. You may choose to let students cut out their own flower shape or do so yourself before class. Instruct the students to write a joy they have in the middle of the flower. Once they are finished, have them fold the flower petals into the middle, covering their words. Place all the flowers like lily pads in a shallow dish of water. Wait and watch as the flowers open and reveal the joys of your class.

**Say:** Throughout time readers have found comfort in God’s promises depicted in this scripture from Isaiah. We wait for the beautiful flowers to be opened by God. This week and this Advent season we share in the “joyous anticipation of the coming Messiah” as “we look toward our own celebration of the birth of Jesus. ...And we hope for the day of healing and renewal, promised so long ago” (*Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament, p. 22*).

# 3 RESPOND

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

Read *The Curious Garden* by Peter Brown. If the book is not available, there are video recordings available on YouTube.

**Ask:** Where did you see transformation in this story? What impact did Liam have on the garden? On the city? On other people? Besides seeds turning into plants like in the story, can you think of other things that transform? (Transformer toys, caterpillars into butterflies, water into ice, etc.) Do you think you can be transformed?

**Say:** “If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation...everything has become new!” (2 Corinthians 5:17). “When you live in sacred community as Christ’s new creation, you will become who you were called to be” (Doctrine and Covenants 164:9b, adapted). We each have our own gifts, talents, and abilities to offer. Following Christ as a disciple compels us to use these gifts to serve others. By accepting God’s love we begin to “think in new ways, see the world with new eyes, make better decisions about our lives, and be open to endless opportunities.” Through Jesus we are transformed into new creatures (*Of Water and Spirit*, pp. 86–87).

Together as a class create a handprint garden on a large sheet of paper. Students can use paint to place their handprint on the paper as a flower and then use crayons, markers, or paint to add stems and leaves. Alternatively they can cut a handprint out of construction paper and glue it to the paper. Once all the flowers are created they should form a flower garden. Instruct the students to write on or next to their flower a gift or ability they have that they can use to serve others (friendly children can greet a new student at school, musical students can play or sing for church, students who enjoy young children can help young families with their children at church, etc.).

**Say:** Just like Liam started with a few plants, we can do small things that make a big difference. Eventually our efforts will grow and, combined with other people in our sacred community, our world will be transformed into a beautiful garden of God’s love.

# 4 SEND

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

Have students take turns reading lines or stanzas of “In the Bulb There Is a Flower” CCS 561.

Create a living Advent wreath by having the students sit in a circle and take turns sharing how they can represent the joy of Jesus in the coming week.

# 5 BLESS

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

Offer a prayer thanking God for the joys in our lives, the gift of God’s son Jesus, and the opportunity to be part of a greater community by serving each other with our gifts.

**Isaiah 35:1–10**

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;  
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly,  
and rejoice with joy and singing.  
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,  
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.  
They shall see the glory of the LORD,  
the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weak hands,  
and make firm the feeble knees.  
Say to those who are of a fearful heart,  
'Be strong, do not fear!  
Here is your God.  
He will come with vengeance,  
with terrible recompense.  
He will come and save you.'

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;  
then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,  
and streams in the desert;  
the burning sand shall become a pool,  
and the thirsty ground springs of water;  
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,  
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

A highway shall be there,  
and it shall be called the Holy Way;  
the unclean shall not travel on it,  
but it shall be for God's people;  
no traveller, not even fools, shall go astray.  
No lion shall be there,  
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;  
they shall not be found there,  
but the redeemed shall walk there.  
And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,  
and come to Zion with singing;  
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;  
they shall obtain joy and gladness,  
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

## LESSON 4

22 December 2019

# FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Isaiah 7:10–16

**Lesson Focus:** God wants relationship with all creation and promises to be with us always—both in good times and in bad. We can share this unconditional love with others.

### Objectives

*The learners will...*

- discover how God interacted with an Old Testament king.
- discuss how God loves and is with us all the time—when we are both happy and sad.
- identify what our sacred story is.
- brainstorm ways to share the love of God with others.

### Supplies

- Video about King Ahaz: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ixvuzyyPPiA>
- Bible, NRSV recommended
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)* one for each student
- Baby name meaning books or access to internet search engines
- Advent wreath, candle for hope, candle for peace, candle for joy, and candle for love
- Copies of the symbols quiz (end of the lesson)
- Poster paper and marker or dry erase board
- Nametag stickers and markers for each student

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Isaiah 7:10–16 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament*, pp. 24–25, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Greet students by name and remind them that we are currently celebrating Advent. We have focused on hope, peace, and joy. Invite students to share with the class one time they were able to share joy with others over the last week.

Share with the class that this week they will add the last candle to the Advent wreath, the candle of love. Explain that this candle represents the love that Jesus brings into our lives.

As you add the love candle to your wreath, echo-sing verse four of “Hope Is a Light” CCS 398. Sing it through several times.

Love is a gift,  
(Love is a gift.)  
Love is a gift our hearts can give,  
(Love is a gift our hearts can give.)  
Light the candle of love,  
(Light the candle of love.)

—Daniel Charles Damon, © 2007 Hope Publishing Company

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

**Say:** Today's scripture is about King Ahaz. Before we read the scripture, we need to learn more about this king and what was going on during his reign.

Show this video King Ahaz by gtasoul found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ixvuzyPPiIA>. Alternatively, you can summarize the context described in the first half of the second paragraph of "Exploring the Scripture" for Isaiah 7:10-16 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament*, p.24. If you choose to show the video, briefly review the information and answer any questions the students may have.

Give each student a copy of the Symbols Quiz from the end of this lesson. Allow time for students to identify each symbol, and then go over the answers as a class.

**Say:** Symbols or signs can communicate information to us very quickly. They can tell us where we need to go, identify what something is, give us direction on what to do, or make it easier to write down information quickly. In our scripture story, King Ahaz does not believe in God. The Prophet Isaiah encourages Ahaz to ask God for a sign so that the King may know the truth about God. But Ahaz refuses!

Ask a child to read Isaiah 7:10–12.

<sup>10</sup>Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, <sup>11</sup>Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol [the place where the dead are] or high as heaven. <sup>12</sup>But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.

**Announce to the class,** "I am Isaiah. You need to ask God for a sign and believe in God!" Have the students emphatically shout, "NO!" Repeat this several times.

**Say:** Luckily Isaiah did not give up on Ahaz. He gave the King a prophesy (told the future). There are some confusing lines in the scripture. When Isaiah mentions a baby eating milk curds and honey, it means the child is old enough to eat regular food. Similarly a child who knows what is good and what is evil is old enough to understand right from wrong. He used these phrases to give a timeline to his prophesy. (*Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament*, p. 24)

Ask another child to read Isaiah 7:13–16.

<sup>13</sup>Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? <sup>14</sup>Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. <sup>15</sup>He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. <sup>16</sup>For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.



**Say:** In the end Isaiah proved to be right. Isaiah said in the scripture, "...the land before whose two kings you are in dread [Israel and Aram] will be deserted." The large country of Assyria conquered the two smaller countries that were threatening Ahaz. But the image of a baby was also very symbolic. Birth symbolized life and hope. Through God, Isaiah promised Ahaz that he would have hope for a future. But Ahaz needed to understand it was God's future. (*Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament, p. 24*)

## 3 RESPOND

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

**Say:** This short scripture story is part of the greater sacred story. It is another example of God's reconciling work in the world. Through stories like these we can learn about God's relationship to people and all creation. (For more about sacred story, see *Of Water and Spirit, Facilitator Guide, p. 18*) What can we learn about God through the story of King Ahaz? (Listen to responses.) Through the prophet Isaiah, God reached out to Ahaz to tell him two things. First, God exists; second, God is here for Ahaz, even when things look difficult.

**Say:** Do you remember what name Isaiah said the pregnant woman would give to her new baby? (Immanuel) There is a very common Christmas hymn that is about the coming of Immanuel.

Give a *Community of Christ Sings* hymnal to each student. Turn to "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" CCS 394 and instruct them to read the verses, paying close attention to the descriptions of the atmosphere and emotions. Have them list specific words or phrase that describe sad, negative situations (captive, lonely, quarrels, gloomy, and so on). Write a list on butcher paper or a dry erase board. Smaller classes may read the hymn together while larger classes may divide the verses among students or groups.

**Say:** The verses of this song describe some pretty bad feelings or experiences. But what does the chorus say? (Rejoice! Emmanuel is here!)

**Say:** God loves us unconditionally, which means God loves us no matter what. In other words, God loves and rejoices with us when we are happy, and God loves and comforts us when we are sad. But sometimes it is difficult to feel God's presence when we feel like things are going badly.

Help the class brainstorm times when they feel sad or bad. Then brainstorm ways they can feel God during those times. For example, you feel sad when a pet or loved one dies, but you are comforted by hugs from family or friends.

## 4 SEND

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

**Say:** In today's sacred story, Isaiah told of a baby who would be named Immanuel, which means "God with us." Does anyone know what their name means? (Listen to responses.)

Provide baby name books or internet search engines for students to look up the meaning of their name. Pass out nametag stickers and have the students write the meaning of their name on it before affixing it to the front of their shirts.

**Say:** The sacred story of God continues today. We each experience God in various ways throughout our life. We each have the ability to share the story of God with others. Our names may not mean "God with us" like Jesus' name does, but as disciples we can still demonstrate the love of God in our daily actions.

Create a living Advent wreath by having the students sit in a circle and take turns sharing how they can represent the love of Jesus in the coming week.



## **BLESS**

Time of prayer, praise,  
blessing, and hope

*(5% of lesson time)*


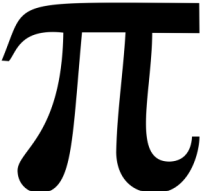

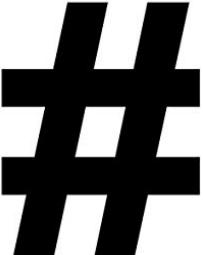



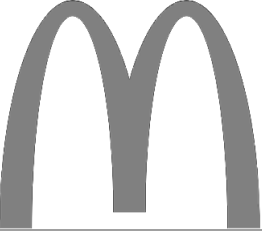


As a closing prayer, read together verse three of “Lord, Lead Me by Your Spirit” CCS 209.

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### **Symbols Quiz – Answers**

1. At
2. Pi (approximately 3.14159)
3. Handicapped
4. Pound / hashtag
5. Walk
6. Rest (in music)
7. Percent
8. McDonald's
9. Parking area
10. Recycle

# Symbols Quiz

1. 	2. 
3. 	4. 
5. 	6. 
7. 	8. 
9. 	10. 

LESSON 5  
29 December 2019

# FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Matthew 2:13–23

**Lesson Focus:** We are called to listen for what God is asking us to do.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- read about Joseph's dream.
- engage in a listening object lesson.
- discuss what they can do to help build God's kingdom on Earth in the coming year.

## Supplies

- Bible (NRSV)
- *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*
- Assorted instruments, noisemakers, or recorded music
- Paper, crayons or markers

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Matthew 2:13–23 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, pp. 26–27, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Greet students and invite them to sing "Listen in the Silence" CCS 153 three times through. Invite students to sit in a circle and turn to a partner. Have partners take turns telling three facts about themselves. After one partner shares, the other partner then repeats the three facts he or she heard. Have partners trade roles and repeat.

Ask the students to share what was difficult and what was easy about the activity.

Repeat activity adding extra background noise (music playing, banging on percussion instruments, or other noisemaking). After the students learn and repeat three new facts about their partners, ask them to share what was difficult or easy about the object lesson this time. Did they have to listen more closely to one another? Could they hear their partners the first time or did they have to say it more than once?

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

After Jesus was born, his parents stayed in Bethlehem for a while. They planned to return to their home in Galilee after Jesus was a bit older. In a far-off country, a group of wise men (magi) saw a bright star shining in the sky. They were sure that star meant someone important had been born, so they packed their belongings and traveled to see where the star led. They stopped in Jerusalem to ask King Herod if he knew where this new king was. Herod learned the baby might be nearby in Bethlehem and became afraid. What if this new king tried to take his place as king? The wise men went on to see baby Jesus but promised to let Herod know where they found the baby.

What can you tell me about the wise men who came to visit baby Jesus? What did they bring to him? After they had visited Jesus, one of them had a dream that Herod was going to try to kill the baby. So they did not go back to tell Herod where the baby was and went home another way.

Today's scripture passage is about a time when Joseph, like the wise men, had to listen carefully to learn what God wanted him to do to protect his family.

Read Matthew 2:13–23 from the NRSV or “Run Away from King Herod” from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, pp. 40–41.

### Ask:

- Who warned Joseph that his family was in danger? (an angel)
- How did the angel visit Joseph? (in a dream)
- Why did the family need to run away to Egypt? (King Herod wanted to kill Jesus)
- Who visited Joseph after Herod died? (an angel in another dream)
- Where did they go when they left Egypt? (Galilee)

When Mary, Joseph, and Jesus were forced to leave their home and go to another country, they became what we call refugees. A refugee is someone who goes to live in a foreign country because it is unsafe for them to live in their country. Even today millions of people are refugees. They often have to live with little food and water around many strangers. Close your eyes and imagine what that would feel like. Would you feel safe? What would you miss about your home if you had to leave today? What would you take with you if you could only take what you could carry in a small bag? Who would you miss most?

It must have been strange and scary for Jesus' family to leave all their friends and family and move to a country where they were strangers. Have you ever moved to a different place? How did you feel?

**Note:** If you have an older group of children or want to go deeper, invite the children to research more about refugees in magazines, the newspaper, or on the Internet. One site that offers information about and pictures of refugee children is <https://www.savethechildren.org/us/what-we-do/emergency-response>. You could also search “refugee children” for more information and pictures.

## 3 RESPOND

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

In our scripture passage today, God communicated with Joseph in a special way—through dreams. Tell about a dream you have had. Was it scary? Was it funny? Did it feel real?

Dreams can be funny or scary. They can be realistic or silly. God has a dream for us—to create God’s shalom (God’s kingdom on Earth). What do you think that might look like? What can you do to find out what God’s kingdom will be like?

In Community of Christ, we believe that our choices and the way we live our lives help create God’s kingdom (shalom) here on Earth. We do this by acting in ways that promote justice, wholeness, and peace for every person. When people disagree, we try to help them reconcile with each other and try to treat every person as a child of God who is worthwhile and sacred.

Write the word “shalom” at the top of the chalkboard or a large piece of paper. Brainstorm with the class what shalom looks like and list ideas on your paper. These might include no war, no bullies, everyone is safe, people take care of one another, or everyone has enough to eat and drink.

Pass out a piece of paper and markers or crayons to each student. Ask them about their dream for the world. Have them draw how they will help make that dream of shalom come true.

# 4

## SEND

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

Gather in a circle with the pictures the children created. Go around the circle and have each child share about their pictures and one way they will work this week to help God’s vision of shalom become real.

Sing together the first verse of “Jesus Is Calling” CCS 578. Have children brainstorm ideas for motions to the song as time allows. An alternate song is “Peace, Salaam, Shalom” CCS 310.

# 5

## BLESS

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

Close by reciting the Mission Prayer together. Encourage children to create motions for each line of the 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.

LESSON 6  
5 January 2019

# SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

**Focus Scripture Passage:** John 1:1–18

**Lesson Focus:** God promises us unconditional love and we can choose to share that love with others.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- discuss the concepts of “word” and “promise.”
- interact with the scripture passage.
- identify times when they received unconditional love from an individual and from God.
- brainstorm ways to spread and share the unconditional love we receive from God.

## Supplies

- Pictures at the end of the lesson
- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*
- Candy or small treats, enough for two per student
- Soft ball
- Butcher paper and crayons or markers
- Two sheets of paper per student
- Pens or pencils
- Opaque object (book), clear object (glass), mirror, flashlight
- Candles for each student and lighter or matches

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for John 1:1–18 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 28, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge,  
prepares and motivates for lesson

*(15% of total lesson time)*

Before class begins place roughly one piece of candy or small treat per student on the table or somewhere students will easily spot it. As students enter greet them and say, “Please don’t eat the treat. I give you my word that you can trust me.”

Once everyone has gathered, show students the pictures found at the end of this lesson and for each one ask, “What is going to happen?” (The athletes are going to race; someone is going to bake cookies;

two people are going to play a game of chess; someone is going to draw and color a picture.) As you go or at the end ask, “How do you know what is going to happen? (Listen to responses.) There are clues in each picture—the athletes are in a starting stance on a track; someone gathered the baking supplies; someone set up the chess pieces; a person has a marker posed ready to draw.”

**Say:** Today’s scripture discusses two different beginnings—“in *the* beginning” and the beginning before Jesus was on Earth. As we read the scripture I want you to listen for clues to tell you what will happen in these beginnings.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

**Say:** Thank you for waiting patiently for the treats. You may each have one, and because you were so patient I have another piece for each of you. (Distribute the treats.) Was it worth it to wait? (Listen to responses.) Did I keep my word? (Listen to responses.)

**Ask:**

- What is my “word”? (It’s a promise; it’s the trust you place in me.)
- What promise(s) have you made with or to others?
- What promise(s) have you kept?
- What promise(s) have you broken?
- Who do you think is the best at keeping promises?

**Say:** Today’s scripture talks about God’s word and God’s promise to us.

Practice motions with the students:

- **Light:** hold your arms in the air above your head like sunrays
- **World:** hold hands thumbs-together palms down at chest-level, move hands out and around like a ball to meet again pinky-fingers-together, palms-up slightly lower than you started (video: <https://www.handspeak.com/word/search/index.php?id=2427>)
- **God:** hold your right hand open palm facing left, swing your hand slightly above your head and down about an inch (video: <https://www.handspeak.com/word/search/index.php?id=922>) \*Briefly discuss there are other words used to refer to God, such as the “One.”

Read John 1:1–18. As students listen to the scripture have them make the motions for the words “light,” “world,” and “God.” Before you read, hand one student a ball. Every time they hear you read “word,” have them gently toss or pass the ball to another student.

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the **Word**, and the **Word** was with **God**, and the **Word** was **God**. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with **God**. <sup>3</sup>All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup>in him was life, and the life was the **light** of all people. <sup>5</sup>The **light** shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from **God**, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify to the **light**, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the **light**, but he came to testify to the **light**. <sup>9</sup>The true **light**, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the **world**.

<sup>10</sup>He was in the **world**, and the **world** came into being through him; yet the **world** did not know him. <sup>11</sup>He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him.

<sup>12</sup>But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become



children of **God**,<sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of **God**.

<sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup>(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") <sup>16</sup>From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup>The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has ever seen **God**. It is **God** the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

On a large piece of butcher paper write "WORD" in large block letters. Using crayons or markers, have students write inside the letters any thoughts they had about the scripture (God makes promises to us) or words and phrases in the scripture that stuck out to them about the Word ("grace and truth", "lived among us"). You may want to read the scripture again as needed.

## 3 RESPOND

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

**Say:** God is the best at keeping a promise, but what exactly is God's promise? (Listen to responses.) God promises to love us without reservation or condition—that means God will love us no matter what.

Give each child two pieces of paper. Ask them to think about a person in their life who loved them no matter what or who treated them with kindness even when they didn't necessarily deserve it. Maybe a teacher went out of his way to help with homework, or a neighbor easily forgave them for breaking her window. After they have a person in mind, instruct them to write a short note to that person thanking them for their love. This can be done even if the person is no longer living or part of the student's life.

As they finish their letters, ask them to think of a time that they remembered God loves them even if they didn't feel very loveable. Maybe they broke a sibling's toy or cheated on a test and they knew God wants them to make better choices, but still loves them. Once they have a situation in mind they can write another note expressing their thanks to God for unconditional love.

**Say:** Verses 12 and 13 in the scripture passage talk about people becoming "children of God." What does that mean? (Listen to responses.) We each have earthly parents so God is not literally listed on our birth certificate. But to become a child of God means we are all one people together in Christ. We are not limited by what society expects us to be or do; we are not held back by situations in our lives; we are no longer divided into groups. All of us are children of God. We know and feel God's unconditional love...and we share this unconditional love with others, just like those people in our letters shared unconditional love with us.

## 4 SEND

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

**Say:** What holiday did we just celebrate? (Christmas) Christmas is a very exciting time in church because we often decorate the building, sing special songs, and read or act out Jesus' birth story. But guess what—the excitement doesn't end there! So what do we do now that the decorations are put away and we are done practicing for our pageant?

**Say:** I want you to repeat these three R's after me: Reject (reject), Receive (receive), and Reflect (reflect). [From "Jesus and the Three R's" at [https://sermons4kids.com/jesus\\_and\\_the\\_three\\_Rs.htm](https://sermons4kids.com/jesus_and_the_three_Rs.htm). Ideas used with permission.]

When Jesus started to teach about God's love and showed people how to love unconditionally, not everyone liked what Jesus had to say. They *rejected* Jesus' teachings for many reasons, such as it took power away from those who had unfair control over the people. On the other hand, many people believed what Jesus said and tried to learn more about God. They *received* Jesus' love and understanding.

Ask a student to read John 1:6–9.

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

**Say:** John understood very early what Jesus stood for and was able to go ahead of Jesus to tell people to get ready for Jesus. He *reflected* Jesus' love by sharing it with others.

Hand one student an opaque object such as a book, a second student a clear object such as glass, and a third student a mirror. Turn on a flashlight.

Shine the flashlight at the opaque object and say, "This object is like the people who rejected Jesus' teachings. They were more concerned with power than understanding God's unconditional love."

Shine the flashlight at the clear object and say, "This object is like the people who received Jesus' message. They were eager to learn more about God's unconditional love and they understood God's love is for everyone."

Shine the flashlight at the mirror so it reflects back at you. **Say:** "This mirror is like those are willing and able to share Jesus' message with others. The light shines back wider and brighter. We can reflect God's love to others when we treat everyone around us with kindness and respect. We should act in a way that others see God's love reflected in us."

**Say:** Sometime this week please try to give your letter to the person who showed you unconditional love. Ask an adult to help if the person is no longer in your life. If the person is no longer alive you can share the letter with their family. Tape your letter to God somewhere you will see it often. Let it be a reminder that God loves you no matter what and that you should offer the same unconditional love, grace, and understanding to everyone in your life.

## 5 BLESS

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

Invite students to stand in a circle. Pass out candles and light them. Sing "Come and Bring Light" CCS 287. (You may elect to sing the refrain and take turns reading the verses.)

Go around the circle and ask students to finish this sentence: "I can reflect God's love by..."



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# FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY/BAPTISM OF THE LORD

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Matthew 3:13–17

**Lesson Focus:** Jesus was baptized. Our baptism is a first step in our journey in a community of disciples. All disciples are called to share their giftedness as disciples.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- tell the story of Jesus' baptism.
- understand that baptism is a first step on the journey of discipleship and demonstrates a desire to follow God.
- name ways they can live the Community of Christ Enduring Principle of All Are Called by sharing their giftedness with others.

## Supplies

- Pitcher or bowl of water and napkins or towels
- Blankets or blue cloth
- Robes, cloth, or Biblical costumes
- Paper printout or drawing of a dove
- One half of a paper plate for each child
- One brass brad per child
- Printout of Jesus and sentences for Respond section (one for each child)
- Crayons or markers
- Soft ball or paper wad
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 3:13–17 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, pp. 31–32, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Gather around a bowl or pitcher of water. Allow children to touch the water and talk about how it feels. Have the children think of ways we use water. We use it for bathing, brushing teeth, cooking, cleaning, and drinking. Our bodies are made up of water. It's essential to survival. Tell children our scripture passage today is about Jesus being baptized in water.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

**Say:** When Jesus was baptized, he was showing everyone that he wanted to follow God.

Invite children to sit comfortably and close their eyes as they listen to the scripture story. Read the scripture story:

John gently dipped people under the water. This showed other people that they wanted to follow God. Jesus was traveling from a town called Galilee, and he came to where John was baptizing people. Jesus asked John to baptize him. But John thought Jesus was a greater teacher than he was, so he told Jesus, "You should baptize me."

But Jesus said, "I want to do what is right so people will know I want to follow God." So John baptized Jesus. When Jesus came out of the water, the Spirit of God landed on him like a dove. And God said, "This is my son. I am happy with him."

Tell children that as you read the story a second time, you want them to use their imagination and put themselves in the story. Invite them to notice what they see, hear, and feel.

Read the story again.

**Ask:** Imagine you were in the story. What did you see? What did you hear? What did you feel? What did you notice?

Invite children to act out the story. Provide materials such as blankets to represent water, a paper bird to represent the dove, and perhaps robes or fabric for costumes. If you have several children, have them work in small groups of two or three to act out the story.

**Say:** When Jesus was baptized, he was showing everyone that he wanted to follow God. This means he would try to live the way God wanted him to live. He would try to help others and share God's love with others.

## 3 RESPOND

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

**Say:** When we are baptized, we become part of a community of disciples. We become part of the body of Christ. In Community of Christ, we believe in the Enduring Principle: All Are Called. This means God graciously gives people gifts and opportunities to do good and to share in God's purposes. We are going to play a game that will help us think about the gifts and talents God has given us.

Children stand if they identify with these statements.

**Say:** Stand up if you can...

- sing to worship God.
- talk to someone who is lonely.
- make a new friend.
- pray.
- help a friend who is hurt.
- pick up trash.

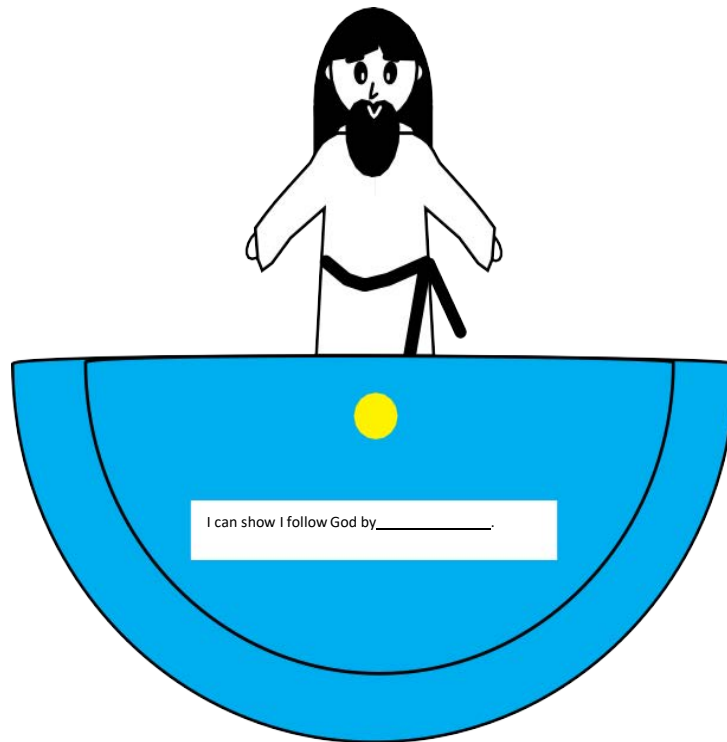
- tell friends about Jesus.
- give money as a Disciple's Generous Response.
- give a hug.
- sit by a younger child during a worship service.
- help collect offering at church.
- participate in worship (prayer, reading).
- other (Offer other suggestions based on the gifts and talents in your class.)

**Craft: Jesus' Baptism**

Provide each child with one half of a thin paper plate. Children can color it blue to look like water. Give each child a small picture of Jesus to color. Help children attach Jesus' feet to the plate with a brass brad so he can be tilted and "dipped" into the water to be baptized. Have each child complete the sentence on the printout and glue it to the paper plate.

Make a copy of the Jesus drawing and these sentences for each child:

- Jesus showed he would follow God by being baptized.
- I can show I follow God by \_\_\_\_\_.



### Going Deeper

For older children, read and discuss Doctrine and Covenants 164:3.

3a. All church members are urged to examine the depth of your baptismal commitment. Having been baptized and confirmed, become fully immersed in the servant life of Christ.

b. Live the meaning of your baptism daily as you grow in the skills and qualities of discipleship. Actively and generously support the ministries of the church, which was divinely established to restore Christ's covenant of peace, even the Zion of your hopes.

c. The Eternal Christ invites those who have yet to experience the blessings of baptism to "Follow me in the way of righteousness and peace." Be baptized of water and the Spirit and discover your spiritual home as a fully functioning member of the body.

Discuss:

- What does it mean to be "fully immersed in the servant life of Christ"?
- In the story of Jesus' baptism, how was Jesus "baptized of water and the Spirit"?
- Why do you think baptism was important for Jesus?

### Going Deeper

Ask some adults or older children in the congregation to come share with the class about their baptism and how they use their gifts to serve others as disciples.

## 4 SEND

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

Toss a ball or paper wad from person to person. When you catch the ball, tell the group something you plan to do to live out your discipleship. Play the game several times. In the first round, tell something you will do at church. In the second round, tell something you will do at home or in your neighborhood. In the third round, tell something you will do at school. Remind children that Jesus was baptized to show that he wanted to do what was right so people would know he followed God.

## 5 BLESS

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

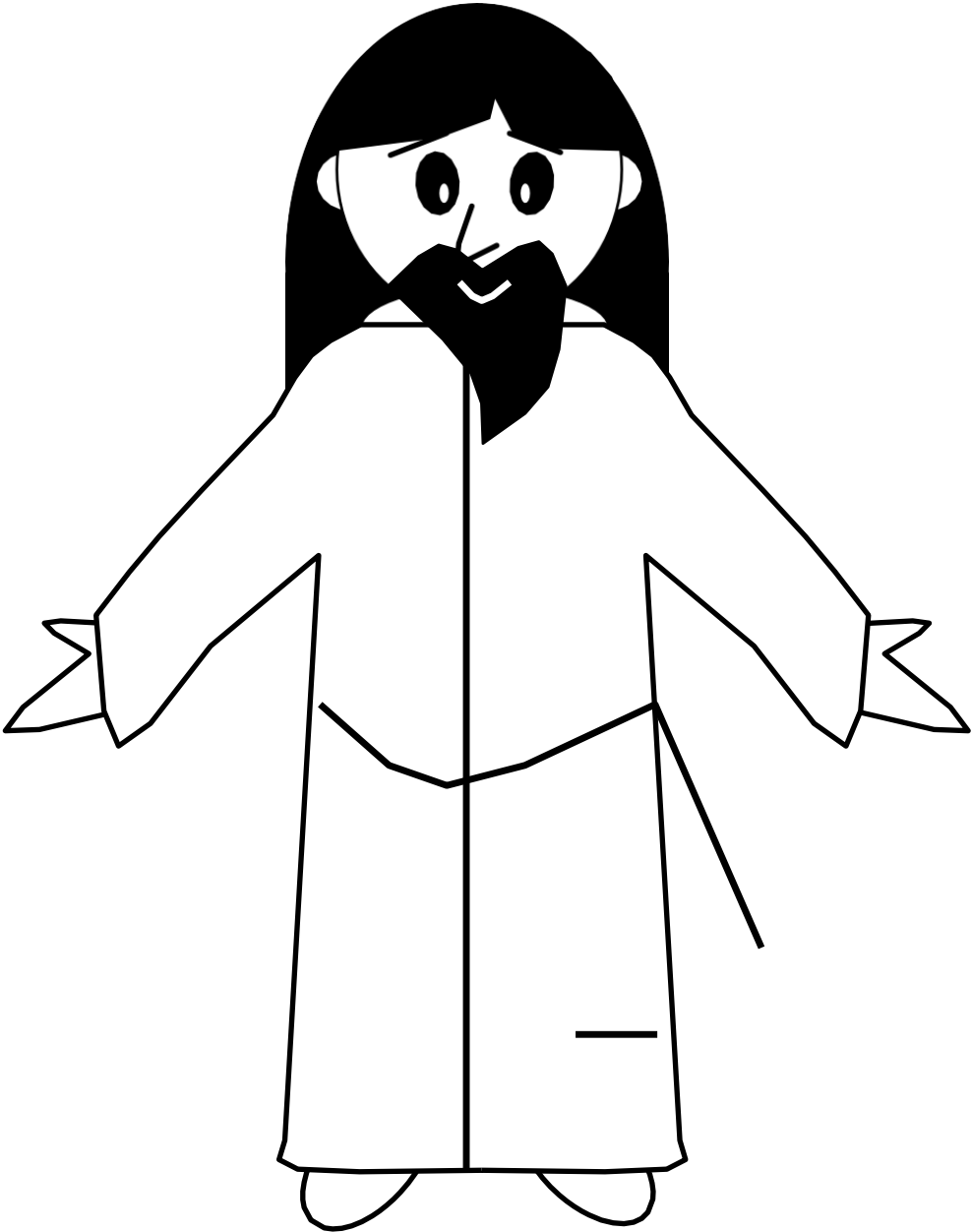
Sing "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" CCS 499. Close with a prayer.



Copy one Jesus outline and one commitment statement for each person.

Jesus showed he would follow God by being baptized.

I can show I follow God by \_\_\_\_\_.



# SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Isaiah 49:1–7

**Lesson Focus:** As humans we often fail, but our diligence and faith helps us to be successful disciples and servants.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- explore the evolution of the servant's understanding in the Isaiah scripture.
- learn about the Mission Initiative: Develop Disciples to Serve.
- hear from other congregation members about their path of discipleship.
- define what it is to be a servant of Jesus.

## Supplies

- Candle and lighter or matches
- Copies of the Famous Failures worksheet (end of the lesson)
- Copies of the Interview Questions (end of the lesson)
- Newspaper classified ads
- Markers
- Bible
- Community of *Christ Sings* (CCS)

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Isaiah 49:1–7 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament*, pp. 36–37, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Greet each child by name and invite him or her to sit in the classroom. Read this riddle:

A long time ago, a wealthy old man wanted to leave all of his money to one of his three sons. He couldn't decide which son to choose, so he created a test for them. He gave each of them a few coins and told them each to buy something that would be able to fill their living room. The first man bought a wheelbarrow full of straw, but there was not enough to fill the room. The second bought a wagon full of sticks but they still didn't fill the room. The third man bought only two small things, but he was able to successfully fill the room. Therefore the third son inherited his father's fortune. What were the two things that the man bought? (Listen to guesses.)

Turn off the lights in your classroom and light a candle. Show them that just one small flame can light an entire room. To answer the riddle, tell the children that the man bought a candle and matches.

**Say:** In today's scripture God promises to make us the people of Israel "a light for all nations." Of course this does not mean the people had to physically turn on lights or make the darkness bright. But rather a small flame made a big difference in the dark. Similarly we can share God's love with small actions and deeds.

We can be a living billboard for Jesus!

Sing the first verse of "This Little Light of Mine."

This little light of mine,

I'm gonna let it shine,

This little light of mine,

I'm gonna let it shine,

This little light of mine,

Yes, I'm gonna let it shine,

Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!

—Harry Dixon Loes

## 2 ENGAGE

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

**Ask:** Think of a time you were successful; a time when you were really good at something. Would anyone be willing to share? (Listen to responses.) Now think of a time when you were unsuccessful; a time when you messed something up or did something wrong. Would anyone be willing to share? (Listen to responses.) No one is perfect. We all have times of great triumph and we even have times of failure. Even famous, successful people fail.

Pass out copies of the Famous Failure worksheet (end of this lesson). Allow time for the students to match the celebrity to their early experience with defeat. Then review the answers: 1-D; 2-F; 3-B; 4-A; 5-C; 6-E.

**Say:** Michael Jordan famously said, "I have missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I have lost almost 300 games. On 26 occasions, I have been entrusted to take the game winning shot, and I missed. I have failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed." It is not how many times you fail that matters, but how many times you try again. In today's scripture the author remembers how his attempts to serve God failed. Yet God still believed in him and trusted him to be "a light to the nations."

Have a child read Isaiah 49:1–3.

<sup>1</sup>Listen to me, O coastlands,  
pay attention, you peoples from far away!

The Lord called me before I was born,  
while I was in my mother's womb he named me.

<sup>2</sup>He made my mouth like a sharp sword,  
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;  
he made me a polished arrow,

in his quiver he hid me away.

<sup>3</sup>And he said to me, "You are my servant,  
Israel, in whom I will be glorified."

**Summarize:** The servant in this passage is remembering that God had great plans for him. The descriptions related to stories in Genesis, like Jacob who became Israel and had "a mouth like a sharp sword to speak the truth of God's Word." (*Sermon & Class Helps*, p. 36).

Have another child read Isaiah 49:4.

<sup>4</sup>But I said, "I have labored in vain,  
I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity;  
yet surely my cause is with the Lord,  
and my reward with my God."

**Summarize:** The servant realizes that his human efforts to spread God's message have failed. But with faith he continues to have a "relationship of trust and grace with God." (*Sermon & Class Helps*, p. 36).

Have another child read Isaiah 49:5–6.

<sup>5</sup>And now the Lord says,  
who formed me in the womb to be his servant,  
to bring Jacob back to him,  
and that Israel might be gathered to him,  
for I am honored in the sight of the Lord,  
and my God has become my strength—  
<sup>6</sup>he says,  
"It is too light a thing that you should be my servant  
to raise up the tribes of Jacob  
and to restore the survivors of Israel;  
I will give you as a light to the nations,  
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

**Summarize:** The servant's original task was to gather back together the Israelites who had strayed from God. This would rebuild and restore the nation. Success in the task meant the Israelites would benefit rather than merely working to glorify God. Instead God said that assignment was "too small and limiting" and gave the servant a "greater mission..." (*Sermon & Class Helps*, p. 36).

Have another child read Isaiah 49:7.

<sup>7</sup>Thus says the Lord,  
the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One,  
to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nations,  
the slave of rulers,  
"Kings shall see and stand up,  
princes, and they shall prostrate themselves,  
because of the Lord, who is faithful,  
the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."

**Summarize:** Instead of merely bringing together the group that was once large but had lost faith, the servant is now a light to the world spreading God’s message. Now when the servant succeeds at his task, God will be glorified. “All the nations will know the Redeemer of Israel and the Holy One of Israel” (*Sermon & Class Helps*, p. 36).

## 3 RESPOND

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

**Say:** The servant in the scripture had a mission. What is a mission? (Listen to responses.) Many companies and organizations have mission statements to tell everyone what they plan to do. “Our mission in Community of Christ is...to share the peace of Jesus Christ in all of its personal, interpersonal, community and worldwide dimensions” (*Of Water and Spirit: Facilitator Guide*, p. 105). Our mission statement mirrors this goal: “We proclaim Jesus Christ and promote communities of joy, hope, love, and peace.”

Christ’s mission is our mission. Community of Christ takes mission even further by outlining five Mission Initiatives. Everything the church does is working toward one or more of these goals. One of these initiatives is Develop Disciples to Serve. As a church we want everyone to be fully able and equipped to be a “continuing presence of Christ in the world.” This includes training priesthood, missionaries, and pastors, but also helping everyone deepen their understanding of God and be disciples of Jesus. For more information, see: <https://www.CofChrist.org/mission-initiatives>.

Instruct the students to go in pairs to find and interview another person in the congregation about how they have served as a disciple and what they have done to develop their abilities and understandings. Children can use the question prompts at the end of the lesson or they can ask their own questions. Once they are finished with the interviews they can return to the classroom and report a short summary to the rest of the class. Alternatively, you can invite one or two congregants to come to your class as guests.

## 4 SEND

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

After the conversations, ask students what stuck out to them during their interviews. Create a list of observations demonstrating what it takes to be a servant. For example praying for guidance, learning from others, thinking about what Jesus would do, and so on.

Show newspaper classified ads to the class. Point out the help-wanted section and read one or two advertisements. As a class use the list of attributes and practices to create a help-wanted ad for a servant. Write the ad in large print using marker on top of the newspaper classifieds. Be creative! As an example:

**Wanted: Willing Servant**

Must be diligent in prayer,  
able to see people through  
God’s eyes, and willing to  
share generously with others.  
Apply in person with Jesus.

# 5

## **BLESS**

Time of prayer, praise,  
blessing, and hope

*(5% of lesson time)*

As a closing prayer, sing together “Make Me a Servant” CCS 597.

# Famous Failures

Match the famous person at left to an unsuccessful time in their career at right.

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| 1. Bill Gates      | A. One of her first jobs in TV ended abruptly after the producer declared she was “unfit for television.”         |
| 2. Walt Disney     | B. One of his most successful books was rejected by 30 publishers. One publisher said the genre would not sell.   |
| 3. Stephen King    | C. All 12 major publishing companies rejected her manuscript. The one that bought it paid very little up front.   |
| 4. Oprah Winfrey   | D. His early Traf-o-Data business created traffic reports, but the machine tanked during an initial presentation. |
| 5. J.K. Rowling    | E. E. At age 62 he pitched his recipe to restaurants and was rejected 1,009 times                                 |
| 6. Colonel Sanders | F. Fired from a newspaper job because the editor said he “lacked imagination and had no good ideas.”              |





# THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Isaiah 9:1–4

**Lesson Focus:** God provides light in times of darkness and we can share this light with others in need.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- learn about God's light in the darkness in the Isaiah scripture passage.
- discuss the Enduring Principle: Worth of All Persons.
- brainstorm and plan how to make a difference in others' lives.

## Supplies

- Bible (NRSV)
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*
- *Never Too Young! 50 Unstoppable Kids Who Made a Difference* by Aileen Weintraub, (Sterling Children's Books, 2018, ISBN 9781454929178), or another children's book about children making a difference
- Flashlight(s) with batteries removed, batteries
- Glass jars (vases, baby food jars, mason jars), Mod Podge, tissue paper, scissors, paint brushes, (battery-operated) tea lights
- Chart paper or dry erase board and marker
- White paper, pens or pencils, markers or crayons

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Isaiah 9:1–4 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament*, pp. 38–39, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Before class time, shut off the lights in your classroom and sit waiting for the students to arrive. As they enter the room, gesture for them to quietly sit down as usual. Once everyone is seated, pass out flashlights (with the batteries previously removed) to all or several of the children. Then instruct the students to turn on the lights. Notice their surprise or frustration. Allow them to explore or talk amongst themselves to discover the problem, giving them prompts if necessary. When the problem is identified, offer batteries for the flashlight(s).

**Say:** We had a problem in our classroom today...we were in the dark. You had the tools to fix this problem...the flashlight. But you still lacked the key piece for your tool...the batteries. We are all capable

people with various gifts and abilities. Yet only with God in our lives do we really shine to our true potential.

Sing the refrain several times to “Come and Bring Light,” CCS 287.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

**Say:** Just like it was dark in our classroom when you arrived, our scripture passage takes place in a very dark time in history. The Israelites were being threatened by the Assyrians and they had lost their land. Isaiah wrote a song to reassure the people and remind them that God is with them no matter who rules the land. “There are many songs in the Bible. We still have words for those songs, but we don’t have the music.” We can read the words and you can make up music if you wish. Here are the words to one of the songs that the prophet Isaiah sang to the people frightened of the Assyrians.

Have students take turns reading the verses to the song.

The people that lived in the dark,  
those people have seen a great light.

The people that walked in the dark,  
their life is now shiny and bright.

Dear God, you have made us so glad,  
we just want to jump up and sing.  
Dear, God we can never be sad,  
your light sparkles bright in each thing.

We were hurting and sad till you came,  
but now we feel strong and alive.  
We were hurting and tired till you came,  
but now we feel glad we’re alive.”

—*Lectionary Story Bible Year A*, Ralph Milton, Wood Lake Publishing: 2007, p. 52

**Say:** In this scripture Isaiah promises to the troubled Israelites what God will do: “God relieves peoples’ burden, lifts the weight from their shoulders, and breaks the rod of their oppressor.” However Isaiah did not give a timeline for this assurance. We (humans) are “impatient, and quick to abandon faith when God’s acts of salvation don’t fit our timetable. But these verses assure us that God is faithful. God will be the victor and bring about light, peace, freedom, and joy in God’s own time” (*Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament*, p. 38).

Make candleholders to remind us that God’s light always shines even in the darkest time. Cut colored tissue paper into small pieces of various shapes. Working a small section at a time, paint Mod Podge on a glass jar and place the pieces of tissue paper on the glue without too much overlapping. Once the jar is covered with paper, allow the mod podge to dry. Give each student a (battery operated) tea light to place in his or her jar.



Source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/sanjoselibrary/5759285897/in/photostream/>

### 3 RESPOND

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

**Say:** At the beginning of class we sang together the refrain of a hymn about God bringing light to the people. The verses of that hymn list different groups of people to whom we need to bring light.

Sing together the refrain of “Come and Bring Light” CCS 287 and have students take turns reading all or some of the verses.

**Ask:** Who are some people or groups of people who would benefit from the light of God? (Listen to responses and write a list on chart paper or a dry erase board. Children can start with the ideas listed in the hymn and add other ideas or specific groups or individuals in their lives or communities.)

**Say:** Community of Christ has Enduring Principles that define the essence, heart, and soul of our faith community. They summarize who we are as disciples. One of these Enduring Principles is the Worth of All Persons. What does “worth” mean? (Listen to responses.) This Enduring Principle means that we should always act in a way that shows we think everyone is important and has value. For more information, see <https://www.CofChrist.org/enduring-principles>.

Refer to the list you made earlier of individuals or groups who are marginalized, oppressed, or just need to feel the light of God.

**Ask:** Each of these individuals and groups has worth—they are all important and deserve to feel God’s love. How can you make a difference in the lives of these people? How can you be the light of God in their lives?

### 4 SEND

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

Show students the book *Never Too Young!* by Aileen Weintraub. Select a story or two to summarize to the class. (If that book is not available, read another children’s book or a story online about children making a difference.)

**Say:** Each of these children did something to make a difference in the lives of others. You, too, have the ability to make a difference! Your actions do not need to be huge or grand, but can be something small that has an effect in someone's life.

Provide each student with a piece of paper, crayons or markers, and a pencil or pen. Instruct them to create their own biography like those in the book. Using pen or pencil they should write their name, their birthdate or year, and a brief summary of something they have done or will do to help others. They can also use crayons or markers to draw a picture of themselves. Display the posters in your classroom.

## **5 BLESS**

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

Stand in a circle holding your candles. Offer a prayer asking for God's light to fill and shine through the students as they minister daily to those around them.

# FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Micah 6:1–8

**Lesson Focus:** As disciples God asks for us to use the gifts we are given and to treat others with love and kindness.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- learn what God expects of us through an Old Testament story.
- explore discipleship in Community of Christ.
- brainstorm their gifts and ways to use those gifts as a disciple.

## Supplies

- Bible (NRSV) or *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- Construction paper, crayons or markers, scissors, glue, stickers
- Large shallow dish (pie plate), milk, food coloring, cotton swab, dish soap
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Micah 6:1–8 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament*, pp. 40–41, available through Herald House.

# 1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge,  
prepares and motivates for lesson

*(15% of total lesson time)*

Before class begins, place supplies for decorating a poster (construction paper, crayons, markers, glue, scissors, stickers, and so on) in various places around the room. As children enter greet them by name and ask them to have a seat as usual.

**Say:** Today I want you to make a poster with your name on it. The materials you will need can be found around the room. You may begin when you are ready.

As students start to work, quickly and often interrupt their acts with more random directions and reminders. “You have to start walking on your right foot.” “You have to use the red marker before you can use the blue one.” “You need to touch the table three times before you sit down.” And so on.

Once students become frustrated or confused, stop their work and ask:

- Were any of you able to complete the task?
- What made it difficult?
- What did you think about my instructions?

**Say:** Sometimes rules and practices are very helpful. We keep supplies in a certain place so you know where to find them. Everyone drives on the same side of the street so we don't have accidents. In church we usually receive the offering the same way so that everyone knows what to do.

- Can you think of any other rules or practices that are helpful at church? (Listen to responses.)

**Say:** But sometimes we can focus too much on the tradition itself and the specific steps required. This causes us to lose track of the important meaning behind what we do.

- Would it be horrible if I moved the class supplies? (*No, but it might be nice for me to show you the new place.*)
- Does everyone in the world drive on the same side of the road? (*No, but we make sure everyone in one place does.*)
- Is it possible to change how the deacons or ushers receive the offering in church? (*Yes and the presider will often give the congregation directions if something will be different in the worship service.*)
- Can you think of any other times we have changed tradition and it has been okay?

**Say:** In today's scripture passage the Israelites were focused on doing specific things to show how much they loved God. The problem is, the things they chose to do were actually serving themselves more than they were serving God. The prophet Micah stepped in to change their practices and tell them what God really wants them to do.

Sing the third part of "What Does the Lord Require of You?" CCS 580.

What does the Lord require of you?

What does the Lord require of you? (Repeat once or twice)

**Say:** By the time class is over today you will be able to answer that question!

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Read together Micah 6:1–8, or "God Speaks through Micah" from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, p. 57.

- What did Micah tell the Israelites that God really wants them to do? (Listen to responses.)

Verse 8 of the scripture says, "...to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God." Let's finish the song from earlier. Teach the first line of CCS 580:

To seek justice and love kindness  
and walk humbly with your God.

Sing this as a response to line three. Depending on your group you could sing together line three, then line one, or sing both or all three lines as a round.

**Say:** Have you ever heard the phrase “Practice what you preach”? (Listen to responses.) What about the saying “If you’re going to talk the talk, you better walk the walk”? (Listen to responses.) Or “Actions speak louder than words”? (Listen to responses.)

- What do you think those mottos are trying to tell us? (If we say we believe something we need to act accordingly with our behavior.)

Instruct students individually to write a list of contradictory pairs of behaviors. For example, “read scriptures in class about Jesus being kind to others...then take your brother’s toy at home after church,” or “sing a hymn about loving everyone...then tease a student at school the next day.” Collect their ideas and add your own as needed.

Have students stand in the middle of the room. One by one read through the pairs of behaviors, assigning one of each pair to a side of the room. For example, “Say a prayer at church asking God to bless everyone...move to the front of the room. Move your bag and coat to fill an empty seat on the bus when a new student gets on looking for a place to sit...move to the back of the room.” Allow the students time to think about the options, then move to the “correct” side of the room. Once everyone is in place, ask for suggestions of what they could have done instead during the scenario. Repeat until all behavior pairs are read or as time allows.

Sing CCS 580 again a couple times, either as line three repeated by line one, or as a round of two or three parts.

## **3** RESPOND

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

**Say:** God takes the first step to invite us to follow Jesus. This is covenant. When we respond to God’s invitation, we experience the blessings of community and form relationships that reflect God’s loving nature. We become disciples. What is a disciple? (a follower of Jesus Christ) One of the Enduring Principles of the Community of Christ is All Are Called, which reads: “God graciously gives [all] people gifts and opportunities to do good and to share in God’s purposes. ...We respond faithfully, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to our best understanding of God’s call” (*Sharing in Community of Christ*, 4th Edition, pp. 29–30).

- What are your gifts? (Listen to responses. Be prepared to offer suggestions for students who have a hard time thinking of their gifts and abilities.)

Pour milk in a shallow dish. Add several drops of different colored food coloring. Put a small amount of dish soap on a cotton swab.

**Say:** This dish represents the world and this stick represents you.

Place the soap-covered tip of the cotton swab into the milk. If desired or necessary spin or move the swab around the dish.

**Say:** Remember your acts and abilities do not need to be huge. When you take a step into the world to treat people fairly and kindly, your small acts can have a big effect. As you grow as a disciple, you will discover even more gifts and you will have many opportunities to share them.

- How can you share your gifts with others? (Sing in church. Help a classmate study. Teach a sport to a student who is left out at recess.)
- What is something you can do this week as a disciple of Jesus? (Help with household chores. Let your sibling choose what to play. Welcome a new student.)

# 4

## SEND

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

**Say:** Retrieve the project you started at the beginning of class so we can finish them. Write on the poster “[Name] has decided to…” and list several actions you can take this week to be a disciple of Jesus. To do what is right and kind to other people, to live humbly, and to trust in God. You may decorate your posters as you please.

# 5

## BLESS

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

Sing together “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus” CCS 499.



# FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Isaiah 58:1–12

**Lesson Focus:** God love us unconditionally and blesses us immensely. In return we respond as generous disciples to share this love and these gifts with others.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- learn what God expects of us through another Old Testament story.
- explore our response as generous discipleship in Community of Christ.
- brainstorm their gifts of time, talent, treasure, and testimony, and ways to use those gifts as a disciple.

## Supplies

- *The Boy Who Cried Wolf* by B.G. Hennessy and illustrated by Boris Kulikov (Simon & Schuster, 2006, ISBN 978-0689874338) (available as book, audio book, or video)
- Bible
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*
- Sheets of paper cut into fourths, crayons or markers, large piece of paper, tape
- Butcher paper or dry erase board
- Bottle cap or lid for each student, printed or written words “Time, Talent, Treasure, Testimony”
- Crayons, stickers, beads, Mod Podge, magnets, glue
- Trashcan

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Isaiah 58:1–12 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament*, pp. 42–43, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Greet students by name as they enter the classroom. Invite them to join you in a circle for a story seated in chairs or on the floor. Read *The Boy Who Cried Wolf* by B.G. Hennessy. Alternatively you could find a version of the classic story online or simply tell the familiar tale.

**Ask the students:**

- Why did the shepherd boy tell everyone he saw a wolf when there really wasn't one?
- What happened when there really was a wolf coming after the sheep?
- Have you ever told someone you would do or not do something, and then break your promise? What happened with that person after the fact?
- Have you ever pretended to be someone or something you are not? What happened?
- Have you ever done something just to get attention? Did it work? What happened?

**Say:** Last week we learned through the prophet Micah that God is not concerned with extravagant rituals to show love for God. Instead God wants them to be kind and humble. Today's scripture is about another time the Israelites were confused and did things to benefit them rather than praise God like they proclaim.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

**Say:** Do you know what it means to fast? (Listen to responses.) Not to be fast, like to move quickly. To fast means to eat little or no food. Often people do this as a religious practice. There are many reasons why people do this. Can you think of any? (Listen to responses.) Some people spend time praying or studying when they would be eating. Others donate to the poor the money they would have spent on food. A common practice is to fast before taking the Lord's Super (Communion). As you prepare to take the emblems and remember what they symbolize. Often fasting is a community activity because people fast with others.

**Say:** Today's scripture passage takes place after the Israelites returned from exile in Babylon. Traditionally they fasted to remind themselves of their past oppression of the poor and the need to repent. Now they thought God punished their behavior by sending them to exile, so if they fasted God would repay their good deeds. They were surprised their attempts did not make a difference with God (*Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament, p. 42*).

Read Isaiah 58:1–9a, adapted.

<sup>1</sup>The Lord says, "Shout out loud. Don't hold back.

Shout out loud like a trumpet.

Tell the people about the things they have done against God.

<sup>2</sup>Then they will want to learn my ways  
and obey the commands of their God.

They will ask me to judge them fairly.

They will want God to be near them.

<sup>3</sup>They say, "To honor you we had special days  
when we gave up eating. But you didn't see.

We humbled ourselves to honor you, but you didn't notice."

But God says, "You do what pleases yourselves on these days  
and you are unfair to your workers.

<sup>4</sup>On these special days when you do not eat,

you argue and fight.

You hit each other with your fists.

You cannot do these things as you do now  
and believe I will listen to your prayers.

<sup>5</sup>This is not the kind of special day I want.

This is not how I want people to be sorry for their behavior.

<sup>6</sup>Instead I want you to free the people you have put in prison unfairly.

Free those to whom you are unfair.

Free them from their hard labor.

<sup>7</sup>I want you to share your food with hungry people.

I want you to bring poor, homeless people into your own homes.

When you see someone who has no clothes, give him yours.

Don't refuse to help your own relatives.

<sup>8</sup>If you do these things, your light will shine like the dawn.

Then your wounds will quickly heal.

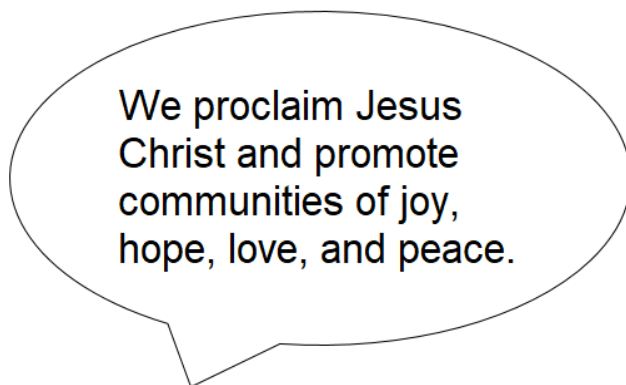
Your God will walk before you,

and the glory of the Lord will protect you from behind.

<sup>9</sup>Then you will call to the Lord,

and the Lord will answer you, "Here I am."

Draw a big speech bubble on a large piece of paper and write the Community of Christ mission statement inside.



Cut sheets of paper into fourths and give each student two pieces. Have students each write or draw on one piece an action that matches the mission statement (sharing toys, greeting a new student) and an action that contradicts the mission statement (cutting in line, cheating at a game) on the other piece. For smaller classes you may make additional pieces yourself ahead of time or ask students to make more than one pair. As the students finish, collect their papers and shuffle them into a pile.

**Say:** The Israelites said they were fasting to please God. But at the same time they were behaving in ways that did not match God’s vision for peaceful creation. This poster represents who we say we are as a church. Our mission statement is, “We proclaim Jesus Christ and promote communities of joy, hope, love, and peace.” Let’s decide which actions truly do this...and which do not.

One at a time, have a student select a paper from the pile and read it the class. Together decide if the action depicted fulfills the mission statement or not. If it does, tape it to the poster. If it does not, crumple it up and throw it in the trashcan.

[Idea for the speech bubble is from <http://worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.com/2014/01/year-fifth-sunday-after-epiphany-fifth.html>. Used with permission.]

## 3 RESPOND

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

**Say:** God loves us unconditionally. “Faithful disciples respond to an increasing awareness of the abundant generosity of God by sharing according to the desires of their hearts...” (Doctrine and Covenants 163:9). As faithful disciples we decide to return these blessings by loving and serving others. Community of Christ calls this A Disciples’ Generous Response. These actions and choices should be heart-felt and honest, and not like the Israelites who treated others unfairly while claiming to serve God.

### Read the story: The Discovery\*

A man was exploring caves by the seashore. In one of the caves he found a bag full of hardened clay balls. It was like someone had rolled clay balls and left them out in the sun to bake. They didn't look like much, but they intrigued the man so he took the bag out of the cave with him.

As he strolled along the beach, he would throw the clay balls one at a time out into the ocean as far as he could. He thought little about it until he accidentally dropped one of the balls and it cracked open on a rock. Inside was a beautiful, precious stone. Excited the man started breaking open the remaining clay balls. Each contained a similar treasure.

He found thousands of dollars’ worth of jewels in the three remaining clay balls. Then it struck him—he had been on the beach a long time and had thrown maybe close to 50 clay balls into the ocean waves along with their hidden treasures. Instead of thousands of dollars in treasure, he could have taken home tens of thousands, but he just threw it away.

—Adapted from <https://www.themiddleschoolcounselor.com/2015/02/its-what-on-inside-that-counts-lunch.html?spref=fb>. Used with permission.

**Say:** Which was more important for the clay balls—the outside or the inside? (the inside) The Israelites were putting on a show on the outside to fast for God, but on the inside they were still being unfair and unkind to each other.

- Does God want our outside appearances to look fancy and have us pretend to be helpful...or does God want our insides to be kind and compassionate?

Write TIME, TALENT, TREASURE, and TESTIMONY across the top of a dry erase board or butcher paper. Draw a line under the four words and vertical lines between the words.

TIME	TALENT	TREASURE	TESTIMONY

**Say:** Besides unconditional love, God has given us a variety of gifts. One type of gift is **time**—we can spend time with people and do things for others.

- What are some ways you could share your gift of time? (List their responses on the chart. Examples include reading to younger kids, visiting elderly people who cannot leave their home, helping your parents with a household chore.)

A second type of gift from God is your **talent**—we each have special abilities and we can use these to bless others.

- What are some talents you could share with others? (List their responses on the chart. Examples include singing or playing music in church, writing a testimony or prayer for church, leading a group of students in a new game to get to know each other.)

Another type of gift is your **treasure**—most often we think of money, but we also have other tangible gifts we can offer.

- What are some examples of treasure you have that you could share with God and others? (List their responses on the chart. Examples include put money in the offering plate, donate to Outreach International or other worthy organizations, give unused toys or clothing to those in need.)

Another type of gift we have is our **testimony**—this is telling our friends about Jesus and sharing about our experiences of being Jesus’ disciples.

- What would you tell a friend to help them get to know Jesus? (List their responses on the chart.)

## 4 SEND

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

Give each student a bottle cap or small lid. Write or print “Time, Talent, Treasure, Testimony” small enough that the entire phrase will fit inside each lid.

- Time
- Talent
- Treasure
- Testimony

Cut a circle around the TTTT paper so the circle will fit inside the lids. Decorate as able and desired with crayons and stickers. Place the paper circle inside a lid. Add extra decoration such as beads as available and desired. Pour Mod Podge into the lids so that everything inside is covered. Assure the

students the glue will dry clear. Allow to dry completely and glue a magnet to the back. Students may retrieve their creations next week after the glue dries clear. **Note:** It takes about a week for the glue to go from white to clear.

[From <https://www.themiddleschoolcounselor.com/2015/02/its-what-on-inside-that-counts-lunch.html?spref=fb>. Used with permission.]

**Say:** Always remember God loves us and blesses us immensely. In return God does not wish for us to put on a fancy show. Instead as generous disciples following Jesus we are asked to respond by treating others with kindness and compassion and to share our gifts with others.

## **5 BLESS**

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

Sing together "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" CCS 499.

# SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Deuteronomy 30:15–20

**Lesson Focus:** Choosing to be a disciple is the first step to a lifetime of making daily choices to act like Jesus. A covenant with God and community will help us be successful.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- explore the responsibilities and promises of covenant outlined in the scripture text.
- learn about the Blessings of Community and covenant relationship with God.
- support each other as a community in their endeavors to be disciples.

## Supplies

- Bible
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*
- Copies of the scripture page found at the end of the lesson
- Highlighters in a variety of colors, one for each student
- Pens or pencils
- Blindfolds (optional)

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Deuteronomy 30:15–20 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament*, pp. 44–45, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Stand outside your classroom or space to greet the children as they arrive. Gather them outside the area and ask them to stay outside with you while you wait for everyone. Once the entire class is present, start walking aimlessly inside the church building. As you wander, recount the Old Testament stories of Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt. You can remind them of the plight of the enslaved people: recall Moses’ interaction with the burning bush; review the plagues sent to Pharaoh; recount the arrival of the 10 Commandments; relate your hallway travels to the 40 years Moses and the Israelites spent wandering in the wilderness. Time your short walk so you arrive back at your classroom just as you finish your review of the stories.

**Say:** Today’s scripture brings us to the end of the Israelites wandering. They are standing on the edge of Canaan, ready to enter the Promised Land. Moses knows he is at the end of his life and wants to instill as much information and advice as possible in the hearts and minds of the people before he dies.

Read Deuteronomy 30:15–20 in a theatrical voice. You may elect to invite an older gentleman from your congregation to read the scripture.

Say: So what do you choose? Will you decide to love and obey God?

Enter the classroom and allow students to follow you as they feel led.

[The idea for the Moses wandering lead-in came from <http://worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.com/2014/01/year-sixth-sunday-after-epiphany-sixth.html>. Used with permission.]

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

**Say:** The last two weeks we read in Isaiah about the Israelites discovering what God really asks of us.

- What does God not care as much about? (Big fancy rituals and practices that make us feel good about ourselves)
- Instead what does God instruct the Israelites and us to do? (Treat each other with kindness and justice, and humbly walk with God)

Moses' instructions were similar, but a bit more specific. What was his question to the people? (Do you choose life or death? Life and success or death and destruction?) At this point those choices are not literal—they would not die the moment they made a mistake. Moses knew there were people in Canaan who did not worship God but instead worshiped many idols. It would be difficult for the Israelites to keep their faith and continue living God's way with so many distractions around them. He wanted them to understand how important it was for them to keep their focus on God. [See *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament*, p. 44]

Give each child a copy of the scripture found at the end of the lesson. Provide enough highlighters so everyone has one and they can each trade to use a second color when instructed. Tell the students to read the scripture and highlight in one color what Moses and God ask of the Israelites, and therefore what God asks of us (love the Lord your God, keep his commandments, and so on).

When that is complete, review their markings as a class. Point out that no good deeds were listed in verses 17 and 18. Have each child trade highlighters with another student so they each have a different color than at first. Next tell them to reread the scripture and this time highlight in their second color what Moses and God promise to the Israelites, and therefore promises to us (live and grow in number, God will bless you, and so on).

When that is complete review their markings as a class. Point out that no good promises were listed in verses 17 and 18, either. Students may choose to put a large "X" over that paragraph to signify "don't do this!"

Ask for a volunteer to read verse 19 aloud.

**Say:**

- What is a witness? (someone who watches something happen)
- When are witnesses important? (In a courtroom, when an accident happens, when we need to watch something important happen.)
- There are many important events that require witnesses. Can you think of any? (weddings, swearing in elected officials, signing an important document)

In this passage God is sharing a promise with the Israelites; the poetic words asking heaven and earth to be witnesses make the next phrase important like a treaty. This agreement is called a covenant. The highlighted phrases on your paper represent God's responsibility and our responsibility in this covenant relationship.



# 3 RESPOND

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

## Say:

- Through God's covenant we are offered a choice. Would any of you choose "death and destruction" over "life and success?" (Listen to responses.)
- Do you think most people would? (Probably not)
- Would you rather have As in school or Fs? (Listen to responses.)
- So far those choices have been easy. But how do you get As in school? (Do your homework, study for tests, read your textbooks, and so on.)

Many times the first choice is easy—I want to earn As; I want life and success. It's the rest of the decisions that are more difficult. To earn As you have to choose to spend time on homework instead of videogames. To be a disciple of Jesus you have to choose to be kind to a shy classmate when everyone else is teasing him or her.

[From <http://worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.com/2014/01/year-sixth-sunday-after-epiphany-sixth.html>. Used with permission.]

Direct students to the bottom half of the scripture worksheet from earlier.

1. Ask them to write goals they have for themselves—specific acts they can do as a disciple of Jesus. (Invite a new student over for a playdate; let your younger sibling play with your toys)
2. Next ask them to think of a "glitch" that will make each of those goals difficult and write one for each goal in the following set of blanks. (The new student may not have anything in common with me; my sibling may break my toys)
3. Lastly ask them to brainstorm ways they can overcome these potential problems. (Ask the new student what they like to do and prepare that activity; play with the toys alongside your sibling so you can assure their safety)

**Say:** I am going to ask you to walk around the room (table or area) as a group. However there are some stipulations. Divide the class roughly into three groups:

Group 1 cannot use their arms or hands

Group 2 must always keep their eyes closed (or covered with blindfolds if available)

Group 3 may only walk backwards.

Once everyone understands their limitation and the overall goal, let them begin. Assist as necessary to assure no one is hurt.

## Ask:

- How did it feel to be without your hands and arms? How did it affect what you did or didn't do?
- How did it feel to be without your sight? How did it affect what you did or didn't do?
- How did it feel to be walking backwards? How did it affect what you did or didn't do?
- How were you able to complete the task? Did you have to work together? How?

[Idea from *Bore No More! 70 Creative Ways to Involve Your Audience in Unforgettable Bible Teaching*, by Mike and Amy Nappa, Group Publishing, Inc., p. 42]

**Say:** God calls us into covenant and community to form relationships that reflect God's loving nature. We cannot be disciples or live in covenant alone. We need the church community to show us the way to

follow Jesus and live in covenant. We cannot serve others if we are all alone. The last couple of weeks we have talked about sharing our gifts as disciples. Each of these gifts is different and unique. Together we can do more because we each bring our own special abilities to covenant with community.

## **4 SEND**

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

**Say:** We can share in covenant community right here in our class.

Ask students to pair up with their scripture worksheet from earlier. Small classes can do this activity as one group.

**Say:** This partner or group can be a supportive presence within your covenant community. Share your listed goals, glitches, and solutions with each other. Listen to each other. Offer words of encouragement or suggestions for solutions as you see fit.

## **5 BLESS**

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

**Say:** In your pairs or group offer a prayer for each other as you work to accomplish the goals on your sheet. Ask God for courage to respond and try something new in order to become a blessing of God's love and peace (Mission Prayer, adapted).

Sing together "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" CCS 499.


# Deuteronomy 30:15–20

(International Children’s Bible)

<sup>15</sup>Look, today I offer you life and success, death and destruction. <sup>16</sup>I command you today to love the Lord your God. Do what he wants you to do. Keep his commands, his rules and his laws. Then you will live and grow in number. And the Lord your God will bless you in the land you are going to take as your own.

<sup>17</sup>But you might turn away from the Lord. You might not obey him. You might be led to bowing down and serving other gods. <sup>18</sup>I tell you today that you will be destroyed. And you will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan River to enter and own.

<sup>19</sup>Today I ask heaven and earth to be witnesses. I am offering you life or death, blessings or curses. Now, choose life! Then you and your children may live. <sup>20</sup>Love the Lord your God. Obey him. Stay close to him. He is your life. And he will let you live many years in the land. This is the land he promised to give your ancestors Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

<p>My Goals</p> 	
<p>My Glitches</p> 	
<p>My Solutions</p> 	

# LAST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Matthew 17:1–9

**Lesson Focus:** Jesus is transfigured. God wants us to listen to Jesus.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- hear the story of the Transfiguration.
- understand that God was showing how important Jesus is.
- understand that we should listen to Jesus.

## Supplies

- Newsprint, poster board or chalkboard, marker or chalk
- Basket or bucket
- Recycled paper for making paper wads
- Helicopter pattern and paper clip, one for each child (print helicopters prior to class)  
[https://www.exploratorium.edu/science\\_explorer/roto-copter.html](https://www.exploratorium.edu/science_explorer/roto-copter.html)
- Paper for making paper airplanes (optional)

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

## 1 GATHER

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

Invite children to sit quietly and listen. What sounds do they hear? Next, ask them to close their eyes as you make some noises and have them guess the noise. You might crinkle a piece of paper, tap a pencil, snap your fingers, or shut a book. Tell the children that today we will learn about how God wants us to listen to Jesus.

## 2 ENGAGE

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

Tell the story of the Transfiguration. If you choose, you might invite the children to act out the roles of Jesus, Moses, Elijah, Peter, James, and John. Or you could use puppets or small dolls to demonstrate the story.

Matthew 17:1–9, adapted:

The disciples, Jesus' followers, had seen Jesus perform many miracles. He healed people. He brought the dead back to life. He even walked on water. So the disciples knew Jesus was pretty amazing. But they were about to see what God thought about Jesus.

Jesus led his friends Peter, James, and John up a high mountain. When they got to the top, something amazing happened. Jesus' face began to shine like the sun, and his face became amazingly white. Suddenly, someone very important appeared by Jesus. It was Moses. Moses is one of the most important people from the Old Testament. He is the one who received the Ten Commandments from God. On Jesus' other side, another important person appeared. It was Elijah. Elijah was also an important prophet from the Old Testament. Moses and Elijah were talking to Jesus.

Peter was so amazed. He wanted Moses and Elijah to stay, and he wanted this wonderful moment to last forever. He said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was talking, a bright cloud came down and covered them all. Then they heard a voice that said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!"

**Ask:** Who do you think was talking? The disciples must have known it was God, because they became afraid and fell down to the ground. Jesus walked over to them and touched them. He said, "Get up. Don't be afraid." When they looked up, Moses and Elijah were gone.

Discuss:

- Why did God want the disciples to see Jesus talking to Moses and Elijah? (To show that Jesus was just as important, that he was also a prophet)
- Why did Peter want to build dwellings on the mountain? (He wanted the moment to last—just like sometimes we want special moments to last.)
- What did God say about Jesus? (This is my Son; I love him; I am pleased with him.)
- What important thing did God say the disciples should do? (Listen to him)

God wants us to listen to Jesus. Play this game to practice listening.

Send one child out of the room. Hide a small object in the room. When the child returns, the child tries to find the object by listening to clapping clues given by the rest of the group. If the child is close to the hidden object, the group claps quickly and loudly. If the child is far from the hidden object, the group claps softly and slowly. Let several children have a turn.

- Was it difficult to find the object based on the way the group clapped?
- Is it sometimes difficult to listen?
- When can it be hard to listen to Jesus? (when others are telling us to do other things)
- How do we listen to Jesus? (prayer, meditation, worship, scripture study, the "still, small voice" in our thoughts that leads us)

# 3 RESPOND

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

In today's scripture passage, Peter wanted to build houses and stay on the mountaintop forever. Can you think of a time when you were very happy and you wanted that feeling to last forever?

Even though Peter wanted to stay on the mountaintop, Jesus had different plans for him. Jesus wanted Peter to go down from the mountaintop so he could serve others and tell others about Jesus. That's what Jesus wants us to do, too. We call it Christ's mission. Mission means special tasks that help people. Jesus' mission is to bring good news and hope to those who need it and to help people who are poor, captive, sick, or oppressed (*Of Water and Spirit*, p. 107). Jesus needs us to help live Christ's mission! The mission statement of Community of Christ states, "We proclaim Jesus Christ and promote communities of joy, hope, love, and peace." Write the mission statement on a large piece of paper or chalkboard.

## Game: Christ's Mission

Supplies: basket or bucket, wads of paper (recycle when finished)

The disciples had to go down from the mountaintop to live Christ's mission.

Designate one side of the room to be the "mountaintop." The other side of the room is the "foot of the mountain." Place the basket on this side of the room and scatter paper wads on the floor surrounding the basket.

Divide children into two groups. Both start on the mountaintop side of the room. They are the "disciples." At your signal, they race to the other side, grab a paper wad from the floor, say a word or phrase from the mission statement, and put the paper in the basket. They might say "joy," "hope," "love," "peace," "community," or "proclaim Jesus Christ." Gathering the paper represents gathering people into God's community. Don't have teams compete against each other. Rather, count how many pieces of paper are in the basket at the end and celebrate together!

God wants us to listen to Jesus. Jesus tells us, "Do not be afraid!" He wants us to live Christ's mission by serving others and telling others about Jesus.

## Going Deeper

Give children copies of the Mission Prayer. Discuss its meaning and encourage them to say it often:

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.

# 4 SEND

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

Cut out and assemble helicopters according to directions on the website below. Invite children to write a prayer or the name of someone they want to pray for on their helicopters. Then take them to a high place (the top of a stairway, for example) and drop the helicopters, symbolic of sending prayers down from the mountaintop.

[https://www.exploratorium.edu/science\\_explorer/roto-copter.html](https://www.exploratorium.edu/science_explorer/roto-copter.html)

**Alternative activity:** Have children write the name of someone they want to pray for on a piece of paper. Help them fold the paper into a paper airplane. Let them fly the airplanes from a high place.

# 5 BLESS

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

Say a prayer for the concerns the children wrote on their helicopters or airplanes. Also pray for the children to be able to listen to Jesus and not be afraid to live Christ's mission.

LESSON 14  
1 March 2020

# FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Matthew 4:1–11

**Lesson Focus:** Like Jesus in the desert, we face tests and temptations in our lives.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- read about and discuss Jesus' temptations (tests) in the desert.
- discuss Lent and create a weekly calendar of giving and making commitments.
- attempt "impossible" activities.
- experience the spiritual practice of Body Prayer.

## Supplies

- Bible (NRSV)
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*
- Copies of test and pencils or pens (Adjust test provided at the end of the lesson to meet the needs of your students or create your own.)
- Copies of Lenten calendar

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Matthew 4:1–11 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, pp. 45–46, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Greet children as they enter and invite them to sit in a circle. Sing together "I've Got the Joy." Have children share a joy they experienced this week.

Ask the children to tell about a time when they had to take a test.

- Where were you? (school, home, or relationships)
- How did you feel when you found out about the test? (nervous, excited, worried, angry, or confused)



## 2 ENGAGE

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

**Say:** The good news today is that we are going to take a test. Are you ready? After I pass out your test, you will have two minutes to answer all of the questions. You may not ask your neighbor for help. You are on your own.

Pass out the test and begin. Some children may finish easily. Others may struggle to answer even one question. After two minutes are over, ask children to stop.

**Ask:**

- What part was easy?
- What about this test was difficult?

Explain that the class now has two more minutes to work on their test. This time they may work together to figure out the answers. At the end of two minutes, have them stop.

- Which was easier—taking the test alone or working together?

**Say:** Today's scripture passage is about a time when Jesus was all alone in the desert for 40 days and nights. While he was there he had to face three different tests. Listen carefully for what those three tests were and how Jesus faced them.

Read together Matthew 4:1–11. What were the three tests Jesus had to pass?

1. Choosing not to be selfish (taking care of his own needs before the needs of others)
2. Choosing not to show off (using his powers for attention)
3. Choosing not to be the king of the world in order to get wealth

**Ask:** Do you ever have to face the same kinds of tests that Jesus did? Discuss times when children were tempted to be selfish, show off, or put money and power ahead of others.

How was Jesus able to resist temptation and pass his tests? (He relied on God and trusted God to give him strength.) One way we can resist temptation is to remember God's promises to us found in scripture. One such scripture is found in Psalm 32:10: "...love surrounds those who trust in the Lord."

Practice chanting this scripture together several times. Vary the volume and speed each time. Continue until class has memorized the scripture.

## 3 RESPOND

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

Ask the children if they would like to try some impossible tasks. Depending on time and the age of your group, explore one or more of the following tasks.

- Hum a favorite song. Now pinch your nose and cover your mouth. Try again. Can you do it?
- Sit straight up in a chair, feet flat on the floor, with arms folded across your chest. Try standing up without leaning forward. Can you do it?
- Hold your right hand out in front of you, with your elbow bent slightly. Turn your hand clockwise. Now hold your right foot off the floor and rotate it clockwise. Easy? Now reverse the direction of your hand only, not your foot. Can you do it?

These things may be impossible, but resisting temptation is not. God is with you. Repeat your verse from Psalm 32:10. "...love surrounds those who trust in the Lord."

—Adapted from *Power and Light Kids' Edition*: January, February, March, April 2005, p. 17 ©Community of Christ

**Say:** For the next six weeks, we will be talking about a period of time in the church calendar called Lent. Lent is the six weeks before Easter when Jesus is resurrected from the dead. Each week during Lent, we will do a special activity called a spiritual practice. These practices will help us become closer to God and understand more about how God wants us to live our lives.

Today's spiritual practice is called Body Prayer. We encounter God through our senses and movements. This type of prayer also honors God with our bodies as vehicles of prayer, praise, and worship.

Experiment with prayer postures as you pray. Model some of these positions for children and invite them to try one as they pray:

- Seated with hands open and receptive in lap, facing straight ahead
- Standing with hands open and in front of the body at waist level
- Standing with hands open and held wide apart at about shoulder level
- Standing with hands open and raised overhead, face tilted toward ceiling or sky
- Kneeling with head bowed
- Kneeling with hands/head in one of the positions described above
- Lying on your back (on your bed, the floor, the grass)
- Lying face down with hands outstretched

Begin and end your prayer with a sacred gesture that has meaning for you. Some examples are:

- Bowing to God with palms together or open in receptive stance
- Embracing the One: create a circle with your arms, fingers pointing together but not touching (hold for 30 seconds) represents caring for all beings and life as sacred.
- Empty cup: hands cupped in front of you as a vessel or cup that needs filling (hold 30–60 seconds) represents awareness of emptiness and the need for God's Spirit to fill us.

## 4

### SEND

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

**Say:** Sometimes during the six weeks of Lent, people choose something to give up and, instead, focus on their relationship with God. Some people give up a certain type of food or drink, watching television, or playing video games. Each person chooses something important to them. Others choose to spend the time of Lent making a commitment to do good deeds or explore their generosity by giving of their time, talent, and treasure to others.

- What are some ways we can give to others?
- Who needs a kind word or good deed from you?

Pass out Lenten calendars and help children fill in the dates of each week of Lent.

**Say:** This calendar will help us keep track of some of the good deeds we do for others during Lent. Take this calendar home with you today. This week write down the good deeds you do for others. Bring it back next week so we can share our good news with each other. (Or keep calendars in the classroom and have children share and complete them in class next week.)

# 5

## BLESS

Time of prayer, praise,  
blessing, and hope

*(5% of lesson time)*

Gather in a circle and have each child share something they can do this week for someone else.

End your time together by reminding the class that God loves them and is always with them, even in times of temptation.

Have the children chant Psalm 32:10 three times, a little louder each time. "...love surrounds those who trust in the Lord."

# TEST

## Fact or Opinion?

	Monday is the best day of the week.
	Christmas is in December.
	Pine trees are conifers.
	1035 – 372 is a difficult problem to solve.
	Igneous rock is formed from cooling lava.

## Solve the following:

$\begin{array}{r} 372 \\ \times 478 \\ \hline \end{array}$	$x + 117 = 436$ $x =$	$7\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{2} =$
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## Synonyms, Antonyms, or Neither?

agree, disagree		rainbow, snowman	
smile, frown		quiet, peaceful	
cold, frigid		bottom, top	
tight, loose		book, plate	
paper clip, rubber band		music, noise	

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

LESSON 15  
8 March 2020

# SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

**Focus Scripture Passage:** John 3:1–17

**Lesson Focus:** Disciples are reborn in both water and Spirit.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- discuss what it means to be reborn in water and Spirit.
- explore ways to illustrate characteristics of the Holy Spirit.
- engage in the spiritual practice Let the Spirit Breathe.
- share experiences from their Lenten calendar.

## Supplies

- Bible
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*
- Fan (electric or hand-powered), paper streamers (optional), small objects that move easily when blown by air (pieces of paper, feathers, small pieces of cloth, or others as available)
- Doctrine and Covenants
- Optional: sticks or dowel rods around 12 in/30 cm long, paper streamers 12 in/30 cm long, push pins or scotch tape
- Extra Lenten calendars (see lesson 14)
- Pens or pencils

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for John 3:1–17 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 47, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Greet children as they enter and have them form a circle. Ask children to share from their Lenten calendars how they used their gifts with others this week.

Invite the Holy Spirit to be present in your class by singing together “Come, Holy Spirit, Come” CCS 154.

Ask children to share about a time when someone told them how to do something but they did not understand how to do it.

- How did they feel?
- What did they do to figure it out?

**Say:** Today’s scripture passage is about a man named Nicodemus who was confused about what Jesus said he should do. Listen carefully for what Jesus told him.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Read together John 3:1–17. Ask the class:

- What did Nicodemus want to know? (how to be “reborn”)
- Did Jesus mean that Nicodemus had to become a baby again? (no)
- What did Jesus say Nicodemus needed to do? (be born “of water and Spirit”)
- What do you think Jesus meant by that?

**Say:** In Community of Christ, people commit to being disciples of Jesus through baptism and confirmation. Baptism happens in the water. It represents leaving behind your old life and being “reborn” into a new way of living—the way of Jesus. Confirmation happens after baptism. Elders in the church lay their hands on the head of the person and ask God to bless the new disciple with the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is a way to be “reborn” of the Holy Spirit.

**Note to teacher:** This would be an ideal time to go deeper with your class about the sacraments of baptism and confirmation, especially if there are children in your class around the age of eight. An excellent resource is *Of Water and Spirit*, ISBN 9780830915699, available through Herald House. This pre-baptismal resource is designed to help children learn more about the sacraments of baptism and confirmation and Community of Christ beliefs. If there are children in your class ready to explore baptism, talk with your pastor or Christian education director about setting up a class.

**Ask:** Have you ever seen the Holy Spirit? In today’s scripture passage, Jesus describes the Holy Spirit as an invisible wind that you cannot see, but whose effects you can see.

Draw the students’ attention to the fan (electric or handheld). Use the fan to blow small objects around on the table (see supply list for suggestions). If using an electric fan, place streamers on the outside cage of the fan. Observe how the wind moves them.

**Ask:**

- What is causing things to blow? (the fan)
- Can anyone see the air or wind created by the fan? (No) God’s Spirit is much the same. We see the actions of the air, and we see the actions of the Holy Spirit in the deeds of others.
- What does it look like when people respond to the Holy Spirit? How do they act?
- What do you do to show others the Holy Spirit? Take a few minutes to role play what that might look like.
- Allow children to experiment with blowing the objects around using only their own air. Clean up as needed.

## 3 RESPOND

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

Read together Doctrine and Covenants 162:2e.

- What does it mean to “let the Spirit breathe”?
- What do you have to do to hear someone breathe? (be quiet, listen carefully, give them room)

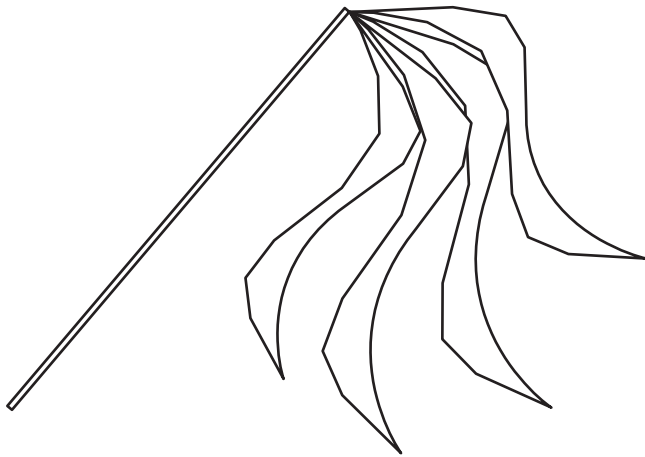
It is the same with the Holy Spirit. We need to take time to listen quietly. This happens when we pray and meditate.

Each week during the six weeks of Lent we are exploring ways to connect with God. These are called spiritual practices. Today's practice is called Let the Spirit Breathe.

Invite the students to lie down in a comfortable position. You may want to dim the lights. Take them through a breathing exercise. Have them slowly breathe in, focusing on watching their stomachs rise. Then have them slowly breathe out, blowing the air quietly out through their lips. Repeat the breathing in and out several times. Remind the class they can do this exercise any time they want to feel close to God and the Holy Spirit.

While still lying down, ask the children to quietly share aloud whatever thoughts, ideas, or feelings they had about the Holy Spirit while they were breathing.

**Optional Activity:** Have the class create Spirit streamers. Pass out a stick (dowel rod) to each child. Have them cut or tear pieces of streamers and tape or pin one end of each streamer to the top of their sticks. Then have children shake or move the stick to represent the movement of the Holy Spirit.



# 4

## SEND

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

Ask students to take out their Lenten calendars (see lesson 14 for more details). Have a few extras available for any students who weren't there last week. Discuss ways the children can show the Holy Spirit to others throughout this week. Have them share ideas to add to their calendars.

# 5

## BLESS

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

Form a circle and sing together "Spirit of the Living God" CCS 567 two times. Hold hands, crouch low to the ground, and slowly rise together as you chant "Let the Spirit breathe." End with arms in the air.

**Note:** Numerous ideas taken and adapted from *Power and Light Kids' Edition: January, February, March, April 2005* © Community of Christ.



LESSON 16  
15 March 2020

# THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT



**Focus Scripture Passage:** Exodus 17:1–7

**Lesson Focus:** Moses gets water from a rock while on a wilderness journey.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- hear the story of Moses getting water from a rock.
- play a game to explore ways God surprises and provides for them.

## Supplies

- Bible
- Plastic Easter eggs filled with items to represent water, such as blue paper, sequins, plastic wrap, or marbles
- A smooth rock for each child
- Paint and paintbrushes or permanent markers

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Exodus 17:1–7 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament*, pp. 60–61, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Show students the plastic Easter eggs.

**Ask:** “What do you think is in these eggs?” Students might guess candy or toys would be in the eggs. Open the eggs. Each egg should be filled with something to represent water, such as blue paper, blue sequins, plastic wrap, or marbles.

**Say:** These eggs are actually filled with “water.” Were you surprised? Our scripture passage today is about a time when Moses and the Hebrew people were surprised by what came out of a rock, just like you were surprised by what came out of these eggs. The people in the story did not always get what they expected.

## 2 ENGAGE

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

Read Exodus 17:1–7 or this summary, adapted from the NRSV:

The Israelites were on a journey through the wilderness. They would travel for a while, then camp for a while. They had left their homes, but they had not arrived at their

destination yet. When they camped at Rephidim, there was no water for the people to drink. The people started to get angry, and told Moses, their leader, "Give us water to drink." Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?" The people were telling Moses that if God was really with them, they would have water. The people kept complaining. "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, just to let us and our children and livestock die of thirst?" Moses cried out to the Lord, "What shall I do with these people? They seem almost ready to stone me." The Lord told Moses, "Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders with you. Take your staff with you. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so the people may drink." Moses did what God told him to do, and water flowed out of the rock. Then Moses called the place "Massah and Meribah," which means "quarrel and test," because of how the people had quarreled and tested the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

#### **Discuss:**

- What do you think the people expected on their journey through the wilderness? Did they always get what they expected?
- What did they do when they did not get what they expected? Would you say they were faithful? Did they have faith in God?
- Was God always with the people? Did they always recognize that God was with them? What sign were they looking for to prove that God was with them?
- When they got water, did it come from where they expected?
- Is God always with us? How do we know? What do we expect from God? Are we ever surprised by God?

## **3 RESPOND**

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

**Say:** Now you will get to make a craft to help you remember our scripture passage for today.

Allow each child to paint a smooth rock. They can paint the rock to look like water is flowing from it. They can also write words on the rock, such as "God is with us," or "God provides."

## **4 SEND**

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

One of Community of Christ's Mission Initiatives is Develop Disciples to Serve. A disciple is someone who follows Jesus. The people in our scripture story today were, like us, still developing as disciples. They were still learning what it means to follow God. They were learning how to trust that God is with them. They were learning that God sometimes provides for us in ways we do not expect.

#### **Game: Four corners**

In this game, the teacher asks a question with four possible responses. Students move to the designated corner of the room that best describes their choice. Take a moment to discuss after each question.

- Where do you feel closest to God? (in nature, at church, at home, somewhere else)
- Where do you expect to see God? (in nature, in other people, in scripture, somewhere else)

- Have you ever wondered if God is with you? (I always wonder, I never wonder, I sometimes wonder, I rarely wonder)
- What has God provided for you? (water, food, family, something else)
- How will you let others know about God's love for them? (tell them my story, pray for them, treat them with love, invite them to church)

## **5 BLESS**

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

End with a prayer:

God, thank you for always being with us.

Thank you for providing for us.

Sometimes we don't know you are there, or we don't understand everything.

Help us to trust you and to know you are with us.

Amen.

LESSON 17  
22 March 2020

# FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

**Focus Scripture Passage:** 1 Samuel 16:1–13

**Lesson Focus:** David is anointed as king. God looks at our hearts.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- hear the story of David's anointing.
- explore the idea that God looks at our hearts and that All Are Called.
- work together to complete a challenge while exploring the Enduring Principle: Worth of All Persons.

## Supplies

- Bible
- Watercolor paints, water, and brushes
- White paper
- White crayons
- One piece of white paper with the phrase "The Lord looks at the heart" written in white crayon
- Rug or towel
- mirror

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for 1 Samuel 16:1–13 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament*, pp. 62–63, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge,  
prepares and motivates for lesson

*(15% of total lesson time)*

Before class, write the phrase, "The Lord looks at the heart" with a white crayon on a piece of white paper. Show the paper to the children. They will not be able to read what is written. Then allow one child or several children to paint over the phrase with watercolor paints. The message will appear. Tell children today's scripture passage is about how God looks at what is in our hearts and does not judge people by their appearance.

## 2 ENGAGE

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

**Say:** Our scripture passage for today is from 1 Samuel 16:1–13. It tells the story of a boy named David, who would become one of the most important kings in history. When our story begins, David is just a little shepherd boy. He is an outsider. People think he is not important.

- Can you think of people in our society or your community who are like young David? (Discuss.)

Read 1 Samuel 16:1–13, or read this summary:

God told Samuel to take some oil and go to see Jesse from Bethlehem. God told Samuel God had chosen a new king from among Jesse's sons. This was a dangerous job for Samuel. If the king, Saul, found out Samuel was looking for another king, Samuel could be killed. Samuel did what the Lord commanded and went to Bethlehem. When he arrived, he found Jesse and Jesse's sons. First, Samuel saw Eliab. Eliab was tall and handsome. He thought surely this was God's chosen king. The Lord said, "The Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." Samuel saw seven of Jesse's sons, and each time God said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." Samuel asked Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" Jesse said, "There is one more, the youngest, but he is out keeping the sheep." Samuel said, "Bring him here." When little David arrived, the Lord said, "Rise and anoint him; for this is the one." Samuel took his oil, put it on David's head, and anointed him. The Spirit of the Lord was with David from that day forward.

### Discuss:

- Why did Samuel think one of the other sons might be God's chosen king?
- Why were people surprised that David was chosen? Did David look like a king?
- Why was it dangerous for Samuel to follow God's directions?
- In Community of Christ, one of our Enduring Principles is All Are Called. We believe everyone is called by God to do something unique or special in the world. David was small and unknown, but he had an important job to do for God. What do you think God might be calling you to do?
- Why do you think David was chosen? What was special about him? What did God see when God looked at David?
- Do we sometimes judge people by their appearance rather than by what's in their heart?
- Samuel took a risk by following God's commands. Is it risky to follow God? Could it be risky to become friends with someone whose outward appearance is different?

## 3 RESPOND

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

Invite children to create a watercolor drawing like the one used in the "Gather" section of this lesson. Give each child a piece of white paper and a white crayon. They can draw hearts or write words such as, "God looks at our hearts." Then they can paint over the writing with watercolor paints, making the drawings appear.

# 4

## SEND

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

One of the Enduring Principles in Community of Christ is Worth of All Persons. This means we believe all people are valuable and important.

- How do we see examples of Worth of All Persons in the story of David being chosen as king?

In the game we are going to play, all people are important. To play the game, everyone stands on a small rug or towel. The object of the game is to turn the rug over without anyone stepping off of the rug. Have the group work together and included everyone's ideas to reach the goal. Remind children that God looks at what is in our hearts and God values each of us.

# 5

## BLESS

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

Invite each child to look into a mirror. Remind them that God values each person (Worth of All Persons) and God has called each of them to do important things in the world (All Are Called).

Invite children to think about something that makes them special and something they are able to do.

Offer a prayer thanking God for each child and the gifts they are given.

LESSON 18  
29 March 2020

# FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Ezekiel 37:1–14

**Lesson Focus:** God breathes new life into bones in the Valley of the Dry Bones.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- hear the story of Ezekiel and the Valley of the Dry Bones.
- explore the Holy Spirit and how it works in their lives.

## Supplies

- Bible
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*
- Latex-free balloons
- Black paper
- White paper
- Black marker
- Cotton swabs
- Glue
- Bubbles and bubble wands

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Ezekiel 37:1–14 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament*, pp. 64–65, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Teach children the song “Dry Bones (Dem Bones)”. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HrzBsUtUdts> for an example. This song was inspired by today’s scripture passage from Ezekiel.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Read Ezekiel 37:1–14 from an NRSV Bible or a more common-language translation such as The Message. This is a challenging passage for children. Children need to understand that the bones are a

symbol for the people of Israel, who were living as exiles (they were not allowed to live in their own land). The breath of God is symbolic of God breathing new life into the people. When they were hopeless, God gave them hope.

We continue even today to experience times in our lives as a valley of dry bones when bad things happen to us. We lose hope, and we do not know where to turn for comfort, joy, and light. Ezekiel reminds us that only God can fill us with the Holy Spirit and call us back into life. Only the breath of God, breathing through us, can restore our spirit. This is a passage of hope and promise.

**Discuss:**

- When have you felt hopeless or afraid?
- What promise can we learn from Ezekiel?
- How does God “breathe new life” into us?

Using latex-free balloons (in case of latex allergies), show children an uninflated balloon. Talk about how the balloon looks sort of sad. It doesn't seem to bring much joy. Then blow up the balloon. This is like the “breath of God” from today's scripture passage. The Spirit of God can fill us and give us joy. Blow up a few more balloons and let the children bounce them to each other, sharing some joy!

## 3 RESPOND

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

Invite children to create a skeleton craft. Draw or print a skull on white paper for each child. Place the skull at the top of a piece of black paper. Then glue cotton swabs on the paper to look like bones. Adults might need to help children cut the cotton swabs into smaller pieces. (For more information, see <https://www.thriftyfun.com/Halloween-Q-Tip-Skeleton.html>.)

As children work, remind them that the bones represent God's promises to us.

## 4 SEND

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

In today's scripture story, the Holy Spirit is represented as the “breath of God.” Read the Community of Christ Basic Beliefs statement on The Holy Spirit:

We believe in the Holy Spirit, Giver of Life, holy Wisdom, true God. The Spirit moves through and sustains creation; endows the church for mission; frees the world from sin, injustice, and death; and transforms disciples. Wherever we find love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, or self-control, there the Holy Spirit is working.

—*Sharing in Community of Christ*, 4th Edition, p. 34

- Discuss how children think of the Holy Spirit. Do they think of the Holy Spirit as the breath of God, a gentle wind, a dove, a warm blanket or something else?
- Invite children to blow bubbles. Encourage them to imagine their breath as the breath of God, moving among creation. Where have they seen the Holy Spirit at work?



# 5

## **BLESS**

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

Sing "Breathe on Me, Breath of God" CCS 190.

LESSON 19  
5 April 2020

# PALM SUNDAY

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Matthew 21:1–11

**Lesson Focus:** Hosanna to the Son of David!

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- discuss the events of Palm Sunday.
- journey through Holy Week.
- share experiences from their Lenten calendar.

## Supplies

- Extra Lenten calendars (see lesson 14)
- Large sheet of blank paper
- Crayons
- Pens or pencils
- Holy Week handout
- Bible (NRSV)
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 21:1–11 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, pp. 53–54, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Greet children as they enter and have them form a circle. Ask children to share from their Lenten calendars the ways they used their gifts with others this week.

Sing together “Takwaba Uwabanga Yesu! (There’s No One Like Jesus!)” CCS 121. One of Community of Christ’s Enduring Principles is Worth of All Persons. Remind the children that Jesus’ teachings, sacrifice, and love are for everyone, not just for people who look, talk, or think just as we do.

## 2 ENGAGE

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

Place blank paper over the top of the table. As you tell the story of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, invite the children to use crayons to draw palm leaves all over the paper. Draw an example first in case they don't know what a palm frond looks like.

**Say:** Today is Palm Sunday. This is the week we remember Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Jesus and his disciples had been traveling outside Jerusalem, sharing the gospel message with others. To return to Jerusalem was risky because there were people there who thought Jesus was a threat and should be killed. But Jesus knew it was time to return to Jerusalem to share in the Passover meal. Share the story of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem adapted from Matthew 21:1–11 NRSV.

When they [Jesus and the disciples] neared Jerusalem and reached Bethphage at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples into the village with these instructions: "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them with you." This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

"Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, put their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

"Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, "Who is this?" The crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."

**Say:** Put yourself in this story and imagine that you are one of the disciples.

- How would you feel when Jesus told you it was time to go back to Jerusalem? Why?
- Jesus just asked you to go into town to take a donkey and her colt. How do you feel? Why do you do what Jesus asked?

Imagine you are someone in the crowd watching as Jesus enters Jerusalem on the back of a donkey.

- How do you respond if you have never met or even heard of Jesus?
- What do you do if you are a believer? How are you feeling? What do you want others to know about Jesus?

## 3 RESPOND

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

There were many important events following Jesus' entry into Jerusalem that led to his crucifixion and then his resurrection. We call the week between Palm Sunday and Easter Holy Week. This week is a time to remember Jesus' final journey to the cross and his resurrection.

Give each child a copy of the Holy Week Journey handout (end of lesson) with windows cut and a blank piece of paper taped to the back. Depending on the size and age of the class, work individually, in small groups, or as a whole class together. Look up each scripture reference; then open the window and in the blank window draw a picture or write a word that represents the scripture. **NOTE:** Some of the scripture references are quite long and due to time may need to be summarized by the teacher.

## **4 SEND**

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

Have students take out their Lenten calendars (see lesson 14). Have each one share at least one idea of how to show others the hope of Jesus this week.

Discuss ways they can share the Holy Week Journey with their families this week.

## **5 BLESS**


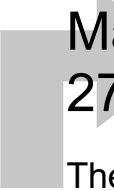


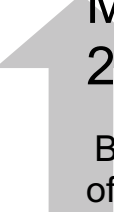






Time of prayer, praise,  
blessing, and hope  
*(5% of lesson time)*

Sing together the camp song “Allelu, Alleluia, Praise Ye the Lord.” Sit while singing “Allelu, alleluia,” and stand with hands raised high while singing “Praise ye the Lord.” Or sing “Halle, Halle, Hallelujah” CCS 86.

# Journey of Holy Week: Matthew 21–28

Cut dotted lines only. Tape blank paper behind.

Fold on solid lines to create windows.

 <p>Matthew 21:1–11</p> <p>Jesus' entry into Jerusalem</p>	 <p>Matthew 27:1–2, 17–31</p> <p>The trial of Jesus</p>	 <p>Matthew 27:32–56</p> <p>Jesus' crucifixion and death</p>
 <p>Matthew 21:12–17</p> <p>Jesus cleanses the temple</p>	 <p>Matthew 26:47–68</p> <p>Betrayal and arrest of Jesus</p>	 <p>Matthew 27:57–66</p> <p>Jesus' body moved to tomb</p>
 <p>Matthew 21:23–25</p> <p>Jesus teaches</p>	 <p>Matthew 26:36–45</p> <p>Jesus prays in Gethsemane</p>	 <p>Matthew 28:1–20</p> <p>The Resurrection of Jesus</p>
 <p>Matthew 26:1–5, 14–16</p> <p>Plot to kill Jesus</p>	 <p>Matthew 26:17–35</p> <p>Jesus' Last Supper with disciples</p>	<p>Halleluia! Jesus is alive!</p>

LESSON 20  
12 April 2020

# EASTER DAY RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Matthew 28:1–10, John 20:1–18

**Lesson Focus:** Jesus is alive!

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- Discuss the events surrounding Jesus' resurrection as shared in the Gospel of Matthew.
- review the journey through Holy Week.
- celebrate Jesus' resurrection.

## Supplies

- Community of Christ Sings (CCS)
- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- Optional: *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- Optional: Shrink art material (handout end of lesson)
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Matthew 28:1–10, John 20:1–18 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, pp. 62–63, and pp. 60–61, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Greet children as they enter and have them form a circle. Ask children to tell how they shared Holy Week with the family. Review the events of Holy Week, especially the Crucifixion and burial in the tomb. Explain that today is the day we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus just three days later. Today we celebrate that Jesus is alive!

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Share the Resurrection story with the children. Read John 20:1–18 and summarize the story for the children. Older children can read it and summarize the story themselves. Or read the Resurrection story from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471), pp. 98–99.

## 3 RESPOND

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

Give each person a handout to color. While working, talk about ways the children can share the story of Jesus with their friends.

Alternate: Print or trace handout onto shrink art material, one for each person (available at craft stores and online). Provide permanent markers or colored pencils to color the design. Before baking, punch two holes in the top corners of the picture so it can be hung with a ribbon or string.

Bake pictures in the oven according to package directions. Final pictures will be half the size of the original and much stiffer.

## 4 SEND

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

Provide several plastic eggs for each child. Give them slips of paper on which to write messages of hope. After messages are written, place one in each egg. Challenge children to share the story of hope by sharing their eggs with individuals in the congregation.

Here are a few to get started:

Be changed. Be the change!

Jesus lives today.

Sonrise—God’s gift to all.

Jesus is alive!

Darkness is followed by light.

The tomb is empty. Celebrate!

# 5

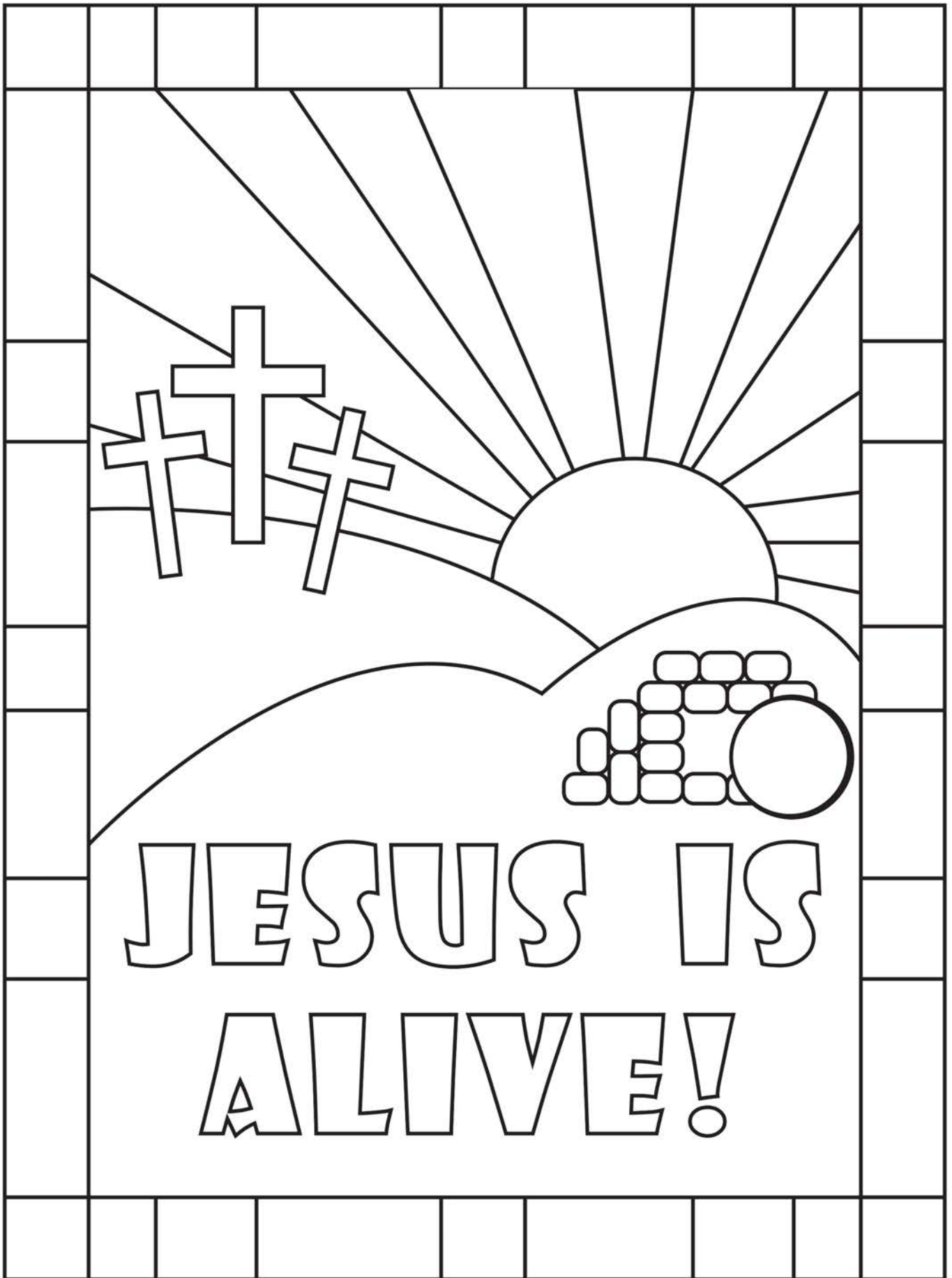
## **BLESS**

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

Sing together the camp song “Allelu, Alleluia, Praise Ye the Lord.” Sit while singing “Allelu, alleluia,” and stand with hands raised high while singing “Praise ye the Lord”. If you are not familiar with the song, look it up online to learn this simple tune. Or sing “Halle, Halle, Hallelujah” CCS 86.

Close with a prayer giving thanks for the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.





LESSON 21  
19 April 2020

# SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

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

**Lesson Focus:** When Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit onto his disciples, he invited them to receive and share his peace. We are also invited to receive the Holy Spirit and Share the Peace of Jesus Christ.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- hear the story of the disciples' encounter with Jesus after his resurrection.
- understand that through the continuing presence of the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ is present with us.
- learn that we are invited to Share the Peace of Jesus Christ.

## Supplies

- Small stone for each child
- Permanent marker
- Bible (NRSV)
- Sheet of paper for each child
- Washable paint thinned with water (one or more colors)
- Straw for each child (optional)
- Small lightweight objects (cotton ball, small piece of paper, feather, leaf, piece of yarn, etc.)
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for John 20:19–31 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, pp. 64–65, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

### Hide and Seek

Write a different word from the focus scripture passage on small stones with permanent marker (examples: Jesus, Disciples, Peace, Receive, Breathe, Holy Spirit, Rejoice, Believe, Send, Blessed). Hide stones in the classroom or class setting (enough for each child to find one). As children arrive, ask them to look for a stone. Once everyone has arrived and found a stone, ask children to read the words on their stones and share their ideas about what the words mean. Tell children we will hear these words again as we read the scripture passage.

# 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction

*(35% of lesson time)*

**Say:** Last week was Easter Sunday, and we learned about Jesus' resurrection. Mary saw Jesus and spoke to him, and she went and told the disciples what Jesus said to her. But they did not believe her, and they were afraid. They were hiding in the house where they met with the doors locked.

- Why do you think the disciples were afraid?
- Can you think of times you have been afraid?
- What is something you might hide from?

Read the first part of the scripture passage (John 20:19–22). Ask children to tell you when they hear the words written on their stones:

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

**Say:** Like our stones, the disciples were hiding. Jesus came to seek them and tell them they did not need to be afraid.

Jesus breathed on the disciples. Blow into your hand.

- How does your breath feel?
- What do we use our breath to do? (Breathe to stay alive, blow up a balloon, blow out a candle, cool off food)

Jesus breathed on his disciples and gave them the Holy Spirit. We will talk more about breath in a few minutes. Let's hear more of the story:

One of Jesus' disciples, Thomas, was not in the house when Jesus first appeared to them. When the disciples told Thomas about Jesus, he did not believe them.

## **Read John 20:24–25.**

Ask children to tell you when they hear the words written on their stones:

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

- Can you think of a time someone told you something that was hard to believe?
- What did it take for you to believe it was true?

## **Read John 20:26–29.**

Ask children to tell you when they hear the words written on their stones:

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

- Why did Thomas believe this time?

- Can you think of a time you believed something without seeing it?

## 3 RESPOND

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

**Say:** Jesus speaks to his disciples about going from believing in him to action—doing something!

Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit (v. 21).

### Object Lesson: Wind, Breath, Spirit

Put small lightweight objects on a table one at a time. (examples: cotton ball, small piece of paper, feather, leaf, or piece of yarn) Ask children to blow the objects. (Objects should blow off the table.) Invite each child to have a turn.

**Say:**

- What happened to the objects when we blew them? (blew off the table)
- Why did they move?
- What happens to the same objects if we don’t blow on them? (they stay there)

We are moving these objects with our breath. Wind also blows objects.

- What can the wind move?

In the New Testament, the same word (*Pneuma*—Greek) means wind, breath, and spirit. Teach children the word in Greek and help them pronounce it “noo-ma”.

In the same way we moved objects with our breath and the blowing wind moves objects, the Holy Spirit moves us. Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit on the disciples and said he was sending them. He sent them to share his peace.

### Breath Art:

Put dots of thin paint on a piece of paper. Blow the paint to make a design (or blow through a straw).

**Ask:** What does your design remind you of?

## 4 SEND

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

**Say:** In Community of Christ, we proclaim Jesus Christ and become his disciples by following him and sharing his peace with others (*Of Water and Spirit*, p. 39). Like the disciples, Jesus gives us the Holy Spirit and sends us to share his peace.

- Can you think of someone (family, friend, neighbor) that you could share peace with?
- How can you share the peace of Jesus Christ? What could you say or do? (Help children think of simple, practical ways they could share peace.)

### Going Deeper:

Sharing the peace of Jesus Christ involves generously and compassionately offering witness, ministry, sacraments, and community life that reconciles and restores people to right or righteous relationships with God, themselves, others, and creation (*Sharing in Community of Christ*, 4th Edition, p. 14).

Ask open-ended questions to explore sharing the peace of Jesus Christ:

- What does it mean to be generous?
- What does it mean to be compassionate?
- Can you think of ways we can be generous and compassionate by sharing our witness (telling people what we are learning about Jesus and why it is important), ministry (helping people), sacraments (inviting friends to come to your baptism), and community life (inviting friends to church or camp)?
- Can you think of a time you invited someone?
- What do you think it means to have a “right relationship” with:
  - **God** (examples: prayer, learning about God in Sunday school, going to church and camp)
  - **Yourself** (examples: making responsible choices, taking care of yourself)
  - **Others** (examples: being kind, forgiving others who treat you unkindly, sharing)
  - **Creation** (examples: not wasting resources such as water, recycling, picking up trash)?

## 5

### BLESS

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

Sing first verse of “Breathe on Me, Breath of God” CCS 190 as a call and response. (Change to contemporary language for age suitability and understanding, for example: thou—you, wouldst—would, dost—do.)

Stand in a circle and hold hands. Close with circle sentence prayer started by teacher:

“Jesus, breathe your Holy Spirit on us. We can share your peace by... (Go around circle and encourage children to say the idea they thought of earlier to share peace.) Amen.”

LESSON 22  
26 April 2020

# THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 24:13–35

**Lesson Focus:** Jesus' followers were sad after he died. We, too, can feel sad or afraid and have questions. Jesus helps us with our feelings and questions through the Holy Spirit and the Blessings of Community.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- hear the story of two of Jesus' followers meeting Jesus after he had risen.
- talk about death as something about which we can feel sad or afraid and have questions.
- learn how the Holy Spirit and sharing the Blessings of Community can help us with our feelings and questions.

## Supplies

- Ingredients to make play dough: flour, salt, oil, water, bowl, spoon for mixing (for gluten free, substitute rice flour and cornstarch for the flour)
- Reusable airtight container(s) to store play dough for future use (or send home with children)  
Example: recycled plastic tubs with lids (such as margarine or yogurt containers)
- *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A* by Ralph Wilton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- **OR** Bible (NRSV)
- Optional: stress ball
- Simple healthy snack (loaf of bread, pitcher of 100% fruit juice or water, fruit, or cheese); Be aware of food allergies.
- Reusable or recyclable plate and cup for each child
- Optional: dictionary
- Piece of yarn (about 18 in/46 cm long) for each child
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Luke 24:13–35 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 66, available through Herald House.

# 1 GATHER

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

## Play dough recipe

Ingredients: 2 cups (473.18 ml) flour  
1 cup (236.59 ml) salt  
1 tablespoon (14.79 ml) oil  
1 cup (236.59) cold water

Add ingredients to bowl. Allow each child to mix with spoon. As ingredients begin to stick together, give each child a lump of dough to knead until smooth. If dough is sticky, add more flour. Depending on how many children are in the class, you may need to make more than one batch. **Note:** Be aware of gluten allergies. Substitute a gluten-free recipe if allergies are present: 1 cup (236.59 ml) rice flour, 1 cup (236.59 ml) corn starch, 1 cup (236.59 ml) salt, 2 teaspoons (9.86 ml) oil, 1 cup (236.59 ml) warm water.

As children arrive, invite them to help you make play dough. Give each child a lump of play dough to knead while the focus scripture passage is read.

# 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

**Say:** When we made play dough today, we used some of the same ingredients used to make bread. There are several scripture passages that use bread to tell a story about Jesus. We will hear one of those stories today.

Read *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, pp. 102–104, or paraphrased Luke 24:13–35 NRSV.

## Luke 24:13–35 NRSV (paraphrased)

Now on that same day two of the disciples were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all the things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but they didn't recognize him. And Jesus said to them, "What are you talking about while you walk along?"

They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that happened?" Jesus asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be killed. And besides that, it is now the third day since Jesus died. Some women of our group were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had seen angels who said Jesus was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it empty as the women had said; but they did not see Jesus."

- How did Jesus' friends feel when he died?
- How do you think Jesus' friends felt when they heard that the women said Jesus was alive?

Then Jesus said to them, "You're having a hard time believing these things." Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he told them the things about himself in the scriptures. As they came near the village, Jesus walked ahead as if he were going on. But they said to him, "Stay with us, because it is almost nighttime." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he disappeared from their sight. They said to each other, "Didn't we have a warm feeling in our hearts

while he was talking to us on the road?” They got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the other disciples and their friends gathered together. They were saying, “Jesus is alive, and he has appeared to Simon!” Then they told what had happened on the road, and how they recognized Jesus when he broke the bread.

- Have you had someone you know or a pet die? Invite children to share experiences of loss. Ask open-ended questions: How did you feel? What did you do? Who helped you? Listen to children’s stories, but be careful not to minimize children’s experiences or give simplistic answers to their questions. Remind children that it is okay to have questions we can’t answer.

**Say:** When we think about people and animals we love dying, we can feel sad or afraid. The same Holy Spirit that we learned about last week that Jesus breathed on the disciples also comforts us. In fact, the Holy Spirit is sometimes called the Comforter. Jesus is always present with us through the Holy Spirit, even if we don’t recognize him or understand, like the travelers on the road.

## 3 RESPOND

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

### Ask:

- How does it feel to squish the play dough?
- Have you ever used a stress ball? (Show example, if available, and pass around for each child to have a turn squeezing the ball.)

Sometimes people use something like a stress ball to feel better when they are nervous or afraid.

- What can you do when you have strong feelings—like sadness, fear, or anger—to help you feel better?

Talking to friends can help, too. Jesus talked to the travelers on the road and listened to their questions. After they realized it was Jesus, they went back to talk to their friends about what happened. Jesus’ followers had a lot of questions about what had happened, and it helped to talk about their questions together.

- What questions do you have about this story?

### Spiritual Practice: Sharing in the Round

**Say:** Jesus went into the home with the travelers and broke bread with them. It was in sharing a meal that they recognized Jesus. Jesus started this practice with his disciples before he died. We continue this practice today in Community of Christ when we share the sacrament of Communion. We also share with each other in fellowship at potlucks, going out to eat, and inviting people to our homes. We learn more about Jesus and each other when we talk and share together.

Have a simple, healthy snack to share at the table with the children. Ask children to pass the food to each other. Let children serve themselves and pour their own drinks. Help younger children as needed, or ask an older child to help younger children. Invite children into conversation by asking questions to get to know each other better.

#### Sharing in the Round

Sharing in the Round is an ancient practice of table fellowship. Some of the most meaningful ministry by Jesus occurred around the table of invitation and hospitality. Good food, friends, and meaningful conversation lead to deeper relationships and community. This missional practice is an important way to follow a model of ministry by Jesus and embody and live the concerns and passion of Christ (adapted from [www.missionalleaders.org](http://www.missionalleaders.org)).



# 4 SEND

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

**Say:** When we share together in food and conversation, we learn more about Jesus and each other. We can talk to each other about our questions. We can pray together. These are the Blessings of Community we share in Community of Christ. Last week, we were invited to Share the Peace of Jesus Christ. We can share peace by inviting someone to share a meal with us.

- Can you think of someone you can invite to share a meal with you? (Examples: invite a friend from school over for dinner, ask your family to invite someone from church to go out to eat, take a meal to share with an elderly neighbor, etc.)

## Going Deeper—Enduring Principle: Blessings of Community

Select one of the phrases from the Enduring Principle Blessings of Community to read to the children. Use a dictionary to look up words children may not understand. Ask questions and ask for children's ideas to deepen understanding of what it means to participate in community.

- The gospel of Jesus Christ is expressed best in community life where people become vulnerable to God's grace and each other.
- True community includes compassion for and solidarity with the poor, marginalized, and oppressed.
- True community upholds the worth of persons while providing a healthy alternative to self-centeredness, isolation, and conformity.
- Sacred community provides nurture and growth opportunities for all people, especially those who cannot fully care for themselves.
- We value our connections and share a strong sense of trust in and belonging with one another—even if we never have met.
- Some disciples are called and ordained to particular priesthood responsibilities and ministries for the sake of the community, the congregation, and the world.
- We are called to create communities of Christ's peace in our families and congregations and across villages, tribes, nations, and throughout creation.

—*Sharing in Community of Christ*, 4th Edition, pp. 31–32

## Game: Draw the Circle Wide (Community Building)

Give each child a section of yarn. Ask them to make a circle with the yarn on the floor and stand inside it.

**Say:** We are invited to receive and share the Blessings of Community. Right now, we are standing in our own space, alone. When we join in community, we get to know each other, share our feelings, ask questions, and learn together how we can be disciples who follow Jesus.

Ask the children to work together to transform their individual circles of yarn into one circle that includes everyone.

# 5

## BLESS

Time of prayer, praise,  
blessing, and hope

*(5% of lesson time)*

While standing together in the yarn circle, sing “Draw the Circle Wide” CCS 273 (chorus only) or “From You I Receive” CCS 611.

If children are unfamiliar with the hymn, teach as a call and response.

Close with a prayer of blessing for each child as they think about how they can invite someone to share the Blessings of Community.

LESSON 23  
3 May 2020

# FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER



**Focus Scripture Passage:** Psalm 23

**Lesson Focus:** God cares for us.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- explore the meaning of Psalm 23.
- create bracelets to help them memorize Psalm 23.
- discover how scriptures such as Psalm 23 can help them develop inner peace and connect this to the Enduring Principle of Pursue Peace (Shalom).

## Supplies

- Bible
- Paper and crayons
- Colored beads, one of each color for each child (white, green, blue, clear, black, brown, orange, purple, red)
- String or pipe cleaners for stringing beads
- Psalm 23 Bracelet handout for each child (end of lesson)

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Psalm 23 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament*, p. 78, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Ask students to solve a riddle:

Long ago, my job was very common.

Today, some people still have my job but it is not as common.

I spend a lot of time outside with animals.

I am mentioned a lot in the Bible.

I take care of sheep.

What am I?

Answer: A shepherd. Ask children what they know about shepherds.

## 2 ENGAGE

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

Invite children to fold a piece of paper into four sections. Stop at four points during the reading and have kids draw what they envision.

Read Psalm 23. Stop after verse 2, 4, 5, and 6 so children can draw what they are picturing. As they draw, discuss the meaning of each verse. According to Community of Christ Sermon & Class Helps, for this scripture:

1. The good shepherd is a provider. The first three verses explain how the shepherd provides everything that the flock needs. The good shepherd provides good food to eat, calm waters from which to drink, safe places to rest, and safe passage.
2. Verse 4 touches on an often-overlooked part of being a shepherd. In this verse, the speaker fears no evil because the shepherd's rod and staff give comfort. A shepherd's rod was a weapon that could be used like a club. It was used to fight off wild animals that might want to eat the sheep. The shepherd's staff was a tool to prevent his animals from coming to harm; it was used to clear the path of snakes or scorpions. Some staffs have been depicted as having hooks used to lift sheep out of precarious circumstances by hooking them behind their front legs. The use of these tools brings the speaker comfort because of the shepherd's fierce loyalty.
3. Verses 5 and 6 stress the speaker's total dependence on the shepherd and thanksgiving for the shepherd's protection. In the first part of verse 5 the speaker realizes that while eating at the table, he is surrounded by enemies. Then, in the second half of verse 5 and in verse 6, the speaker expresses gratitude for the shepherd's leadership.

## 3 RESPOND

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

Invite children to make beaded bracelets that will help them remember Psalm 23. Give each child a paper that lists the colors of beads and which order they go. Children may string the beads on string or pipe cleaners to make a bracelet. When they are finished, they can practice saying Psalm 23 using the bracelet as a guide.

## 4 SEND

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

One of the Enduring Principles in Community of Christ is Pursue Peace (Shalom). One kind of peace is peace within ourselves. Psalm 23 reminds us that we can find peace by remembering that God is with us, protects us like a shepherd, and loves us. God wants us to feel happy and peaceful. Only when we feel peace inside us can we share peace with others.

Do some simple yoga poses and encourage children to think peaceful thoughts, such as those from Psalm 23. "My cup runs over" or "He leads me beside still waters" might be good verses to remember. Suggestions for simple yoga poses include:

- Downward-facing dog: Place hands and feet on the ground. Bend at the waist.
- Tree pose: stand up straight with arms out to the side. Carefully lift one leg and place the foot on the inside of the other leg. Balance like this for as long as you can.

# 5

## BLESS

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

At the end of Psalm 23, the writer was feeling very thankful (“My cup runneth over”). Say a pop-up prayer. The teacher says each line, then children have the opportunity to “pop up” and say more.

Thank you, God, for nature: (kids pop up and say something from nature for which they are thankful.)

Thank you, God, for toys: (kids pop up and say names of toys)

Thank you, God, for food: (kids pop up and name food)

Thank you, God, for people: (kids pop up and name people)

Thank you, God, for everything. Amen.

## Psalm 23 Bracelet

BEAD	VERSE
White	The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
Green	He makes me lie down in green pastures.
Blue	He leads me beside still waters.
Clear	He restores my soul. He leads me in right paths.
Black	Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me.
Brown	Your rod and your staff comfort me. You prepare a table for me in the presence of my enemies.
Orange	You anoint my head with oil. My cup overflows.
Purple	Goodness and mercy will follow me all of my days.
Red	I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

LESSON 24  
10 May 2020

# FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Psalm 31:1–5, 15–16

**Lesson Focus:** God is our rock and refuge.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- hear Psalm 31:1–5, 15–16.
- explore metaphors for God.
- learn how praise and worship are part of the Mission Initiative: Experience Congregations in Mission.

## Supplies

- NRSV Bible and other translations
- *Community of Christ Sings* or campfire songs
- Rocks in a variety of shapes and sizes, which will be used for stacking
- Lego® bricks or other blocks
- A small rock for each child
- Flexible wire: approximately 15 inches (38.1 cm) per child
- Cord or string for necklaces: approximately 18 inches (45.72 cm) per child
- Wire cutter

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Psalm 31:1–5, 15–16 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament*, p. 79, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge,  
prepares and motivates for lesson

*(15% of total lesson time)*

Place several rocks of different shapes and sizes on the table. Invite children to stack rocks in a variety of ways, creating towers by balancing the rocks. As they work, talk about what the kids know about rocks.

- How do people use rocks?
- What metaphors do people use for rocks? (Solid as a rock, rock hard, you are my rock).
- How is God like a rock?

(For ideas related to rock balancing, see <https://www.education.com/science-fair/article/balancing-rocks/>.)

## 2 ENGAGE

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

Read Psalm 31: 1–5, 15–16. Read the passage several times, possibly using several different Bible translations. As you read, allow children to create a fortress out of small blocks such as Lego® bricks. Discuss the metaphors for God found in the passage. God is called a rock, a refuge, and a fortress. In this passage, God is a rescuer, leader, guide, redeemer, protector, deliverer, and savior. As children build, talk about how God is all of these things to each of us. When has God protected or guided you?

## 3 RESPOND

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

Invite children to create necklaces. Give each child a small rock and about 15 inches of flexible wire. They should wrap the wire around the rock several times and create a loop on the end. An adult can cut off any extra wire. Then string the rock onto a length of string or cord and tie the ends together to form a necklace.



Source: <http://craftscollection.net/?p=1644>

## 4 SEND

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

One of the Mission Initiatives in Community of Christ is Experience Congregations in Mission.



According to the church website:

### **Experience Congregations in Mission**

We are poised to become congregations that are the true and living expressions of Jesus Christ, woven together by the Spirit, and sent into the world as evangelistic witnesses, compassionate ministers, and justice and peacemakers.

We fulfill God's ultimate vision as we...

- Nurture Congregations of Christ's Love and Peace
- Experience God's Presence through Worship
- Become a People of Peace, Reconciliation, and Healing of the Spirit

—<https://www.CofChrist.org/mission-initiatives>

Today's scripture passage is all about praising and worshiping God for God's greatness! As a congregation, we come together to worship so we can experience God's presence and then become a people of peace. Psalms is an entire book of the Bible full of songs for God.

Let's worship God and enjoy some other songs about God! Play or sing some favorite camp songs or hymns. Or play a game of "musical chairs" with praise music.



## **BLESS**

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

Close with a prayer of praise.

God, you are my rock.

God, you are... (Let each child finish the statement with words of their choice.)

Amen.

LESSON 25  
17 May 2020

# SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

**Focus Scripture Passage:** John 14:15–21

**Lesson Focus:** Jesus will not leave us alone! He loves us and sends the Holy Spirit as an Advocate.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- hear Jesus' words of promise to be with us.
- learn that Jesus asks us to keep his commandments to love God, others, and ourselves.
- explore how we can keep Jesus' commandments by being an advocate for others.

## Supplies

- Copies of Love handout (end of lesson)
- Markers or crayons
- Dictionary
- Newspaper or news magazine
- Pillar candle or battery-operated tea candle for each child
- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Tape
- Bible (NRSV)
- *Community of Christ Sings* or audio recording (available through Herald House)

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for John 14:15–21 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 71, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge,  
prepares and motivates for lesson

*(15% of total lesson time)*

As children arrive, give them a Love handout and ask them to write or draw ways they can show love (See handout at the end of the lesson.)

When everyone has arrived, sing "Ubi Caritas et Amor" CCS 152 ("Where there is charity and love, God is to be found") or play audio recording. If children are unfamiliar with the hymn, sing as a call and response, one phrase at a time.

## 2 ENGAGE

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

Read focus scripture passage: John 14:15–21.

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

“I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

**Say:** Jesus says that if we love him, we will keep his commandments. Let’s look at two scripture passages to learn what Jesus asks us to do:

Read or ask a child in the class to read the scripture passages below:

John 13:34–35:

“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Matthew 22:36–39:

“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

- What does Jesus want us to do to keep his commandments? (*love God, others or neighbors, and self*)

Ask children to write on their Love handout: Love God. Love others. Love myself.

**Say:** Jesus also says he will ask God to send an Advocate.

Use a dictionary to look up the word advocate. Read definitions and help children identify which definition best describes what Jesus means when he says he will ask God to give the disciples an advocate.

**Say:** An advocate is someone who stands up for another person. Advocate is another word used to describe the Holy Spirit, the same Spirit that Jesus breathed on the disciples after the Resurrection.

## 3 RESPOND

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

### Spiritual Practice: Holding in the Light

**Say:** Our scripture passage today says that Jesus will send the Holy Spirit as an Advocate, so we will know Jesus is with us. If we love Jesus, we will keep his commandments to love God, ourselves, and other people. Part of loving people is standing up for them in unfair situations. The Holy Spirit will help us have the courage to stand up for and love other people.

Read several headlines in a newspaper or news magazine. Help children name situations of injustice where people might need an advocate.

Light a pillar candle in the center of the table, or provide each child a battery-operated tea candle. Ask each child to name someone or a situation (either from their life or from the news) that they can pray for and stand up for. If using battery-operated candles, send candles with children to continue prayer practice at home.

### Going Deeper

“The prevailing message is love. Jesus’ love enables ministry as followers understand it being about God’s grace and generosity. God reveals love through the ministry of Jesus and the promise of the Holy Spirit. Believers return Jesus’ love when they live in love. When they keep Jesus’ commandments they love him.”

—*Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 71

Jesus says that he will not leave us alone! He will stay with us and he will advocate for us through the Holy Spirit.

Read these sentences describing the Enduring Principle Grace and Generosity.

- God’s grace, especially as revealed in Jesus Christ, is generous and unconditional.
- Having received God’s generous grace, we respond generously and graciously receive the generosity of others.
- We offer all we are and have to God’s purposes as revealed in Jesus Christ.
- We generously share our witness, resources, ministries, and sacraments according to our true capacity.

—*Sharing in Community of Christ*, 4th Edition, p. 28

We receive God’s grace and generosity through the love of Jesus.

- How can we respond to God’s grace and generosity by keeping Jesus’ commandments and generously sharing our love and resources?

### Love Chains

Provide precut strips of construction paper, or, depending on ages of children, let children cut their own paper strips. Give each child several strips of paper. Ask children to think of words that show how they can love God, love themselves, and love their neighbors. Write these words on their paper strips. Use tape to make the paper strips into chains. Connect children’s chains to hang in the classroom, or let children take their chains home.

# 4

## SEND

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

Ask children to sit on the ground in pairs facing each other with their knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Ask children to keep their hands in their laps and feet flat on the floor and try to stand up without moving their hands or feet.

Then ask children to grasp each other’s wrists and help each other stand up, keeping their feet flat on the floor. If classroom is small, consider moving outside if weather permits or to a large area, such as a fellowship hall.

After children finish playing the game, ask:

- Was it easier to stand up by yourself or when you helped each other?
- How can we be advocates for each other and other people?
- How does helping other people show Jesus that we love him and want to keep his commandments to love God, our neighbors, and ourselves?

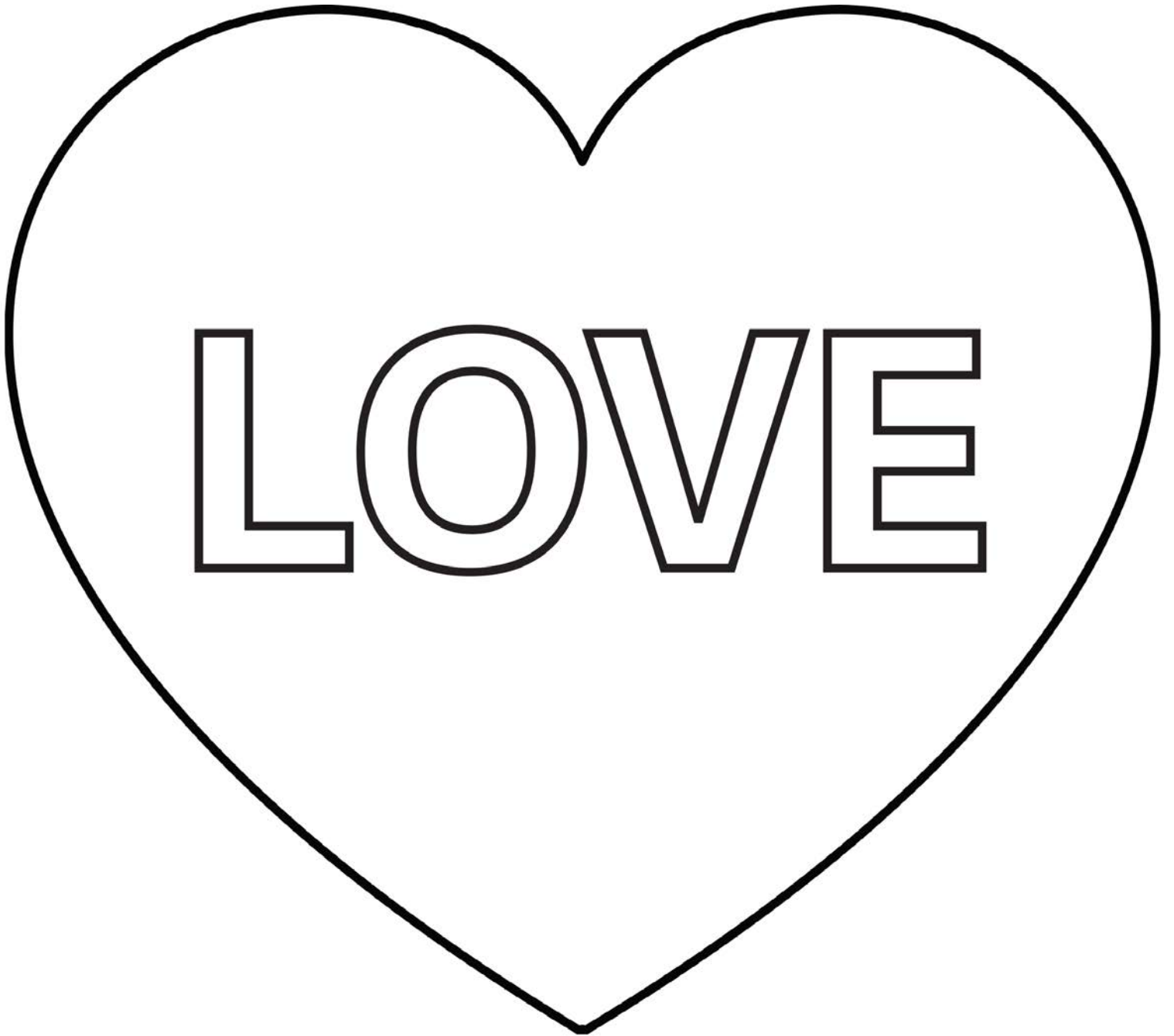
# 5

## **BLESS**

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

Sing “We Are One in the Spirit” verses 1 and 2, CCS 359. On verse 2, join hands and walk together in a circle.

Close with a circle prayer. Invite each child to take part in the prayer: “God, help me use my hands to show love by...”



LESSON 26  
24 May 2020

# SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

## ACCENTION OF THE LORD

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 24:44–53

**Lesson Focus:** Jesus blessed his disciples before he left them. We can use our hands and actions to bless.

### Objectives

*The learners will...*

- hear the scripture passage about Jesus blessing his disciples and ascending to heaven.
- think about what it means when the scripture passage says Jesus was carried up to heaven.
- learn that blessing means to “speak well of.”

### Supplies

- Bible (NRSV)
- Construction paper
- Several colors of washable paint
- Paintbrushes
- Sheet of paper for each child
- Crayons or markers
- Scissors for each child
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Luke 24:44–53 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, pp. 72–73, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

### Spiritual Practice: Body Prayer

**Say:** Prayer helps us listen for God and follow Jesus. There are many ways to pray. Today, we are going to pray with our bodies.

**Body Prayer** (excerpted and adapted from The Prayer of St. Patrick—Anonymous)

Use motions and ask children to repeat words and motions:

Jesus before me (stretch arms out in front of you)  
Jesus behind me (stretch arms out behind you)  
Jesus in me (cross hands over heart)  
Jesus beneath me (sweep arms toward feet)  
Jesus above me (raise arms above head)  
Jesus on my right (stretch both arms to right)  
Jesus on my left (stretch both arms to left)  
Jesus when I lie down (lie down on floor)  
Jesus when I sit up (rise to sitting position)  
Jesus when I rise (stand up)  
Jesus in all I say (point to lips)  
Jesus in all I see (point to eyes)  
Jesus in all I hear (point to ears)  
Jesus in all I do (hug self)

## 2 ENGAGE

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

**Say:** We've heard about several encounters between Jesus and his followers after his resurrection. But we know Jesus didn't stay with his followers. Our story today is about what Jesus said and did before he left his disciples.

### **Read Luke 24:44–53 (paraphrased).**

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "These are the words I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." He helped them understand what was written about him in the scriptures, and he said to them, "Remember, I told you that I would die and rise again on the third day. You have seen this happen... And now, I am getting ready to send upon you what God has promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

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

**Say:** The scripture passage says that while Jesus was blessing his disciples, he left them and was carried up to heaven. There are many ideas of what or where heaven is. Some people think heaven is up in the sky. Scientists tell us that the sky is not only up; it is all around us. The Earth's atmosphere begins at our feet, with the air around us. At night, we can imagine how far the sky extends by looking into the stars, but the sky is still all around us. When we look up at the stars at night, we say we are looking up into the heavens, but the heavens are still part of the atmosphere that is all around us.

The Bible uses parables and stories to help us learn about God. When the scripture passage says Jesus was carried up to heaven, it may have been a way for the writer of the scripture passage to help his readers understand that Jesus had been with them, but he was no longer. Heaven is around us, not beyond us. Jesus is with us through the Holy Spirit, even though he is not physically with us.



## Going Deeper into Basic Beliefs and Enduring Principles

Share with children ideas from the Basic Beliefs statement on Creation and the Enduring Principle Sacredness of Creation. Emphasize God as Creator and our role as caretakers of God's creation, including "the heavens and the earth and all that is in them." Ask children to share ideas about how we can take care of God's creation and why it is important.

### Basic Beliefs: Creation

As an expression of divine love, God created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them, and called them "good." Everything belongs to God and should be cherished and used justly according to divine purposes. God sees creation as a whole without separation of spirit and element. God calls people of every generation to join with God as stewards in the loving care of creation.

### Enduring Principle: Sacredness of Creation

- In the beginning, God created and called it all good.
- Spirit and material, seen and unseen, are related.
- Creation's power to create or destroy reminds us of our vulnerability in this life.
- God is still creating to fulfill divine purpose.
- We join with God as stewards of care and hope for all creation.

—*Sharing in Community of Christ*, 4th Edition, pp. 28–29, 34

## Painting the Heavens

Provide construction paper and several colors of paint. Ask children to paint their ideas of the heavens. Remind children that the heavens are all around us, and the sky begins at our feet. So they can paint anything they see or think of.

## 3 RESPOND

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

**Say:** The scripture passage says Jesus blessed his disciples. Blessing means to speak well of someone. Jesus was getting ready to leave his disciples, but he wanted to bless them first.

- What do you think Jesus might have said to bless, or speak well of, his disciples?
- If you were going to leave someone for a while, what is something you might say to bless him or her?

### Blessing Each Other

Ask children to sit in a circle on the floor. Teacher starts by going around the circle and briefly blessing each child by "speaking well" of them. Depending on size of class, ask children to bless each other by going around the circle and "speaking well" of each child or the child next to them if you have a large group.

### Blessing Walk

**Say:** "God created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them, and called them 'good.' Everything belongs to God..." (Basic Beliefs statement on Creation) We can pay attention to everything around us and speak well of, or bless, anything we see.

Take a walk outside, if weather permits, or around the church or class setting. Remind children that they are “walking in the sky,” since the Earth’s atmosphere is all around us, even when they are inside. Ask children to notice what is around them. Tell children when they see something they would like to bless to tell you. The class will pause the walk to share in blessing. (examples: Bless you, tree. You give me shade. Bless you, car. You take me places. Bless you, kitchen. You help us share food. Bless you, book. You help me learn.) Continue the walk until everyone has had a chance to offer blessing.

## **4 SEND**

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

**Say:** Jesus lifted up his hands to bless the disciples. We can use our hands to bless people with our actions.

Help children trace one of their hands on a sheet of paper. Ask them to think of someone they can bless today at church. On the hand, ask children to write the person’s name and how they will bless that person today. Help children think of a simple act of blessing they can do today (hug, handshake, helping carry something). Ask children to cut out their hand shape (help younger children as needed) to take with them and give to the person they will bless today.

## **5 BLESS**

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

Read the last verse of the focus scripture passage, “And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and they were continually in the temple blessing God.”

Remind children that to bless means to speak well of.

When we praise God, we speak well of God.

Sing “Uyai Mose (Come All You People)” CCS 84. If children are not familiar with the hymn, teach as a call and response.

Close with a sentence prayer of praise. Stand in a circle and ask each child to complete the sentence, “God, I praise you for...”

LESSON 27  
31 May 2020

# DAY OF PENTECOST

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Acts 2:1–21

**Lesson Focus:** Jesus sent the Holy Spirit for all people in all places.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- hear the story of Pentecost.
- talk about ways we can be the church.
- learn that Community of Christ is a worldwide church.

## Supplies

- Copy of “Community of Christ around the World” handout for each child (end of lesson)
- Crayons or markers
- *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A* by Ralph Wilton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- **OR** Bible (NRSV)
- White construction paper
- Washable paint (red, yellow, orange)
- Community of Christ country list (end of lesson)
- World map or globe
- Optional: *Can You Say Peace?* by Karen Katz, Henry Holt and Company LLC, 2006, ISBN 9780805078930, or the word peace in several languages
- Community of *Christ Sings* or audio recording, available from Herald House

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Acts 2:1–21 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, pp. 74–75, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

As children arrive, give them the Languages of the Church handout. Invite them to color the church seal. Help children pronounce the name of the church in different languages.

### Ask:

- What language do you speak?
- When someone talks in a different language, can you understand what he or she is saying?
- Do you know any words in another language?

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Read *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, pp. 116–117, or read the excerpts from Acts 2:1–21 that follow.

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard in their own language. Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt, and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: ‘In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh... Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’”

**Say:** A few weeks ago, we talked about Jesus giving the disciples the Holy Spirit in the room where they were hiding.

- Do you remember what Jesus did? (He breathed on the disciples. He said “Peace be with you.” He said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”)

In this story in Acts, we learn that Jesus sends the Holy Spirit not just to the disciples but to everyone! People from many places who spoke different languages were gathered in one place. Because of the Holy Spirit, each person could understand what the disciples were saying about Jesus in their own language, even though the disciples didn’t speak those languages.

If you are not using the *Lectionary Story Bible*, tell the rest of the story from Acts 2.

The story from Acts 2 tells what happened after Peter spoke to all the people: (excerpted from Act 2:37–42)

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, “What should we do?” Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.” So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

# 3 RESPOND

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

## Tongues of Fire Painting

Give each child a sheet of white construction paper. Ask them to fold the paper in half and make a crease. Open the paper and have children squirt a small amount of red, yellow, and orange paint in the crease. Refold paper and press lightly from the crease outward to the edges of the paper to make “flames.”

**Say:** The scripture passage today describes the Holy Spirit as fire and wind.

- Can you think of other ways we have described the Holy Spirit? (dove, breath, Comforter, Advocate)

After this experience at Pentecost, people got together to

- help each other,
- eat together,
- remember the things Jesus said, and
- talk about living God’s way.

They called it the church! (adapted from *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, p.117)

- Can you think of ways we help each other at church?
- Can you think of times we eat together at church?
- How do we learn about the things Jesus said at church?
- How do we talk about living God’s way at church?

Since the day of Pentecost, the good news about Jesus has spread throughout the world. Community of Christ is a worldwide church! Community of Christ has about 250,000 members in more than 60 nations.

Show children the list of countries where Community of Christ has members (end of lesson). Refer to the “Community of Christ around the World” handout. Find those countries on the world map or globe. See how many other countries from the list children can find on the world map or globe.

# 4 SEND

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

Optional: Read *Can You Say Peace?* by Karen Katz.

If the book is not available, look up the word peace in several languages.

**Note to teacher:** If you need help finding the word peace in various languages, contact the Peace Pavilion: 816–521–3033 or e-mail [kidpeace@kidpeace.org](mailto:kidpeace@kidpeace.org). Several websites also list words for peace including [www.planetpals.com/IKC/peacedictionary.html](http://www.planetpals.com/IKC/peacedictionary.html).

Help children pronounce the words in various languages. Remind children of the scripture passage from John 20 where Jesus said to his disciples, “Peace be with you” and “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

# 5

## **BLESS**

Time of prayer, praise,  
blessing, and hope

*(5% of lesson time)*

Teach children “Wa Wa Wa Emimimo (Come, O Holy Spirit, Come)” CCS 157 in all four languages as a call and response, or play audio recording and invite children to sing along.

Say a prayer that with the help of the Holy Spirit we will help each other, eat together, remember the things Jesus said, and live God’s way.



Community of Christ

ENGLISH



Communauté du Christ

FRENCH



Comunidad de Cristo

SPANISH



Komunidad ni Kristo

TAGALOG



Gulu la Khristu

CHEWA



Содружество Христа

RUSSIAN



ქრისტეს თანამეგობრობა

GEORGIAN

The following list reflects the order in which Community of Christ was established in each country (as of January 2019).

**Community of Christ has been formally established in:**

United States of America (1830)

Canada (1833)

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (1837)

Commonwealth of Australia (1840)

French Polynesia (1844)

Kingdom of the Netherlands (1869)

Kingdom of Norway (1874)

New Zealand (1890)

Federal Republic of Germany (1914)

Cayman Islands (1921)

Japan (1960)

Republic of South Korea (1960)

United Mexican States (1964)

Federative Republic of Brazil (1965)

Republic of Peru (1965)

Federal Republic of Nigeria (1966)

Republic of India (1966)

Republic of the Philippines (1966)

New Caledonia (1968)

Republic of Haiti (1968)

Republic of the Fiji Islands (1968)

Republic of Honduras (1972)

Republic of China (Taiwan) (1976)

Republic of Liberia (1976)

Republic of Kenya (1977)

Democratic Republic of Congo (1981)

Dominican Republic (1981)

Republic of Zambia (1987)

Republic of Côte d'Ivoire (1988)

Jamaica (1989)

Republic of El Salvador (1990)

Republic of Malawi (1992)

Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal (1999)

Republic of Bolivia (2002)

Republic of South Africa (2002)

Republic of Chile (2007)

Republic of Zimbabwe (2007)

Russian Federation (2007)

Ukraine (2007)

Republic of the Congo (2007)

Republic of Nicaragua (2007)

Kingdom of Spain (2015)

Republic of Sierra Leone (2016)

Republic of Angola (2016)

Republic of Togo (2016)

**The Church has a recognized presence in:**

Argentine Republic

Aruba

French Republic

Republic of Colombia

Republic of Guatemala

Republic of Hungary

**The Church has initial contact in:**

Commonwealth of Puerto Rico

Georgia

Kingdom of Thailand

Republic of Botswana

Republic of Mozambique

Republic of Venezuela

Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

United Republic of Tanzania



# FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST TRINITY SUNDAY

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Genesis 1:1—2:4a

**Lesson Focus:** Out of darkness, God first created light and it was good. God continued to create the rest of the world and still continues today. As disciples, we should recognize the sacredness of God's creation and take action to conserve and preserve the masterpiece God made.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- learn God created light on the first day.
- understand the Enduring Principle of Sacredness of Creation.
- recognize many ways around the world in which God's creation is being destroyed.
- brainstorm ways she or he can conserve the Earth in his or her community.
- participate in a worldwide challenge that promotes the removal of local trash and pollution (optional).

## Supplies

- *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- Optional: #Trashtag Challenge. Find information here: [https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trashtag-challenge-inspires-bored-teens-and-others-clean-the-planet-2019-03-11/?fbclid=IwAR0UDO-yZ-CDOflvvgY58d2uvBYsyO8EV\\_E4EHU0axjcNV00h50Hz1rByk](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trashtag-challenge-inspires-bored-teens-and-others-clean-the-planet-2019-03-11/?fbclid=IwAR0UDO-yZ-CDOflvvgY58d2uvBYsyO8EV_E4EHU0axjcNV00h50Hz1rByk)
- White Paper
- Crayons, markers, colored pencils
- Animal and flower stickers (optional)
- Sacredness of Creation Matching Cards (printed, cut out, and mixed up)
- "This Little Light of Mine" alternative Lyrics
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Genesis 1:1—2:4a in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament*, pp. 84–85, available through Herald House.

# 1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge,  
prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Prior to class, black out any windows in your classroom and take precaution measures to ensure there are no tripping hazards. Turn the lights off and wait in the dark for your students to arrive. As they arrive, greet each one by name and tell them to come join you at the table. Students may try to turn the light on, but instruct them to keep it off. They must attempt to sit at the table with you in the dark. Once everyone has arrived, begin the lesson by singing one of the following songs (while still seated in the dark):

- “All Things Bright and Beautiful” CCS 135
- “My God Is So Big”
- “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands”
- “Take Care of God’s World” by Janné Grover
  - Audio: <https://www.CofChrist.org/resources?tags=English-Home-Resource#/2059/take-care-of-god's-world>
  - Sheet music: <https://www.CofChrist.org/common/cms/resources/Documents/Take-Care-of-Gods-World.pdf>
  - Instrumental: <https://www.CofChrist.org/resources?tags=English-Home-Resource#/2060/take-care-of-god's-world---instrumental>

Continue with the lights out: explain that just like the song says, God created everything new and good in this world. Ask if children know what God created first. Allow students several opportunities to guess. Once everyone has had the chance to guess, tell them that God first created light. As you say the word “light,” flip on the light switch (allow students to complain or comment that you turned the lights on too fast or that it’s too bright, and so on; you will address that later in the lesson).

# 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction

(35% of lesson time)

Explain that when God spoke, the breath of God—as wind or Holy Spirit—brings light where there was once darkness. God created something out of nothing. Tell the students that creating light was just the beginning of all God’s marvelous creations. Pass out a white piece of paper for each child. Provide access to crayons, markers, and colored pencils. Read aloud “God Makes a Universe” from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, pp. 121–122. As you read, ask the students to pay special attention to everything listed in the story that God created and begin drawing a picture. Allow extra time for students to complete their picture after you’ve completed the story. Encourage students to take their time and really focus on including everything. Optional: provide students with flower and animal stickers to include in their pictures. Praise students for their beautiful creations.

Next, allow each child the opportunity to share his or her creation. One student starts by holding up his or her picture so everybody can view. Then the child explains in one minute or less the key aspects of his or her picture. Again provide positive feedback and allow other students to compliment as well (that is a masterpiece or what a beautiful creation). Then move on to the next child and continue until everyone has had a turn. As each child is sharing, be sure to reiterate all the things that God created. After everyone has shared, gather all the pictures in a stack in front of you.

# 3 RESPOND

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

**Say:** “You all did such a nice job on the beautiful pictures you’ve created. Now that you’ve learned about God’s creation, we no longer need these, so I’ll just throw them away.” Act like you are beginning to crumble or tear the papers or toss them in the trash. Hopefully at least one child will beg you to stop. If not, ask, “Is everyone OK with me just throwing these away after you’ve spent time and effort into creating them?” Allow responses from students. Explain that one of the Community of Christ’s Enduring Principles is the Sacredness of Creation. We believe that God created the world and has a vision for creation. Say, “Just like each of you took the time and effort to create such beautiful pictures, God created—and continues to create—all that is good in this world. Just like you feel protective and proud of your picture, God loves all of creation: the oceans, land, animals, and every human being in the entire world.”

## Sacredness of Creation

- In the beginning, God created and called it good.
- Spirit and material, seen and unseen are related.
- Creation’s power to create or destroy reminds us of our vulnerability in this life.
- God is still creating to fulfill divine purpose.
- We join with God as stewards of care and hope for all creation.

—*Sharing in Community of Christ*, 4th Edition, pp. 28–29

**Continue explaining:** “When we damage or hurt all the living and non-living parts of the Earth, we are destroying God’s creation.” Place the pile of “Sacredness of Creation Matching Game” cards on the table. Explain that 12 cards state an environmental fact while the other 12 cards list ways in which we—as disciples protecting God’s creation—can help. Allow several minutes for the class to complete the matching activity. If time allows, ask students to read the matches aloud and discuss.

# 4 SEND

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

**Explain:** “Just like God chose to bring light to the world on the first day, we can bring light to creation by consciously preserving everything on Earth that God created. When I abruptly turned the light on at the beginning of the lesson, many of you moaned and complained. Similarly, it is easy to gripe and grumble when we see the amount of work that must be done to help protect God’s sacred creation. The matching game listed many ways in which we can help reduce pollution and destruction around the world. Those problems are big and complicated and will be difficult to overcome. What are some issues that we can fix right here in our own community?” Allow time for the class to brainstorm ideas such as picking up trash somewhere, purchasing and using a recycle receptacle at church, planting trees or flowers, and so on. Explain that no matter how young or old, big or small, strong or weak, everyone can make a difference by shining our light on God’s sacred creation.

Optional: If desired, plan a time for your class and congregation to participate in the *#TrashTag* Challenge. Tag your photos with *#TrashTag* or *#CommunityofChrist* or both. For more information, Google “trashtag challenge” or visit the website: [https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trashtag-challenge-inspires-bored-teens-and-others-clean-the-planet-2019-03-11/?fbclid=IwAR0UDO\\_-yZ-CDOflvvqY58d2uvBYSyO8EV\\_E4EHU0axjcNV00h50Hz1rByk](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trashtag-challenge-inspires-bored-teens-and-others-clean-the-planet-2019-03-11/?fbclid=IwAR0UDO_-yZ-CDOflvvqY58d2uvBYSyO8EV_E4EHU0axjcNV00h50Hz1rByk)

# 5

## BLESS

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

Stand in a circle and sing “This Little Light of Mine” using alternative lyrics below.

### **This Little Light of Mine**

Based on the song by Harry Dixon Loes  
Alternate lyrics by Sarah Marolf

This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine  
This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine  
This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

Reduce, recycle, I’ll do my part, I’m gonna let it shine  
Reduce, recycle, I’ll do my part, I’m gonna let it shine  
Reduce, recycle, I’ll do my part, I’m gonna let it shine  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

Conserve creation, preserve the Earth, I’m gonna let it shine  
Conserve creation, preserve the Earth, I’m gonna let it shine  
Conserve creation, preserve the Earth, I’m gonna let it shine  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

Make a difference in God’s world, I’m gonna let it shine  
Make a difference in God’s world, I’m gonna let it shine  
Make a difference in God’s world, I’m gonna let it shine  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine  
This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine  
This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

### **Going Deeper**

For additional information, refer to these websites:

<https://www.dosomething.org/us/facts/11-facts-about-pollution>

<https://www.livescience.com/22728-pollution-facts.html>

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/global-warming/deforestation/>

<https://climate.nasa.gov>

<https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/9-facts-about-ocean-plastic/>

<http://realdiapers.org/diaper-facts>

<https://www.itopf.org/knowledge-resources/data-statistics/statistics/>

<https://www.nrdc.org/experts/peter-lehner/fast-food-trash-nation-time-cut-down-packaging-waste>

Help keep the beaches and oceans clean by picking up trash along shorelines and installing trash/recycle receptacles nearby.

Over 1 million seabirds and 100,000 sea mammals are killed by pollution every year.

Each year 1.2 trillion gallons of untreated sewage, storm water, and industrial waste are dumped into US water.

Use proper dumping stations to dispose of unclean water and support companies who do the same.

In 2014, Americans produced about 258 million tons of solid waste. A little over half of the waste — 136 million tons— was gathered in landfills.

Recycle!

783 million people around the world do not have access to clean water and around 2.5 billion do not have access to adequate sanitation.

Financially support organizations (such as Outreach International) that help bring clean water to communities around the world.

Carpool, take public transportation, walk, or ride a bike in order to reduce chemicals released in the air from vehicles and factories used to create gasoline.

Air pollution kills more than 2 million people each year.

Underwater noise pollution coming from ships has been shown to upset whales' navigation systems and kill other species that depend on the natural underwater world.

Petition companies and governments to reroute cargo shipping to avoid whale migration patterns.

Disposable diapers are the third largest single consumer item in landfills, and represent about 4% of solid waste.

Use cloth diapers.

The 1.4 billion Capri Sun pouches thrown away every year would reach nearly halfway to the moon, laid end-to-end.

Purchase food and drinks that come in recyclable or reusable packaging. Petition companies to begin using recyclable materials for all packaging.

In 2018, 116,000 tons of oil was spilled into the environment; this annual quantity is the largest recorded in 24 years.

Support alternative forms of energy - wind, solar, hydro, electric, etc. - to power vehicles, houses, and factories.

Between 1990 and 2016, the world lost 502,000 square miles (1.3 million square kilometers) of forest—an area larger than South Africa.

Go paperless and purchase products that come from eco-friendly companies.

Carbon dioxide levels in the air are at their highest in 650,000 years.

Plant trees and other plants.

At least 8 million tons of plastic enter the oceans each year. That's similar to emptying a garbage truck of plastic into an ocean every minute.

Use reusable straws and cloth shopping bags.  
Reduce the amount of plastic you use on a daily basis.

LESSON 29  
14 June 2020

# ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 6)

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Genesis 18:1–15; 21:1–7

**Lesson Focus:** As it was with Abraham and Sarah, God generously surprises us with gifts that—as disciples—we must learn to share with others.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- learn the sacred story about Abraham and Sarah bearing a child.
- draw a connection between the surprise gifts and talents they receive in their own lives with God’s surprise for Abraham and Sarah.
- share an important message about God’s Grace and Generosity with an adult in his or her congregation or church.

## Supplies

- Website with description of balloon experiment: <https://brightside.me/article/six-simple-science-experiments-you-need-to-show-your-kids-14605/>
- *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- 1 balloon (inflated with air and tied off)
- A handful of pushpins or a bed of nails
- Coloring page for each child (end of lesson)
- Markers or crayons or colored pencils
- Glue sticks or tape
- Baby drawing for each child (end of lesson)
- Scissors
- Large, empty box wrapped with bright wrapping paper and a bow; the only thing inside the box should be a note that reads, “Surprise! Be open to the gifts God has for you!”
- Gift Bags—one per child
- Blank strips of paper

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Genesis 18:1–15; 21:1–7 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament*, pp. 89–90, available through Herald House.



# 1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge,  
prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

As children arrive, instruct them to sit around a table so everyone can see. On the table should be a handful of pushpins sitting on the flat side, with the points sticking straight up. Once everyone has arrived, say, “I’m going to poke this balloon with all these pins and it won’t pop.” Allow a few moments for kids to react (the goal is for them to respond in surprise or doubt; you want them to question and laugh at your “absurd” statement). Once they have appropriately responded, take the balloon and very carefully press it down on all of the pushpins, ensuring that the balloon is pressed evenly on all the pushpins. The balloon should not pop; when you increase the number of pins, you reduce the pressure on each pin.

Allow children to react in a surprised manner; then ask the following questions:

- When I first told you that I was going to poke the balloon with a bunch of pushpins, did you think it was going to pop?
- Did you believe me when I told you it wasn’t going to pop? Did you think it was possible?
- Were you surprised when it didn’t pop, just like I’d promised?

Explain that just like in the experiment, our scripture story focuses on a husband and wife who are surprised by some news from God...just like you, they didn’t believe it.

# 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction

(35% of lesson time)

Give a coloring page to each student to color. Explain that the story you will read is about this husband and wife. As they are coloring the picture, read the story aloud “A Mother of Nations” from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, pp. 133–134. After reading the story, ask the following questions:

- What surprise did God promise Abraham and Sarah?
- How did they react when they heard the news?
- Why was it so hard to believe that Sarah would have a baby?

Pass out the drawing of a baby for each student. Allow them to color, cut out, and then glue the baby onto their coloring page in the arms of either Abraham or Sarah.

# 3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from  
hearing to doing

(35% of lesson time)

Explain that just like in the sacred story about Abraham and Sarah, sometimes God surprises us with gifts we could never imagine. God always wants to show us the blessings God has planned for us, but sometimes we have a hard time believing they are possible. One of our Enduring Principles is Grace and Generosity. “God’s very nature is grace and generosity. Generosity is the way God loves us and wants us to love others. Everything comes from God, out of God’s great love,” (*Of Water and Spirit, Facilitator Guide*, p. 51). Even though it may sometimes be difficult to believe, we need to be open to God’s surprises in our lives.

Place the large gift-wrapped box in front of the class stating that you have a surprise for the class. Allow students to tear open the box to discover what is inside. Hopefully some of the kids will be surprised and laugh when they see nothing but a piece of paper inside. Ask a student to read the paper aloud. Then ask and discuss the following questions:

- What does it mean to “be open” to the gifts God has for you?
- What can you do to figure out what gifts and talents God has given you?
- Has God surprised you with any gifts and talents before? Explain.

## **4 SEND**

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

As followers of Christ, our job is to always be ready to respond to God’s call. “We receive God’s grace and generosity. When we follow Jesus, we become a person who wants to share love and treat others with generosity too. This is being our true selves as God created us. God is loving and generous. We can be, too” (*Of Water and Spirit, Facilitator Guide*, p. 51). Disciples don’t just rejoice in their gifts from God. Instead they choose to be generous with their gifts, using them to bless others.

Pass out a strip of paper and gift bag to each child. Ask the children to copy the saying, “Surprise! Be open to the gifts God has for you!” onto their strip of paper and place it in their gift bag. Send the kids into the congregation to give their gift bag to an adult. Ensure that the children stay to watch the adults open their gifts before returning to the classroom.

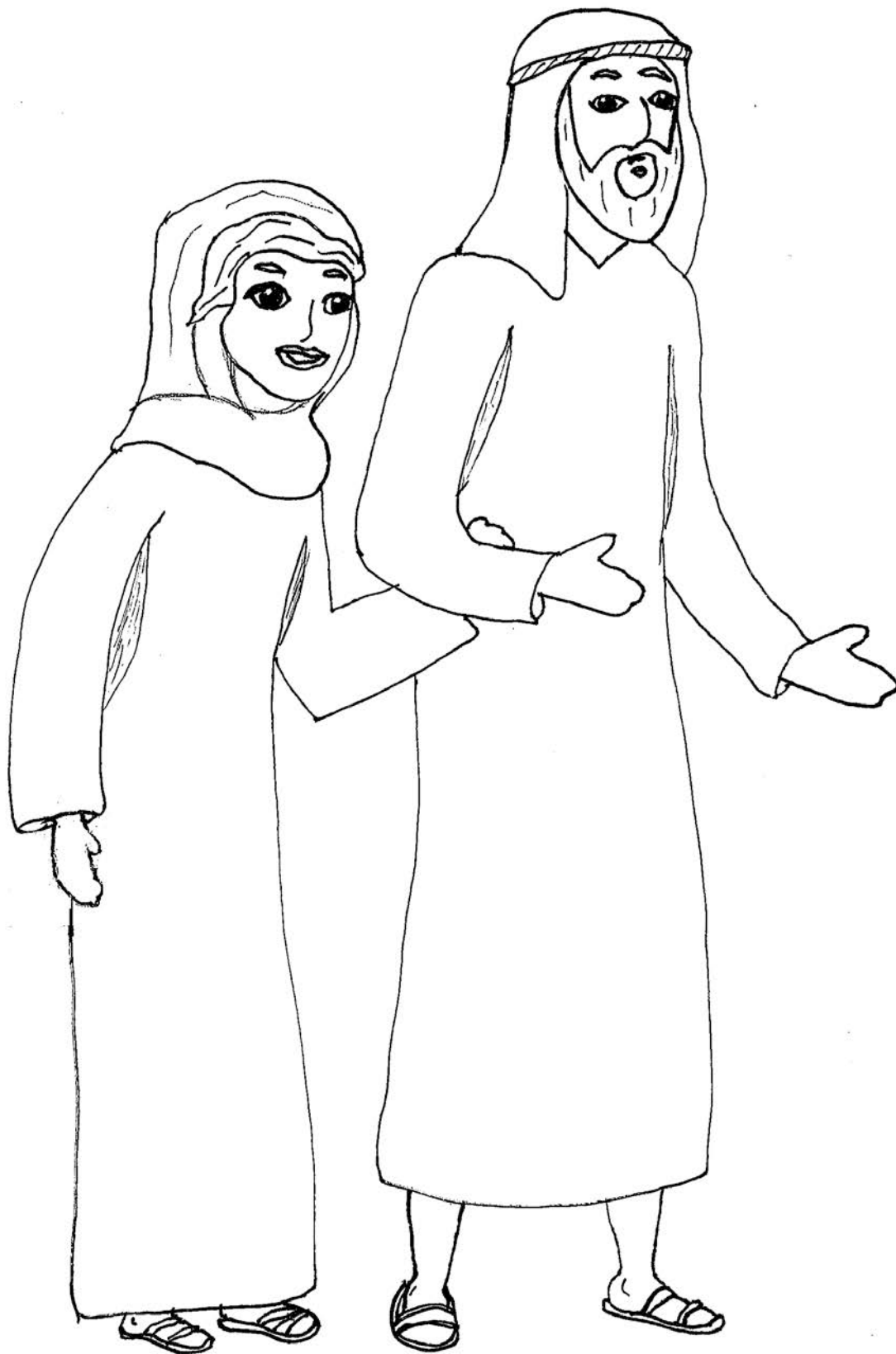
## **5 BLESS**

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

Explain to the class, “Because of the surprise gift from God, Abraham and Sarah were actually able to have many children. And those children had children, who had many children, and so on. To help us remember to always listen and receive God’s generosity, let’s sing the song “Father Abraham” together with the actions.”

See sing-along lyrics with movement prompts at

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ASXowiv3FAc>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y3DjT6kS4-4>





LESSON 30  
21 June 2020

# ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 7)

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Matthew 10:24–39

**Lesson Focus:** Following Jesus and sharing God’s love with others is not always easy, but God’s love makes us strong.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- understand that following Jesus and making Responsible Choices are not always easy.
- explore what Jesus teaches his followers in the focus scripture passage.
- discover ways of generously sharing God’s love with others with time, talent, treasure, and testimony.

## Supplies

- *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471) (optional)
- Flip chart paper or white board and markers
- Wood craft sticks or construction paper
- Glue
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 10:24–39 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, pp. 86–87, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Greet children by name as they enter the space, and let them know you are glad they chose to be here today.

### Which Do You Choose?

Clear a space for children to move from one side to another. Read the following choices and have them move to the side of the room that reflects their choice. (Designate which side of the room is for each option.) You may have them explain why they made the choice they did.

Choices (You may choose to make your own list of choices appropriate for the children in the group.)

1. Playing inside or playing outside?
2. Reading a book or playing an instrument? (Remember, your voice is an instrument!)
3. Hot weather or cold weather?
4. Playing a team sport or playing with a special friend?

5. Singing a solo or singing with a group?
6. Helping someone in need or having lots of money?
7. Warm bath or cool swim?
8. Music or sports?
9. Creating your own artwork or admiring another person's artwork?
10. Giving a gift or receiving a gift?

**Ask:**

- Which choice was the easiest? Explain.
- Which choice was the most difficult? Explain.

**Say:** Each day we make lots of choices. When we follow Jesus we learn to make Responsible Choices. Sometimes the choices are easy; other times they are difficult. Jesus teaches us that God's love makes us strong and helps us make Responsible Choices.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Read "Jesus Teaches His Friends" from *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, p. 141, or use the following story adapted from Matthew 10:24–39. You may use the questions below for discussion.

**Jesus taught his friends and followers many things.**

- What have you learned from Jesus?

**God loves you more than you love something valuable.**

- Have each child complete the following statement with something they value. "God loves me more than I love..."

**God loves people so much; God even knows the number of hairs on each person's head!**

- Do you know how many hairs are on your head? Try to guess!

(Fun fact: The average human head has about 100,000 hairs.)

**Jesus wants his followers to tell his stories and share God's love with everyone!**

- What can you do to share God's love?

**Sometimes when you share stories about Jesus, other people don't want to hear them.**

- Have you ever told someone else a story about Jesus?
- How did they respond?
- How did it make you feel?

**Not everyone wants to share God's love by helping other people.**

- How do you think God feels when people don't want to help others in need?

**Following Jesus helps us make Responsible Choices. Sometimes Responsible Choices can be difficult.**

- What is an example of a responsible choice you have made to follow Jesus?
- Was the choice easy or difficult?

**Even when following Jesus is not easy, God’s love gives us courage and makes us strong.**

- How does God’s love make you strong?

**Option for older children:** Today’s passage contains challenging concepts for children (and even adults!). For a class with older children, you may have them read Matthew 10:24–39 NRSV. Using the narrative above, have them compare the bold statements with the verses that best match the meaning. It is important to point out that Jesus was preparing his disciples (followers) for challenges ahead. Following Jesus is not always easy, but sharing God’s love is what matters most.

## **3 RESPOND**

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

On a flip chart or erasable writing surface, write “Power of Ten” at the top. Make four columns titled Time, Talent, Treasure, and Testimony. As a class, list ten actions in each column that the children can do to share God’s love with others.

You may also give each child a piece of paper and pencil, pen, marker, or crayon to make their own “Power of Ten” columns. Have them think of ten things they can do, or Responsible Choices they can make, with their time, talent, treasure, and testimony to generously share God’s love with others.

### **Going Deeper**

The “Power of Ten” is a way of illustrating the concept of tithing. Talk about how Community of Christ upholds the following definition of tithing, and how it compares with the lists the children have made.

Tithing is a spiritual practice that demonstrates willingness to offer every dimension of one’s life to God.

—Doctrine and Covenants 165:2d

As these words find expression in the church, the following affirmations guide us:

- Stewardship is whole-life response to God’s grace and the ministry of Jesus Christ.
- One way stewardship is expressed is through the spiritual practice of tithing.
- Although tithing literally means a tenth, giving generously to one’s true capacity is the spirit of tithing.
- Tithing of time, talent, treasure, and testimony supports local and worldwide church ministries in pursuit of Jesus Christ’s mission.
- All disciples are called to live as faithful stewards who tithe.

## **4 SEND**

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

**Say:** Verse 38 of today’s scripture passage says “...whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me.” Taking up the cross is another way of saying we follow Jesus.

Have students create a cross with wood craft sticks or construction paper and write one thing from each of their “Power of Ten” columns they will do this week to share God’s love with others. Invite each child to share one choice or action they included on their cross.

# 5

## **BLESS**

Time of prayer, praise,  
blessing, and hope

*(5% of lesson time)*

Sing "I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me" CCS 581. Invite children to think of words to use in place of "live" (such as jump, play, sing, pray, love, smile, hug) and sing as many verses as needed to show the different ways children can share God's love.



LESSON 31  
28 June 2020

# ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 8)

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Matthew 10:40–42

**Lesson Focus:** We share the peace of Jesus when we care for others and practice hospitality.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- experience welcome and hospitality.
- discuss the meaning of hospitality and connections to Enduring Principles and Mission Initiatives.
- explore ways to practice hospitality.

## Supplies

- Chart paper or erasable writing surface
- Plain paper
- Markers, crayons, colored pencils
- Dictionary or internet access (optional)
- *Enemy Pie* by Derick Munson (Chronicle Books, 2000, ISBN 9780811827782)
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 10:40–42 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 88, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Greet students by name as they enter the space. Take time to ask how they are doing, share something positive and affirming about them, and let them know they are welcome.

Gather in a circle and sing “Jesu, Tawa Pano (Jesus, We Are Here)” CCS 71. Sing multiple times, each time inserting a child’s name in place of “we.” Let students know this song is an important reminder of our commitment to follow Jesus and to be his presence in our homes, our schools, at church, and in our communities.

Offer a prayer of thanksgiving for the many ways each child represents the love and peace of Jesus.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Provide plain paper and crayons, colored pencils, or markers. Ask students to draw a picture of, or describe, a place where they feel welcome and safe and where they can be their true selves. Have a picture prepared of your such place to share with students. Invite children to share why their spaces are special or sacred.

Write the word “Hospitality” in the middle of a piece of chart paper or an erasable writing surface. If possible, provide a dictionary or internet access to look up definitions of the word. You may choose to look up definitions ahead of time and have children read them. Surround the word “Hospitality” with words that describe hospitality. Have children share their pictures with the class. Explain that hospitality means being kind, generous, and friendly to others and making them feel welcome. Make the connection with the class that the things in your picture (and theirs) are examples of what hospitality means. Share aspects of their pictures that make them feel welcome.

Have children read Matthew 10:40–42 NRSV. Ask students how the passage describes hospitality. Add new ideas to the hospitality chart found in the scripture passage. One example is giving strangers food and water if they are hungry and thirsty.

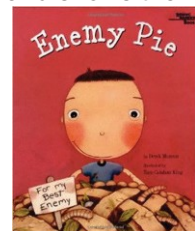
## 3 RESPOND

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

Part of practicing hospitality is welcoming those you may not like. Read *Enemy Pie* by Derick Munson. If you are unable to get a copy of the book, a website titled Storyline Online reads it aloud and shows the illustrations ([www.storylineonline.net/enemy-pie/](http://www.storylineonline.net/enemy-pie/)).

After the story is read, ask the following questions for discussion:

- How was Jeremy feeling towards his “enemy” at the beginning of the story?
- Did Jeremy do any of the things on our hospitality chart for his enemy?
- Did this story make you think of anything to add to our hospitality chart?



Form small groups of two or three and provide each group with a hospitality scenario to act out for the rest of the group. You may choose some of the following examples or come up with your own according to the needs of the group. Have each group talk about how they would demonstrate hospitality in this circumstance and role play it for the group.

Examples:

- A new student comes to school or church.
- A person at school eats lunch alone every day.
- An older person sits alone at church.
- A family from a different country moves into the home next door to yours.

Refer to *Sharing in Community of Christ*, 4th Edition, pp. 20–24, 27–32.

**Ask:**

- How does practicing hospitality demonstrate the Community of Christ Enduring Principle Worth of All Persons?
- How does practicing hospitality demonstrate the Mission Initiative Invite People to Christ?

For older children:

- Which Enduring Principles are demonstrated when we practice hospitality? Explain.
- Which Mission Initiatives are demonstrated when we practice hospitality? Explain.

Practicing hospitality is a way of sharing the peace of Jesus Christ and sharing God's love for all people.

## **4 SEND**

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

On the back of the picture the children drew at the beginning of the lesson, have them draw a picture of how they will practice hospitality in the coming week. Invite them to share with the rest of the group. If children did not draw pictures earlier, they can simply describe how they will practice hospitality.

## **5 BLESS**

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

Form a circle and begin the following prayer. Go around the circle and have each child complete the prayer.

God who loves and welcomes all people, help us share the peace of Jesus and honor the Worth of All Persons in all we do. Help me practice hospitality by...

Amen.

Close by singing "Jesu, Tawa Pano (Jesus, We Are Here)" CCS 71.

LESSON 32  
5 July 2020

# ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 9)

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Matthew 11:16–19, 25–30

**Lesson Focus:** All are invited to receive and share the peace of Jesus Christ.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- experience how it feels when Jesus helps us with our burdens or challenges.
- discover ways to receive and share the peace of Jesus.

## Supplies

- Two “burdens” (large, bulky, or odd-shaped items) for children to carry on their backs while crawling
- Scripture puzzles: write the words of Matthew 11:28–30 and Doctrine and Covenants 163:2a on different colored paper and cut into puzzle pieces
- *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471) (optional)
- Object or symbol to represent the peace of Jesus
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 11:16–19, 25–30 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 89, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge,  
prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Before class begins, prepare the space for the Gather and Engage activities. For the Heavy Burden Relay you will need two “burdens” (large, bulky, or odd-shaped items) for children to carry on their backs while crawling. They should be difficult to carry, but not so heavy as to cause injury. Designate a starting and turning point for the relay. Prepare scripture puzzles (as described in Supplies) and hide the puzzle pieces around the room.

Greet children by name and welcome them into the space.

### Heavy Burden Relay

Form two teams and have them line up at the starting point. Give each team the “burden” the students are to carry on their backs, one at a time, while crawling to the turning point and back. If the “burden” falls off, the student must start again. Play until all children have a chance to carry their team’s “burden” to the turning point and back. Play the game again, but this time have each team designate one person to be Jesus. “Jesus” can help each person on their team carry the “burden” so it does not fall off. See how much faster the game is completed when Jesus helps carry the burden.

Ask the children to describe how it felt to carry the burden alone and how it felt when Jesus helped.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

### Scripture Puzzle Search

**Say:** Today we will look at two scripture passages that illustrate how Jesus helps us with burdens or challenges in our lives. One is from Matthew in the New Testament, and the other is from the Doctrine and Covenants. Each passage has been cut into puzzle pieces and hidden around the room.

Tell each team which color to look for and have the teams find their puzzle pieces and put their passage together. When they have completed their scripture puzzle, have them read it aloud or read it yourself if children are younger.

For younger children, help each team create actions to accompany the reading of the passage. For older children, compare the two passages and discuss what is similar and what is different.

Ask how each passage relates to the Heavy Burden Relay.

These passages help us understand that God wants all people to experience the peace of Jesus. As followers of Jesus, we receive the peace of Jesus, and we share the peace of Jesus with others.

Teach the children motions as they say the following:

**Receive the peace of Jesus** (bring hands together and place over your heart)

**Share the peace of Jesus** (extend hands outward and to your sides)

For younger children, read “Children Know This” from *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, pp. 150–151. For older children, read Matthew 11:16–19. Discuss the following questions.

- Why was Jesus frustrated? (People did not believe who he was or what he taught because he ate and drank like everyone else.)
- Why were people upset at Jesus? (He was friends with people they didn't like or didn't approve of.)
- What did we learn about Jesus by his eating and drinking like everyone else? (Jesus was human, just like us, and gave us an example of how God wants us to treat others.)
- What do children know that adults sometimes forget? (Jesus wants us to be kind and help everyone!)
- How did a child in this story help another person? (Abigail helped Thomas when he hurt his toe.)

## 3 RESPOND

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

Just as Abigail helped Thomas in the story, we can share the peace of Jesus by helping others. It doesn't matter if we are young or old, small or big. Everyone can share the peace of Jesus!

### How many ways can you share the peace of Jesus?

For younger children: Have each child act out how they can share the peace of Jesus with someone in their home, school, church, or community. Have the other children guess what they are acting. Allow each child to have at least one turn.

For older children: Give each child a piece of paper and a pen or pencil. Designate an amount of time (three to five minutes) and have them list as many ways of sharing the peace of Jesus with others as they can. Have students share their lists and see how many ideas were the same and how many unique ideas each child had.

## **4 SEND**

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

Read the passages again from the Scripture Puzzle Search. Recite again (with motions) what we learn from these passages.

**Receive the peace of Jesus** (bring hands together and place over your heart)

**Share the peace of Jesus** (extend hands outward and to your sides)

In order to share the peace of Jesus, we must first receive the peace of Jesus.

Form a circle on the floor. Select an object or symbol (any object you choose or prepare something in advance) to represent the peace of Jesus. Tell the students we are going to practice receiving and sharing the peace of Jesus. Begin with the following prayer; then allow a minute for quiet listening.

Dear Jesus, thank you for helping us when we are hurting, sad, or lonely. Help us receive your peaceful presence as we are quiet and still.

After a moment of silence, have each child say something kind to the next person as they pass the object representing the peace of Jesus. Repeat as needed!

## **5 BLESS**

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

Sing "Prayer of Peace" CCS 164 with motions.

LESSON 33  
12 July 2020

# ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 10)

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23

**Lesson Focus:** Followers of Jesus take good care of themselves, others, and the Earth so all can grow and thrive.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- experience what helps seeds grow.
- discover how today's parable teaches about caring for self, others, and creation.
- explore ways to honor the Sacredness of Creation and Develop Disciples to Serve.

## Supplies

- Seeds, potting soil, water, recycled paper cups or containers, strips of paper, tape or glue (optional)
- *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471) (optional)
- Paper and crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- Bible

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, pp. 90–91, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Before class begins, prepare supplies for planting (if available), and prepare a space for the Here We Grow! game. If weather permits, play the game outside. Designate a start and finish line.

Greet each child by name and welcome them to the space.

### Here We Grow!

This game is best played in a large, open space. It is similar to the game Red Light, Green Light. Have the children line up side by side at the starting point. They will be the seeds, and the teacher (or designated student) will be the sower (planter). With the sower's back to the seeds, the sower will call out elements that help seeds grow: good soil, sunshine, water. As long as there are good elements, the seeds can grow, or move forward, at whatever pace they choose. When the sower calls out something that keeps seeds from growing (weeds, thorns, dry soil), the seeds must freeze. If the sower turns around and sees a seed moving, the seed must go back to the starting point. The first seed to reach the finish line becomes the sower for the next round.

If playing inside, offer a prayer of thanksgiving for all the ways God helps us grow. If playing outside, take a nature walk around the grounds. When you see healthy growth, stop and give thanks for the many ways God helps us grow and care for creation. Where there is need for growth, stop and ask God to help us care for all creation.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

**Say:** Jesus used stories, or parables, to teach people lessons about being disciples. Today's passage is a parable about a sower and seeds. It teaches us about growing as disciples, caring for creation, and helping others grow as disciples.

Read "Stories That Help Us Grow" from *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, pp. 154–155 or Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23 NRSV. Invite children to act out or draw what they hear as you read the story. Have the children share about what they acted or drew as they listened to the story. Use the following questions to guide discussion.

- Who does the sower represent in this story? (God, Jesus, teachers or preachers, disciples, anyone who shares the good news of Jesus)
- What do the seeds represent? (God's vision for creation, the gospel or good news that Jesus teaches, people)
- What elements kept the seeds from growing? (hard ground, birds, little soil, weeds, thorns)
- What do these elements represent? (unhealthy conditions, poor choices, forces of nature)
- What can we do to help seeds or disciples grow in good soil? (take care of the Earth, make healthy and responsible choices, learn and grow as disciples, share the good news of Jesus with others, encourage others)

## 3 RESPOND

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

If supplies are available, give each child a container and seeds. Guide them in filling their containers with potting soil, planting seeds, and adding water.

As the children are planting, talk about the following:

In Community of Christ, we honor the Sacredness of Creation as an Enduring Principle. We believe that all creation is sacred or precious to God. You are sacred, each and every person is sacred, and the Earth is sacred. Jesus teaches us to take good care of ourselves, the Earth, and other people. This is also part of the Community of Christ Mission Initiative Develop Disciples to Serve. God wants each person to learn and grow to their full potential. As followers of Jesus, we do this when we make Responsible Choices, when we practice and study, when we learn, and when we make healthy choices. We help other disciples grow when we share the good news of Jesus and encourage them to grow and thrive.



# 4 SEND

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

Prepare strips of paper for each child and provide crayons, markers, or colored pencils. For younger children, you may prepare strips with the following statement and have the children color their strips. Older children can write the statement and decorate their strips.

**As a follower of Jesus, I will care for myself, others, and the Earth so all can grow and thrive!**

As the children are doing this, talk about choices that will help them care for themselves, others, and the Earth.

If the children planted seeds in containers, help them attach their strip of paper to the container with tape or glue.

# 5 BLESS

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

Gather in a circle and close with a group prayer. Begin each prayer statement and invite children to complete them.

Creator God, thank you for all the ways you help us grow. As a follower of Jesus,

I will care for myself by...

I will care for others by...

I will care for the Earth by...

(All together) Amen!

LESSON 34  
19 July 2020

# ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 11)

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Matthew 13:24–30, 36–43

**Lesson Focus:** Jesus teaches that Responsible Choices help us create shalom in the world.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- review concepts and experiences from previous lessons.
- discuss the scripture story and Enduring Principle Responsible Choices.
- explore examples of Responsible Choices that help create shalom.

## Supplies

- *We Share* by Monica Bradford (ISBN 9780830915743, available from Herald House)
- Chart paper or erasable writing surface (optional)
- Copies of the Enduring Principles (*Sharing in Community of Christ*, 4th Edition, pp. 27–32, available from Herald House or online at [www.CofChrist.org/common/cms/resources/Documents/Sharing-in-Community-of-Christ-4thEd-WEB.pdf](http://www.CofChrist.org/common/cms/resources/Documents/Sharing-in-Community-of-Christ-4thEd-WEB.pdf))
- Bible (NRSV) or *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- Blank paper or copies of wheat and weeds images
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 13:24–30, 36–43 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 92, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Welcome the children to class and ask how they are doing. If they planted seeds the week before, ask how their seeds are doing. Do they see plants growing yet? Are they keeping the soil watered? If they did not plant seeds, ask what they did during the previous week to grow as a follower of Jesus. How did they care for themselves, others, and the Earth?

Remind children how important they are in sharing and living the good news of Jesus. Caring for self, others, and the Earth is how we live like Jesus and share the peace of Jesus!

Sing “Jesus, Tawa Pano (Jesus, We Are Here)” CCS 71. Sing in multiple languages, or insert a child’s name each time you sing.

# 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction

(35% of lesson time)

Invite the children to share what they remember about the story from last week and what they learned. Remind them the word “parable” is a story Jesus used to teach a lesson. Today’s story is another parable that is similar to the story last week.

Read “The Wheat and the Weeds” from *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, pp. 162–163.

**Note to teacher:** If the *Lectionary Story Bible* is not available, read Matthew 13:24–30, 36–43 NRSV. For younger children, adapt the scripture passage to tell the meaning of the story. For older children, help them explore the meaning as you discuss the passage.

### Ask:

- How is this story (*parable*) similar to the parable from last week? What is different?
- What does shalom mean? (*God’s vision for creation, wholeness and peace*)
- What does the wheat represent? (*people who make Responsible Choices and care for themselves, others, and the Earth*)
- What do the weeds represent? (*people who do not make Responsible Choices and do not care for themselves, others, or the Earth*)

In a previous lesson we learned about Responsible Choices. Ask children to give examples of Responsible Choices. If possible, record their responses on chart paper or erasable writing surface. After everyone has had chance to share, talk about the descriptions of the Enduring Principle of Responsible Choices (See *Sharing in Community of Christ*, p. 30). For younger children, use the following adapted descriptions. For older children, provide copies of the descriptions from *Sharing in Community of Christ*. Talk about, have children act, or draw examples of each description.

- People experience the world in different ways, and God gives people the ability to make choices.
- Responsible Choices help us contribute to good in the world.
- Many aspects of creation need healing because of irresponsible human choices.
- We are called to make Responsible Choices within the circumstances of our lives that contribute to the purposes of God.

Read *We Share* by Monica Bradford. Pause and make connections with concepts from the scripture story such as shalom and Responsible Choices. Also point out connections from the previous lesson related to Sacredness of Creation and Develop Disciples to Serve.



## **3 RESPOND**

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

Have students draw pictures of wheat and weeds, or provide copies found at the end of lesson. One picture should be of weeds and wheat together, and the other should be of healthy wheat with no weeds. Around the weeded image, have them write or draw examples they see of people making hurtful or unhealthy choices. Around the healthy wheat picture, have them write or draw examples of responsible or healthy choices. For every “weed” example, have them come up with three “wheat” examples.

## **4 SEND**

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

If there are landscape or plant beds around your meeting space, take children outside to pull the weeds. Talk about the importance of making Responsible Choices that contribute to God’s purposes: caring for ourselves, others, and the Earth. If it is not possible to go outside and pull weeds, invite the children to find an opportunity in the coming week to help a family member or neighbor by pulling weeds. Think of all the ways your choices can help create shalom!

## **5 BLESS**

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

Gather students in a circle. Place their weed and wheat images in the center of your circle. Ask someone to say a prayer, or begin the following group prayer and invite each child to complete the prayer.

Loving God, thank you for trusting us to make good choices.

Help us create shalom by...

(All together) Amen.

Sing “I’m Gonna Live So God Can Use Me” CCS 581 Repeat several times and replace the word live with different ways children can help create shalom (work, play, share, love, help).



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LESSON 35  
26 July 2020

# ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 12)

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Matthew 13:31–33, 44–52

**Lesson Focus:** God magnifies even the smallest acts of kindness and generosity.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- learn about the parable of the mustard seed.
- discover that in the kingdom of heaven tiny things can become great things. Sometimes we overlook the value of small things, but God gives great potential to even the smallest things.
- explore how to grow as a disciple.

## Supplies

- Bible or *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*
- Variety of small objects (such as pieces of cereal, crackers, tangerine, or other fruit; candy; small doll accessories; or rocks)
- (Optional) Mustard seed
- (Optional) Any kind of tree seed that represents a tree that grows in your area
- (Optional) Supplies for demonstration
  - 1/2 cup 6% hydrogen peroxide (sold in beauty supply stores or online as 20 Volume clear developer)
  - 2 tsp. yeast (1 packet) 3 tbsp. warm water dish detergent
  - food coloring (optional) empty 16 oz. plastic bottle funnel
  - safety goggles
  - tray or container to catch the foam

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 13:31–33, 44–52 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 93, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge,  
prepares and motivates for lesson

*(15% of total lesson time)*

Greet children as they enter the classroom. Invite children to sing “Jesu, Tawa Pano (Jesus, We Are Here)” CCS 71. Sing it through several times in multiple languages, and have children join in as they feel comfortable.

Ask children to identify the tiny items you have placed in front of them (such as pieces of cereal, crackers, tangerine, or other fruit; candy; small doll accessories; or rocks). If such items are not available, ask children to name tiny objects. Ask what these tiny objects do. Are they powerful? What could make them more powerful? Answers may vary.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Today we are going to talk about something that is very tiny and very powerful.



Photo © Jessica Spangler | flickr

Ask the children if they know what a mustard seed is and how big they think it is.

Mustard seeds are the small round seeds about 1–2 mm (0.04 to 0.08 in) in diameter and are different colors from pale yellow to black. Mustard seeds are used as a spice in many foods.

Show the children a picture of a mustard seed, or if you have a real mustard seed, let the children touch, look at, and smell it.

Show the children a seed that produces a tree that grows in your area. (Example: acorn, pinecone, etc.)

Ask the children questions about a tree they are familiar with.

- How big is the tree?
- Was the tree always this big?
- Will the tree get bigger?
- How small was the tree once?
- How did the tree start?

Invite children to read Matthew 13:31–33, 44, or read “Stories of God’s Shalom” from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, pp. 166–167.

<sup>31</sup>He put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; <sup>32</sup>it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

<sup>33</sup>He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.”

<sup>44</sup>“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

When Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven in these parables, he is describing God’s vision for creation: shalom. Shalom is a Hebrew word that means a completeness or fullness of peace, but shalom is more than peace. Shalom is the vision God has for all creation to live together in the way the world

was created. When Jesus explained peace, he meant the most perfect peace imaginable: peace between people, between groups of people, and among all of God's creations (*Of Water and Spirit: Preparing Children for Baptism and Confirmation in Community of Christ*, p. 31).

Ask and discuss the following questions.

- How is God's shalom like a mustard seed?
- How is God's shalom like yeast?
- How is God's shalom like a hidden treasure?
- How would you describe God's shalom to a friend?

## **3** RESPOND

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

In Community of Christ one of our Enduring Principles is Blessings of Community. Read the following description from *We Share* by Monica Bradford. Read in all three languages, if possible!

(English) We trust in and belong to one another even if we have never met.

(Spanish) Confiamos y pertenecemos unos a otros incluso si nunca nos hemos conocido.

(French) Nous faisons confiance et nous comptons les uns sur les autres même si nous ne nous sommes jamais rencontrés.

A seed cannot grow on its own; it needs water, sunlight, and soil to help it grow. Yeast cannot act alone; it requires other ingredients to activate it. When we do small acts of kindness and generosity, they are magnified by God and by the community acting together. We are going to do an experiment with small things to see what happens when they work together.

If supplies are not available for the science experiment, ask children to describe, act out, or draw what Blessings of Community means to them.

1. Pour 1/2 cup of the peroxide into the empty water bottle. (Hydrogen peroxide can irritate skin and eyes, so make sure you protect your eyes and skin.)
2. Add a few drops of food coloring to the bottle (optional).
3. Add about 1 tbsp. of liquid dish soap and swish it just a bit to mix it.
4. In a separate cup, combine yeast and warm water. Mix for about 30 seconds until most lumps are gone.
5. Pour the yeast mixture into the bottle (using a funnel) and watch the foaming begin.

The foam is just water, soap, and oxygen, so it's safe to touch, but it will be warm because of the chemical reaction!





Source: <http://www.cometogtherkids.com/2012/02/elephant-toothpaste-foaming-science.html>

**Ask:**

- How does this experiment demonstrate Blessings of Community?
- What small acts of kindness and generosity have you seen magnified when a community works together?

## 4 SEND

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

**Discuss:**

- What type of seed does Jesus refer to as the smallest seed planted in a garden? (mustard seed)
- What is amazing about a very small mustard seed? (When it is planted, it grows into the largest plant in the garden.)
- Why is it important to help people and the church even if we only can do “little” things? (Little things are the beginnings of big things.)
- What small acts of kindness and generosity can you do to grow and help others grow as disciples of Jesus Christ? (Possibilities are endless!)

# 5

## **BLESS**

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

Close by singing “Kanisa Litajengwa (Oh, Who Will Build the Church Now?)” CCS 338.

Dear God,

Help us grow in faith and love. Bless our small acts of kindness and generosity so they make a big difference!

Amen.

LESSON 36  
2 August 2020

# ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 13)

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Genesis 32:22–31

**Lesson Focus:** Struggling with God is part of discipleship and can bring blessing in the end.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- hear the story of Jacob wrestling with God.
- describe how Jacob's struggle with God transforms him.
- explore the meaning of discipleship.

## Supplies

- Bible or *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- Paper
- Scissors for each child
- "Jacob Wrestles with God" worksheet
- Chalk, string, or tape to divide the room down the middle. Signs that say "TRUE" and "FALSE" for Respond section.
- Small bowl
- Strips of paper with the words "honesty," "courage," and "forgiveness" written on them (enough for each child to have one)

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Genesis 32:22–31 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament*, pp. 99–100, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge,  
prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Give each child a piece of plain paper and a pair of scissors. Challenge them to cut a hole in the paper that they can stand in or step through. Give them some time to struggle with this challenge, which might seem impossible. You can give them a second piece of paper if they need to start again after a failed attempt.

After children have struggled with the challenge a while, show them the solution. See "Climb through a Hole in a Sheet of Paper" at <https://blog.doublehelix.csiro.au/climb-through-a-hole-in-a-sheet-of-paper/>

1. Fold the paper in half like a book.
2. Start cutting on the folded side, about 1 cm from the edge of the paper. Cut a straight line towards the opposite side and stop cutting about 1 cm before you reach the edge of the paper.

3. Turn the paper around and make a cut from the non-folded edge toward the folded edge, stopping 1 cm before you reach the folded edge.
4. Continue cutting, alternating directions, until you have filled the paper with cuts.
5. Along the folded side of the paper, cut each of the loops except the first and last ones.
6. Open the paper and step through the loop you have created.

Talk to the children about how it felt to struggle with this challenge. Sometimes we struggle with challenges in our lives and we feel frustrated or alone. Our scripture story today is about a man named Jacob, who was struggling so much that he actually wrestled with God.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Read Genesis 32:22–31 or read “Jacob Fights with God” from *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, on pages 168–169. Talk about how Jacob changed during the story. In the beginning, Jacob was fearful. He was running from his own brother. He didn’t fully trust God to protect him and lead him in the right way. Jacob’s name meant “deceiver,” and he told many lies and cheated many people. After he wrestled with God, Jacob was a changed man. He had a new name, Israel, which means “wrestled with God.” He went to his brother and was forgiven. He knew God had forgiven him just as Esau had forgiven him. He learned that God is with him always, no matter what. He knew God was leading him in the right way.

Invite children to complete the “Jacob Wrestles with God” worksheet (below). Or, have children fold a piece of paper in half and draw or write about Jacob before he wrestled with God on one side of the paper and Jacob after he wrestled with God on the other side of the paper.

## 3 RESPOND

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

Mark a line down the middle of the room with chalk, tape, or a string. Label one side of the room “TRUE” and one side “FALSE.”

One of Community of Christ’s Mission Initiatives is called Develop Disciples to Serve. This Mission Initiative focuses on helping people of all ages become better disciples of Jesus.

- How does the story of Jacob wrestling with God help us understand more about being a disciple?
- What can it teach us about being in relationship with God?

Play a Discipleship Game. In this game, the children will line up on the line in the middle of the room. The teacher will say a statement about discipleship, and children will move to one side of the room or the other, depending on their answer to the question. The statements are:

- God wants us to be in relationship with God. (True)
- Jacob was struggling with some of the bad choices he had made. (True)
- If you make a mistake, God is done with you. (False)
- God forgives people. (True)
- Jacob was a perfect disciple. (False—there are no perfect disciples; that’s why we need God’s love!)

- Like Jacob, everyone has times of doubt and fear. (True)
- Discipleship is always easy. (False)
- Jacob always wanted to do what God told him to do. (False—Jacob was struggling to follow God's will.)
- God can transform people and change lives. (True)
- God blessed Jacob. (True)

## 4 SEND

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

Jacob learned a lot about honesty, forgiveness, and courage. What are some ways we can show honesty, forgiveness, and courage in our lives?

Write the words “honesty,” “forgiveness,” and “courage” on slips of paper. Repeat the words as needed so you have enough slips of paper for each child. Put the slips of paper in a small bowl. Have children stand in a line at the other end of the room. Have children take turns running to the bowl, grabbing a slip of paper, and running back to the group. Then the child must read the character trait and tell a way they can show that character trait in their life. For example,

- “I can show honesty by telling the truth when I make a mess.”
- “I can show forgiveness by forgiving my brother when he borrows my toy without asking.”
- “I can show courage by praying to God when I feel scared.”

## 5 BLESS

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

After Jacob wrestled with God, God blessed Jacob (Genesis 32:29). Let's think about ways God has blessed us.

Invite each child to say a short prayer using this sentence: “God, thank you for blessing me with \_\_\_\_\_.”

If children need help, you might suggest they say “my family,” “friends,” “food,” “church,” or something else.

# Jacob Wrestles with God

Genesis 32:22–31

Draw or write about Jacob before and after he wrestled with God.  
How did he change?

**Before**

**After**

LESSON 37  
9 August 2020

# ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 14)

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Genesis 37:1–4, 12–28

**Lesson Focus:** Sometimes we feel abandoned by God, but God is always with us.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- hear the story of Joseph being betrayed by his brothers.
- discuss times when we have felt alone, and how God is with us and has plans for us.
- consider how they can help meet the Mission Initiative of Abolish Poverty, End Suffering.

## Supplies

- *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471) (optional)
- Crepe paper streamers in several colors
- Copies of Joseph's Coat paper
- Pipe cleaners, sequins, stickers, tissue paper, Washi® tape, markers, small candies, or other items for decorating Joseph's coat
- Glue
- Paper and markers or crayons

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Genesis 37:1–4, 12–28 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament*, pp. 101–102, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Divide children into small groups. Tell them today's scripture passage is about Joseph and his colorful coat. Before we hear the story, we are going to create some colorful coats. Choose one child from each group to wear the "coat." The other children in the group will have three minutes to create a "coat" for that child using colorful crepe paper streamers. If your class is very small, you could have children work in pairs, or you could have the whole class work together to create one "coat" on a child.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Last week we learned about Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel after he wrestled with God. Today's scripture passage is about Jacob's son, Joseph. Tell the story of Joseph, adapted from Genesis

37:1–4, 12–28. Or read the story “Joseph’s Beautiful Coat” from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, on pages 174–176.

Joseph was his father Jacob’s favorite child. Israel had even made Joseph a long robe with sleeves, which is famously known as “Joseph’s coat of many colors.” Joseph’s brothers hated him for this. The brothers went far away to find grass for their animals. They were gone for a long time. Jacob began to worry about them, so he sent Joseph out to find them. After a long walk, Joseph found his brothers. They saw him coming and were angry with him for being their father’s favorite. The brothers grabbed Joseph and tore off his fancy coat, then threw him in a pit. Some of the brothers wanted to kill Joseph. Just then, some traders came along. These traders bought and sold things and they even bought and sold slaves. A slave is a person who belongs to someone else. The brothers sold Joseph to the traders for some money. The traders took Joseph to Egypt. The brothers told Jacob that Joseph had died.

**Ask:** “How do you think Joseph was feeling at this point in the story?” (afraid, alone, angry, worried)

The Lectionary scripture passage for this week ends here, but you can assure children there is a happy ending! Once Joseph arrived in Egypt, the pharaoh of Egypt (a pharaoh is like a king) learned that Joseph could interpret dreams, and that he could use the dreams to understand about what was going to happen in the future. Joseph warned the pharaoh that there would be seven years of good harvests with plenty to eat, followed by seven years when there would be no rain and hardly any food. Joseph helped the people save up enough food so they would not starve. The pharaoh was so happy, he made Joseph his helper. Joseph became one of the most important people in Egypt and he was able to save many lives. God had a plan for Joseph all along.

## 3 RESPOND

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

Give each child a copy of the Joseph’s Coat worksheet (included below). Give them a choice of items with which to decorate the coat. Ideas include pipe cleaners, sequins, stickers, tissue paper, Washi® tape, markers, or even small candies. As they work, talk about the meaning of the story. What can this story teach us about our lives? Does it sometimes seem like God has abandoned us? It is sometimes hard to see what good will come out of difficult times, but God is always with us and always has a plan for us.

## 4 SEND

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

When Joseph was in Egypt, he ended up being able to warn the pharaoh about a famine (time with no food) that was coming. He was able to help the pharaoh prepare the people, which saved many lives. Without Joseph’s help, many people and animals would have died of hunger.

One of the Mission Initiatives for Community of Christ is Abolish Poverty, End Suffering. This is Christ’s mission of compassion. The Mission Initiative states, “We are poised to be Christ’s hands and feet, reaching out through compassionate ministries that serve the poor and hungry and stop conditions that diminish the worth of persons” (*Sharing in Community of Christ*, 4th Edition, p. 23).

All those years ago, Joseph was finding ways to abolish poverty and end suffering in Egypt. Invite kids to collect canned goods to donate to a local food pantry. Today, they can create signs or flyers and hang the signs around the church building. Next week, they can collect the donations for delivery to the food pantry. If you prefer, children can create signs for a different charity or event that helps abolish poverty or end suffering in your community.



# 5

## **BLESS**

Time of prayer, praise,  
blessing, and hope

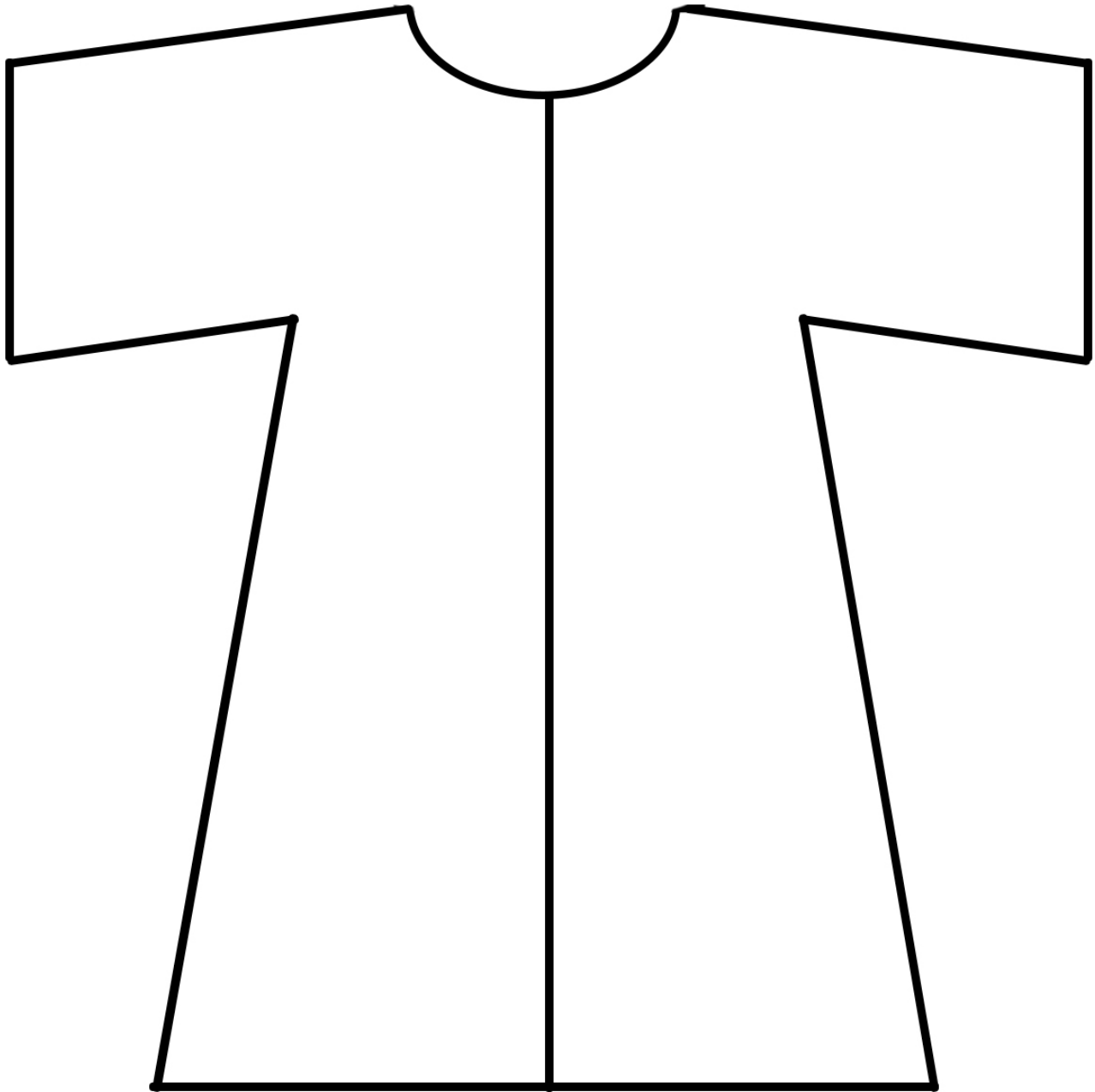
*(5% of lesson time)*

Say a prayer of blessing for the food that will be collected. Thank God for being with us and having a plan for us, even in our most challenging times.

# Joseph's Coat

Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a long robe with sleeves.

—Genesis 37:3



God had a plan for Joseph and  
God has a plan for each of us!

LESSON 38  
16 August 2020

# ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 15)

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Genesis 45:1–15

**Lesson Focus:** God wants us to forgive others.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- hear the story of Joseph reuniting with his brothers.
- study Joseph's story through playing a board game.
- explore the meaning of the Enduring Principle of Grace and Generosity.

## Supplies

- Bible or *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- Bible costumes (optional)
- Joseph's Journey board game and cards (printable), small tokens to use as game pieces
- Paper and markers (optional) for Send section
- Canned goods

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Genesis 45:1–15 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament*, p. 103, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Play a quick game of "Hide and Seek." One child hides while the others look for him or her. Tell children that in today's scripture passage, Joseph is found by his brothers.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Remind children about last week's story: Joseph, son of Jacob, was sold into slavery by his brothers. He was taken to Egypt, where he became a helper for the pharaoh (king). Joseph was able to help save lives by warning the pharaoh about seven years of famine (times with no food) that were coming. Our story today starts where last week's story left off.

Read Genesis 45:1–15, or read "Joseph and His Brothers" from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, on pages 182–183.

When Joseph finally saw his brothers again, he was happy to see them and happy to hear that his father was still alive. His brothers were afraid Joseph would be angry with them because of what they did to him. Joseph told them not to be afraid, because God wanted Joseph to be in Egypt so he could help the people. Joseph sent his brothers back to bring the entire family to Egypt so they would have enough food.

Invite children to act out the reunion between Joseph and his brothers. What do you think they said to each other? How would they react to seeing each other after so long? If Bible costumes are available, you can even let the children wear costumes. Emphasize how kind and forgiving Joseph was, even after his brothers had treated him so poorly in the past.

## **3 RESPOND**

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

Play “Joseph’s Journey” board game (below). Place game pieces on the first square. A player draws a card and follows the directions on the card. If all the cards have been used, you may shuffle them and use them again. Celebrate as each player reaches the final square. If you have more children in class, you might need to make multiple copies and play in small groups. You might also choose to make several copies of the cards for the game. If you do not have access to a copier, you can use a pre-made board game or draw a simple game board on paper.

## **4 SEND**

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

Grace is God’s love and forgiveness. We believe God’s grace is generous and unconditional.

- How did Joseph show grace to his brothers?

Generosity is when we share all that we have with others. We believe God has shown us grace and has generously blessed us, and in return we can share generously with others.

- How did Joseph show generosity to his brothers?

Last week, we talked about ways we can address the Mission Initiative of Abolish Poverty, End Suffering. We made signs and invited people to share generously by bringing canned goods to church today. How does this show generosity?

Collect all of the food donations and explain to children where the food will be donated. Thank them for being generous disciples. If time allows, children could create cards or write messages for the people who will receive the donations.

If children did not start a food drive during last week’s lesson, you could allow them to create signs and start a food drive today. If this is not possible, children can draw a picture of something they could do to generously share with others.

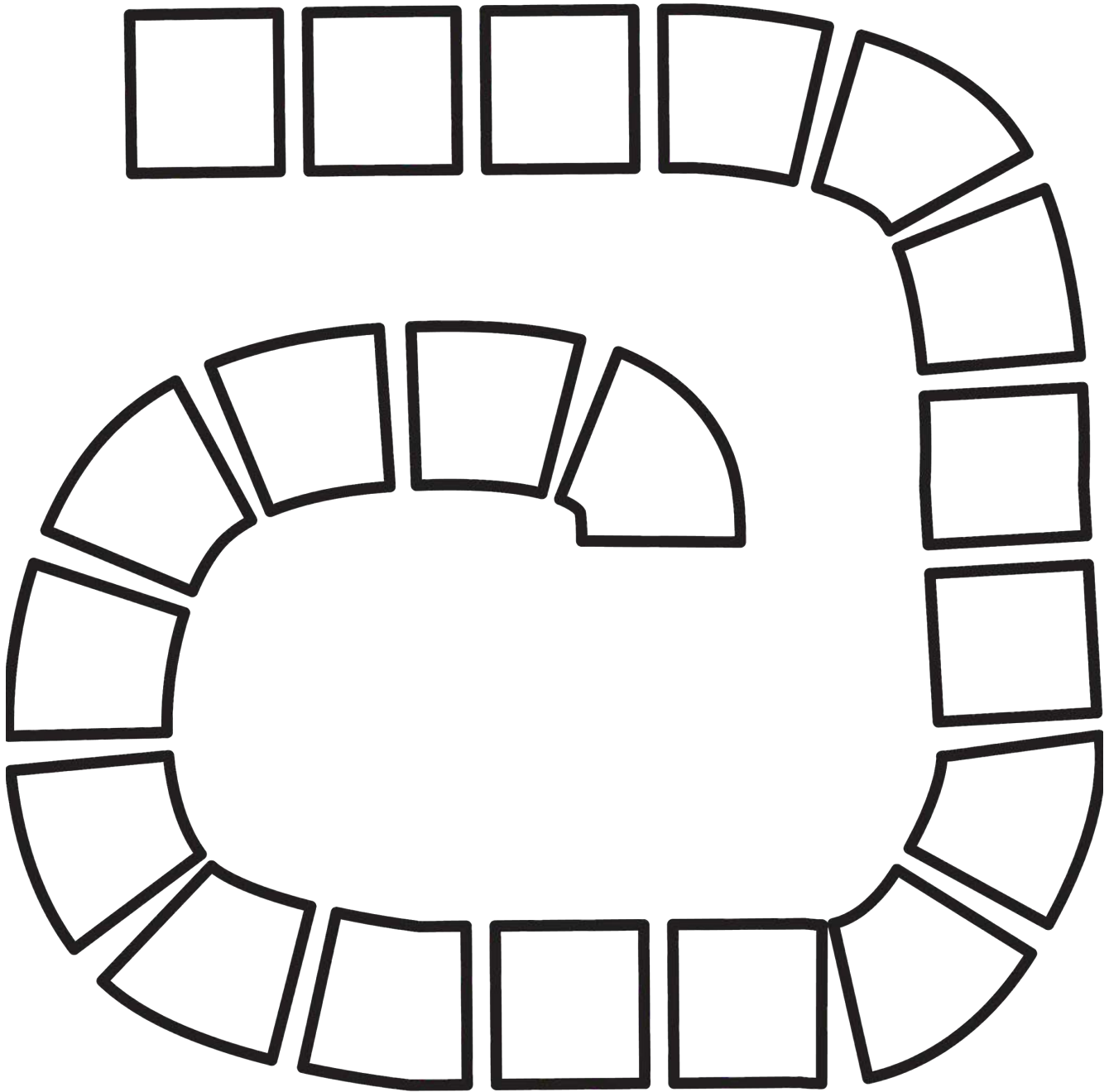
## **5 BLESS**

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

Say a prayer of blessing on the food that was collected. If time allows, play another game of “Hide and Seek.”

# Joseph's Journey

Genesis 37-45



Source: <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Store/Hidesys-Clipart>

Joseph's father loved him and made him a colorful coat. Move forward 2 spaces.	Joseph's brothers were afraid he would be angry at them. Go back 2 spaces.
Joseph's brothers were jealous of him and sold him into slavery. Go back 3 spaces.	Joseph forgave his brothers. Go forward 3 spaces.
Joseph worked hard and wished he could go home. Go back 1 space.	Joseph knew God had a plan for him, and that he had been sent to Egypt to save the people. Go forward 1 space.
Joseph helped the pharaoh save the people from a famine. Go forward 2 spaces.	Joseph sent his brothers back to get his father and to bring the whole family to Egypt. Go forward 2 spaces.
Joseph became a trusted helper of the pharaoh. Go forward 1 space.	Joseph's family went to Egypt, where there was enough food for everyone. Go forward 3 spaces.
Joseph's brothers found him. Go forward 1 space.	God wants us to forgive others! Go forward 2 spaces.

LESSON 39  
23 August 2020

# ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 16)

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Exodus 1:8—2:10

**Lesson Focus:** When we are afraid, we can trust God.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- hear the story of Moses' birth.
- explore the Enduring Principle of Worth of All Persons.
- learn Psalm 56:3, "When I am afraid, I put my trust in you."

## Supplies

- Bible or *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- Large bowl of water
- Various items to put into the water (some that sink and some that float)
- Paper for each child, plus some extra
- Props for telling the story of Moses in the basket: toy people, blue fabric, green paper
- Blue paper plates (or plain white), blue tissue paper, green paper, play dough or clay, white paper, markers or crayons
- Printed scripture verses from this lesson
- Small ball

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Exodus 1:8—2:10 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament*, p. 104, available through Herald House.

# 1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge,  
prepares and motivates for lesson

*(15% of total lesson time)*

Place a large bowl of water in the middle of the table where the children can see it. Show them several objects and have them make a prediction if each object will sink or float. Then test their predictions. Possible objects include a ball, a paper clip, a piece of wood, a rock (volcanic rock is porous and will float!), a piece of clay, or a pencil. Finally, ask the children if a piece of flat paper will float. When the flat paper sinks, give each of them a single piece of paper and see if they can make it into a shape that will float.

Tell children today's scripture passage is about a baby that was put into a floating basket and placed on the river! He survived and became one of the most famous people in the Bible. His name was Moses.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Our scripture passage today is from Exodus 1:8—2:10. About 400 years have passed since last week’s story about Joseph and his brothers. Remind children that Joseph’s entire family moved to Egypt. They came to be called the people of Israel, or “Hebrews.” The Hebrews eventually became slaves of the Egyptian people. There were more and more Hebrews and the Egyptians began to fear that the Hebrews would take over. The pharaoh told his soldiers to drown all the Hebrew baby boys in the river. This is where the story of Moses begins.

If you choose, you can tell the story of Moses using some props. Use small figurines or toy people as the characters: baby Moses, Jochebed (Moses’ mother), Miriam (Moses’ sister), and the princess. Use a strip of blue fabric for the river. Create some reeds along the edge of the river using green paper.

Use the props and tell the story of Moses in the basket by reading Exodus 2:1–10 or read the story, “Miriam Saves Her Brother” in *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, on pages 186–188.

## 3 RESPOND

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

God took care of Moses, just like God takes care of us. Do you think Moses’ mother was afraid? Psalm 56:3 says, “When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.” It must have taken a lot of courage and trust for Moses’ mother to put him in that basket. God took care of Moses and had great plans for Moses’ future.

- Discuss times when the students have been afraid. Did it help to put their trust in God?

### Moses in the Basket craft

Use a blue paper plate (or plain paper plate colored blue) and blue tissue paper for the water. Help children cut fringes on a rectangle of green paper to make the reeds. Let children make a basket out of play dough or clay. Let them use plain paper to create a baby for the basket and a lid for the basket. (See <https://lettheirlightshine.com/2015/10/28/baby-moses-paper-plate-craft/amp/> for additional ideas for this craft or search “Baby Moses paper plate craft” for other design ideas.)

Copy the scripture verse (below) and glue on each plate. Or, on a small piece of paper, write, “When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.” –Psalm 56:3. Glue the scripture to the plate.

When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. —Psalm 56:3	When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. —Psalm 56:3
When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. —Psalm 56:3	When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. —Psalm 56:3
When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. —Psalm 56:3	When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. —Psalm 56:3



# 4 SEND

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

The pharaoh thought the Hebrew people were not as important as the Egyptian people. Most Hebrew people were slaves, who were forced to work for Egyptians without being paid. They were treated like property. Pharaoh even thought it was OK to kill Hebrew babies. We know that God loved the Hebrew people and that all people are precious to God.

In Community of Christ, one of our Enduring Principles is Worth of All Persons. We believe God views all people as having equal worth. God wants all people to know the joy that comes from knowing about God and about Jesus Christ. Little baby Moses was important to God long ago, and each of you is important to God!

Sit in a circle. Toss a ball around the circle. When a child has the ball, they should say, "Tim has worth!" or "Sarah has worth!" and toss the ball to the child whose name they said.

# 5 BLESS

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

Do a call and response prayer. Tell children to say: "When I am afraid, I put my trust in you" each time you point to them.

**Leader:** God, sometimes we are afraid.

Children: When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.

**Leader:** Sometimes we don't feel important.

Children: When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.

**Leader:** Sometimes we don't know what the future will be like.

Children: When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.

**Leader:** Thank you, God, for showing us that we each have worth and that we can trust you.

**ALL:** When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. Amen.

LESSON 40  
30 August 2020

# ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 17)

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Exodus 3:1–15

**Lesson Focus:** All are called by God.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- hear the Bible story of Moses at the Burning Bush.
- explore the Enduring Principle of All Are Called.

## Supplies

- Bible or *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- Clear plastic cups
- Red, orange, and yellow tissue paper
- Glue
- Battery-operated tea lights
- Permanent markers

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Exodus 3:1–15 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament*, p. 105, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Tell the children some riddles:

- If I drink, I die. If I eat, I am fine. What am I? (fire)
- What kind of man can never enjoy a blazing fire? (a snow man)
- I am not alive, but I grow; I don't have lungs, but I need air; I don't have a mouth, but water kills me. What am I? (fire)
- What can't be burned in fire, nor drowned in water? (ice)
- Can you guess what our scripture passage is about today? (fire)

## 2 ENGAGE

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

Last week we learned about baby Moses, who was put into a basket and found by the Egyptian princess. He was raised as an Egyptian. As Moses grew older, he realized how poorly the Hebrew people were treated in Egypt. He also learned that he was Hebrew.

Read “Moses Goes Back to Egypt” in *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, on pages 194–195, or read Exodus 3:1–15.

### Discuss:

- What did God tell Moses to do?
- How did Moses feel about this call?
- Did he feel like he was ready and able?
- What excuses did Moses make? (I don’t know how to talk very well. Couldn’t someone else do it? What will I tell them?)
- What was God’s response? (I will be with you.)

## 3 RESPOND

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

### Burning Bush craft

Give each child a clear plastic cup and strips of red, orange, and yellow tissue paper. Children can spread glue on the inside of the cup and glue the tissue paper inside, letting some of it hang out the top of the cup. Then have children draw a tree or bush on the outside of the cup with a permanent marker. When they place a battery-operated tea light inside, the cup will appear to glow like fire. (For craft details, see “Burning Bush Craft for Kids” by Beth Gorden at [https://www.123homeschool4me.com/moses-bible-crafts-for-kids\\_67?](https://www.123homeschool4me.com/moses-bible-crafts-for-kids_67?) )

## 4 SEND

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

One of the Enduring Principles of Community of Christ is All are Called. We believe God gives all people special talents and gifts, and that we are all called to follow Jesus and share our special talents and gifts with the world.

When Moses heard God’s voice in the burning bush, Moses argued a little. He didn’t think he was good enough and he didn’t think he knew the right words to say. Moses had to trust that God knew best and God was calling him to do something important.

Discuss times when the children have been called to do something, but it made them nervous. You can also share a personal experience of yours. Remind children of last week’s scripture from Psalm 56:3: “When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.”

Moses followed God’s directions, even when he was feeling afraid.

Play a game of “Follow the Leader” to remind everyone that we are all called to follow God in our own unique way.

# 5

## **BLESS**

Time of prayer, praise,  
blessing, and hope

*(5% of lesson time)*

Turn off the lights in the room and have children turn on their tea light candles. Invite a child or several children to offer a prayer.

## LESSON 41

6 September 2020

# ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 18)

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Exodus 12:1–14

**Lesson Focus:** God answered many prayers and saved a group of people from many years of slavery. Jewish people celebrate this during a holiday called Passover by participating in a traditional Seder meal. This has many similarities to the Communion meal that Christians remember.

### Objectives

*The learners will...*

- identify a few of the plagues God used to free the Hebrew people.
- participate in a drama reenacting the how God helped Moses lead the Hebrews out of Egypt.
- understand the meaning and significance of the Passover.
- experience a traditional Seder meal and identify the similarities and differences between it and Communion.

### Supplies

- “Happy Passover” greeting taken from the following website: <http://time.com/5193392/how-to-wish-someone-a-happy-passover/>
- Information on the Seder meal can be found on the following website: [https://www.chabad.org/holidays/passover/pesach\\_cdo/aid/1751/jewish/What-Is-a-Seder.htm](https://www.chabad.org/holidays/passover/pesach_cdo/aid/1751/jewish/What-Is-a-Seder.htm)
- Ideas for Seder meal and play adapted from <https://ministry-to-children.com/childrens-lesson-passover/>
- Small plates and cups for each child
- Pillows or blankets for each child
- Copies of “The 10 Plagues” script
- Four large cups of grape juice
- 1 large bowl of warm water and a pitcher or glass to use for pouring
- Hand towel
- Boiled onion or potato chopped into bite sizes
- 1 tortilla shell or matzo or unleavened bread
- 1 small bowl of salt water
- Optional: props listed in the play script
  - Crown for the pharaoh to wear
  - Staff or cane for Moses
  - Aluminum foil balls (hail)
  - Red or pink dot stickers (boils)
  - Red paint, brown paper, tape

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Exodus 12:1–14 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament*, pp. 106–107, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Before class, remove or stack the chairs off to the side. Replace the chairs with pillows or blankets for the children to sit on. Lower a table or create a short table-like surface for the children to sit around. Set the “table” with a small plate and cup for each child to use. As each child enters the classroom, greet them with the following phrase “*chag Pesach samech*” which means “happy Passover” in Hebrew. Be aware that the “ch” in these words is NOT pronounced like the “ch” in chair. Instead, the “ch” is pronounced like in the word Bach. Before sitting down, coach the children to say it back to you. Once everyone has arrived, spend time teaching the entire class how to pronounce the phrase a few more times and explain its meaning.

## 2 ENGAGE

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

Explain that today’s lesson focuses on a Jewish holiday called the Passover. Ask if anybody knows or has heard of Passover before. Allow time for answers before explaining that—similar to the Christian holidays of Christmas and Easter—Passover is a Jewish holiday celebrating a time long ago when God freed the Hebrews from slavery. Say, “thousands of years before Jesus was born, the Hebrew people were enslaved and treated horribly by the Egyptians. The Egyptian king, called a pharaoh—would not let the Hebrew people leave. They prayed and begged God to free them from slavery, and God finally answered their prayers by sending a man named Moses.”

Tell the class that they are going to help you tell the story of how God helped Moses free the Hebrews. Assign roles: God, Moses, and Pharaoh. As the teacher, you will be the narrator. Pass out scripts so everyone can see and follow along. Begin reading the story aloud. Be sure to give copies of the story to each child so they can follow along and read their parts. If desired, ensure that the optional props are accessible.

## 3 RESPOND

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

After finishing the play, explain that just like Christians have many traditions each year to celebrate Christmas and Easter (hide and hunt for Easter eggs, put up a Christmas tree, give presents, dye eggs, eat a meal together, and so on), the Jewish people eat a traditional Seder meal during Passover to remember the story we just heard.

**Say:** In the Community of Christ, we partake in a sacrament called the Lord’s Supper or Communion as a way to remember the sacrifice Jesus made for each of us. At Communion, we remember God’s grace and recommit ourselves to follow Jesus Christ and live in covenant community. We also try to resolve any problems we have in our relationships with others, (adapted from *Of Water and Spirit, Facilitator Guide*, p. 60). We eat the bread as a symbol of Christ’s body and drink the grape juice as a symbol of Christ’s blood. At a Seder meal, other foods act as symbols to help the Jewish people remember this

time when God helped Moses get the Hebrews out of slavery. Traditionally, this meal can last all evening long and contains many rituals. But today we are just going to go through a few of them.”

Pour a small amount of grape juice from the first large cup into the small cups of each of the students. As you are pouring, tell the class to wait until instructed before drinking. Explain that normally wine is a royal drink that is used to symbolize freedom, joy, and happiness. We are substituting it with grape juice. Also explain that each of the four glasses of “wine” have multiple meanings. This first glass is used to show that the Hebrew people never changed their name while held as slaves and they were liberated from Pharaoh's slavery.

Ask students to remain seated on their pillow or cushion and to lean onto their left elbow. Once everyone has leaned over into the left reclining position, allow them to drink the grape juice and sit back up. Explain that in ancient biblical times only free people had the luxury to recline while eating, so the Jewish people continue to recline during the Seder meal to recognize they are still free.

Have each child—one at a time—hold his or her hands over the large bowl of warm water. Dip the pitcher or cup into the bowl and then pour it out over the hands: pour twice over the dominant hand and only once over the other hand. Afterwards, use the hand towel to dry. After each child's hands have been properly washed and dried, explain that the Seder meal is a spiritual experience that requires cleanliness. Hands must always be washed when eating any meal with bread since it is considered the staple of all foods.

Pass out a piece of the boiled onion or potato onto each child's plate. Again, do not allow them to eat until instructed. Demonstrate that each child should dip his or her vegetable into the salt water before eating. Explain that the salt water is used to symbolize the 400+ years the Hebrew people were slaves in Egypt and the backbreaking work they had to endure. Instruct them to lean to their left before putting the vegetable in their mouths. Once finished eating, they may sit upright again.

Pour a small amount of grape juice from the second large cup into the small cups of each of the students. As you are pouring, instruct the class to wait until instructed before drinking. Explain that this second glass of “wine” is used to show that the Hebrew people continued to speak their own language while held as slaves and they were liberated from pharaoh's order to kill all Hebrew male babies when born. Again lean to the left and drink.

Break the tortilla/matzo/unleavened bread in half in front of the class. Explain that first breaking the bread in half represents God's act of separating the Red Sea in two so that the Hebrew people could run away from pharaoh's army. Begin tearing the bread into smaller pieces and give a piece to each child. Explain that the tortilla/matzo/unleavened bread represents the bread the Hebrews had to eat when quickly leaving their homes after pharaoh finally agreed to let them go. Remind your class to lean to the left when eating.

Pour a small amount of grape juice from the third large cup into the small cups of each of the students. As you are pouring, instruct the class to wait until instructed before drinking. Explain that this third glass of “wine” is used to show that the Hebrew people remained highly moral according to God's laws while held as slaves and were saved from the drowning of Hebrew boys upon pharaoh's order. Again lean to the left and drink.

Explain that there are many more foods that are traditionally eaten at a Seder such as an egg, bitter herbs, a special sandwich, and so on. There are also several blessings offered and scriptures read. Before finishing, the fourth cup of “wine” is drunk. Pour a small amount of grape juice from the fourth large cup into the small cups of each of the students. As you are pouring, tell the class to wait until instructed before drinking. Explain that this fourth glass of “wine” is used to show that the Hebrew people remained loyal to one another while held as slaves and were saved from pharaoh's decree for the Hebrews to collect their own straw in order to make bricks. For the last time instruct the class to lean to the left and drink.

# 4

## SEND

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

Ask the following discussion questions after finishing the Seder meal.

1. The Hebrew people were slaves in Egypt for around 600,000 years. Why do you think the pharaohs wanted them as slaves?
2. How many times did Moses have to ask pharaoh to free the slaves?
  - When we ask God to help us, does the help always come immediately?
  - Would you have continued following God's command like the Hebrew people or would you have given up?
3. What did God finally have to do in order to convince pharaoh to free the Hebrews?
4. In this story, many people had to listen and do what God told them to do—even if it seemed weird. Who were some of the people and what were they asked to do?
5. This sacred story took place a really long time ago. Why do you think Jewish people continue the yearly traditional Seder meal even today? Jesus died on the cross a long time ago as well; why do we continue to partake in the Communion meal every month?
6. Has God ever asked you to do something you didn't understand?
  - How do you know God is talking to you?
  - Have you always listened?

# 5

## BLESS

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

This story shows us that God answers our prayers when we listen and follow God's voice—even though it may not happen right away or in the way we expect.

Instruct the class to join hands in a circle and repeat after you as we pray together.

Dear God, (pause to allow children to repeat)

You are so good. (children repeat)

Thank you for answering my prayers. (children repeat)

Help me to ask you when I need help. (children repeat)

Remind me to listen and follow your directions, (children repeat)

Even when I don't understand or think it sounds weird. (children repeat)

In Jesus name I pray, (children repeat)

Amen! (children repeat)



# The 10 Plagues

## Cast/Characters

Narrator—Teacher

God

Moses

Pharaoh

## Optional Props

- Crown for the pharaoh to wear
- Staff or cane for Moses
- Aluminum foil balls (hail)
- Red or pink dot stickers (boils)
- Red paint, brown paper, tape

## Script

**Narrator:** Many, many years before Jesus was born, God's people were enslaved in Egypt. They were treated horribly and God was not pleased. God called Moses to go to Pharaoh and tell him to let God's people go.

**God:** Moses, go to Pharaoh and tell him to let my people go!

**Moses:** (to Pharaoh) God says to let my people go!

**Pharaoh:** No!

**Narrator:** Because Pharaoh was being stubborn and not letting God's people go, God had to convince him. God sent many different plagues to Egypt: God turned the water into blood, made the Egyptians have boils or sores all over their skin (pause and let all kids—except Moses, God, and Pharaoh—put red or pink stickers all over Pharaoh). God sent lots of frogs to jump all over the place, made all the Egyptian animals sick, and made it thunderstorm hail (pause and let all kids except Moses, God, and Pharaoh throw aluminum foil balls at Pharaoh). After each plague came, Moses went back to the pharaoh to tell him to let God's people go.

**Moses:** (to Pharaoh) Let my people go!

**Pharaoh:** No!

**Narrator:** After God had sent nine different plagues and Pharaoh STILL kept the Hebrews as slaves, God knew that something drastic needed to happen. God told Moses what would happen and to pack up quickly for a long journey ahead.

**God:** On this night, kill a lamb and roast it. Use the blood from the lamb to paint above your doorposts. This will be a sign that the plague should not come to your homes. You can bake some bread, but you will need to leave so quickly; do not wait for it to rise.

(Allow kids to paint red on the brown paper and then tape it above the classroom door.)

**Narrator:** The tenth plague was the death of every firstborn in Egypt. However, just as God said, homes with blood painted on the doorpost were passed over and nobody harmed. Most Hebrew people had painted blood over the doorpost, but the Egyptians did not. So every Egyptian firstborn—from the firstborn cattle to the firstborn of King Pharaoh himself—died that night. The Pharaoh was so sad about the loss of his son that he called for Moses to come back and talk.

**Pharaoh:** Moses, come here!

**Moses:** (to Pharaoh) Yes, Pharaoh? Will you let God's people go?

**Pharaoh:** Go, take the people and go!

**Narrator:** So Moses hurried to tell the Hebrew people they were free to go. Just as God had said, the people had to leave so quickly, their bread didn't have time to rise. Grabbing just what they could carry, the Hebrews set out of Egypt with Moses as their leader.

## LESSON 42

13 September 2020

# ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 19)

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Exodus 14:19–31

**Lesson Focus:** God will always be with us; just like God helped Moses part the Red Sea to help the Hebrew people escape the Egyptian army.

### Objectives

*The learners will...*

- listen to and discuss the story of Moses parting the Red Sea.
- make a craft to help remind them that God always provides.
- share the sacred story with adults in the congregation.

### Supplies

- “Pepper and Water Science Trick” at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ho0o7H6dXSU>
- *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- Regular plate
- Ground black pepper
- Dish soap
- 1 gallon plastic zipper bags\*(one for each student)
- Jars or bottles of hair gel\* (one bottle per student)
- Beads
- Packing tape
- Blue food coloring (if hair gel isn’t already blue)
- Printed Red Sea Sensory Bag Notecard (one per student)

\*To save money, use quart sized plastic bags and then half a bottle of hair gel for each bag.

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Exodus 14:19–31 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament*, p. 108, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Before class, fill the plate with water and set it on a table. The table and plate should be located in a place where everyone can see. Keep the dish soap hidden from view but easily accessible from where you sit. Once everyone has arrived, tell the class that you have super powers. Confidently state that you can control all the pepper on the plate with just one touch of your finger. Ask if anyone would like to try first, and allow any student to use his or her finger to try to move the pepper. While students are

attempting, secretly put a small dab of dish soap on your finger. Once everyone has a chance to try, place your dish soap-covered finger in the middle of the plate. All of the pepper should scatter to the sides. Allow as much Q & A and discussion as desired.

For visual directions of the experiment and the scientific explanation, watch the YouTube video listed in the resources.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

**Say:** Last week we learned about God using a man named Moses to convince the pharaoh to free the Hebrew people from slavery. They had to pack up fast to follow Moses out of Egypt. Explain that the story you will be reading today is about how God has to again help the Hebrew people, this time by moving water.

Read “A Long, Long Journey” on pages 203–204 in the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*. After reading the story, ask the class the following discussion questions:

- At first, the Hebrew people were thankful because they were finally free from years of slavery. But then they had a long journey ahead. How would you feel if you had to walk for years in the desert?
- How did the Hebrew people feel when they were stuck on the shore of the sea with pharaoh’s soldiers chasing after them?
- What did God do to help Moses save the Hebrew people?
- What happened to pharaoh’s army?
- What did the Hebrew people do once they were safe on the other side of the sea?
- Do you notice a pattern? (Things are going bad and the people complain and pray to God for help. God answers their prayers and the people rejoice. Then something else happens, and the people begin complaining out of fear and frustration. God answers their prayers once again. And again, the people rejoice. This pattern continues throughout the Bible.)

## 3 RESPOND

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

Explain that the class is going to make a “Red Sea Sensory Bag” to help them remember how God saved the Hebrew people by parting the Red Sea. The directions are as follows:

1. Give each student a gallon-sized plastic zipper bag and bottle of hair gel.
2. Help the children fill the plastic bag with the hair gel.
3. Mix in the blue food coloring if needed.
4. Add in a handful of beads.
5. Spread the hair gel and beads throughout the bag, getting as much air out as you can.
6. Seal the bag and use packaging tap to prevent accidental spills.

Allow children time to manipulate the bag by squeezing and pushing the gel around while others finish. Once everyone has finished their bag, direct the class to pretend the gel is the Red Sea by making a

path through the gel in the middle of the bag. Explain that God always creates a path for us, even when things seem hopeless, frustrating, or difficult.

Look on the internet for more ideas and images of sensory bags.

## **4 SEND**

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

Pass out a “Red Sea Sensory Bag Notecard” for each child. Help them read through it a couple times so that everybody knows exactly what it states. Ensure that all the kids can read through it themselves. Point out that this is exciting news and should be shared with enthusiasm and smiles. Explain that sharing miracles like this helps others believe in the awesome power of God.

As disciples, we are to continue sharing the sacred story with others so they can also hear and believe. Tell the class to go quickly find one adult in the congregation—preferably not a family member. They should use their bags as a visual demonstration and then read their notecards to the adult. Once they’ve practiced sharing their good news, they should return to the classroom to finish class.

## **5 BLESS**

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

Once everyone has returned, allow children to share their experience if desired and time allows. Give the class a challenge: share this news with at least one other person not at church sometime throughout the coming week.

Ask a volunteer to read the closing prayer aloud:

Loving God,

Thank you for everything you have done for your people in the past.

Thank you for everything you will do for your people in the future.

You are so good.

Help us to always trust in you, even when things seem hopeless or frustrating.

Help us to always feel your Spirit and to know that we are never alone.

In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

# Red Sea Sensory Bag Notecards

<p>God saved the Hebrew people by giving Moses the power to part the Red Sea. Instead of fear and complaints, I should always have faith and trust that God will provide.</p> <p>The Hebrews were never alone, and neither am I.</p>	<p>God saved the Hebrew people by giving Moses the power to part the Red Sea. Instead of fear and complaints, I should always have faith and trust that God will provide.</p> <p>The Hebrews were never alone, and neither am I.</p>
<p>God saved the Hebrew people by giving Moses the power to part the Red Sea. Instead of fear and complaints, I should always have faith and trust that God will provide.</p> <p>The Hebrews were never alone, and neither am I.</p>	<p>God saved the Hebrew people by giving Moses the power to part the Red Sea. Instead of fear and complaints, I should always have faith and trust that God will provide.</p> <p>The Hebrews were never alone, and neither am I.</p>
<p>God saved the Hebrew people by giving Moses the power to part the Red Sea. Instead of fear and complaints, I should always have faith and trust that God will provide.</p> <p>The Hebrews were never alone, and neither am I.</p>	<p>God saved the Hebrew people by giving Moses the power to part the Red Sea. Instead of fear and complaints, I should always have faith and trust that God will provide.</p> <p>The Hebrews were never alone, and neither am I.</p>
<p>God saved the Hebrew people by giving Moses the power to part the Red Sea. Instead of fear and complaints, I should always have faith and trust that God will provide.</p> <p>The Hebrews were never alone, and neither am I.</p>	<p>God saved the Hebrew people by giving Moses the power to part the Red Sea. Instead of fear and complaints, I should always have faith and trust that God will provide.</p> <p>The Hebrews were never alone, and neither am I.</p>
<p>God saved the Hebrew people by giving Moses the power to part the Red Sea. Instead of fear and complaints, I should always have faith and trust that God will provide.</p> <p>The Hebrews were never alone, and neither am I.</p>	<p>God saved the Hebrew people by giving Moses the power to part the Red Sea. Instead of fear and complaints, I should always have faith and trust that God will provide.</p> <p>The Hebrews were never alone, and neither am I.</p>

LESSON 43  
20 September 2020

# ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 20)

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Exodus 16:2–15

**Lesson Focus:** The Hebrew people were hungry and God provided food in an unexpected way. God provides to those who ask and trust in the Lord.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- list the two ways God provided food for the starving Hebrew people.
- relate their lives to the feelings the Hebrew people felt so long ago.
- learn that God provides, even in the most unexpected ways.
- explore the Enduring Principle of Grace and Generosity.

## Supplies

- Bible or *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- Scented candle or air freshener that smells like food (for example: apple pie, Christmas cookie, gingerbread maple, popcorn, and so on)
- Sticky notes and pencils (enough for each child)
- Biscuit and honey for each child (be sensitive of food allergies)
- Optional: Napkins or plates
- Small paper cups (one for each child)
- Large bag of M&M's® or similar candy

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Exodus 16:2–15 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament*, pp. 109–110, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge,  
prepares and motivates for lesson

*(15% of total lesson time)*

Prior to arrival, prepare the classroom by making it smell like some type of delicious food either by using a scented candle or air freshener or by baking or cooking something nearby so that the smell wafts into the classroom. The smell should be very noticeable and stimulate most people’s salivary glands. As students walk into the classroom, engage in conversation with them about how good it smells. Give them the opportunity to guess what it smells like. The more discussion, the better. The purpose of this activity is to make the kids feel hungry or at least feel a desire for food.

# 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Explain that today's scripture lesson continues with the Hebrew people after they crossed the Red Sea and got away from pharaoh and his army.

Begin reading the excerpts below of Exodus 16:2–15, and from "I'm So Hungry!" page 206 in the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*. Stop at various points in the story to ask the discussion questions below.

## Read:

"It's such a long way," Miriam sighed.

"I know," said Aaron. "It's hot in the daytime and cold at night. And I'm so hungry."

"So am I," said Miriam. "But there's no food anywhere."

The Hebrew people hadn't eaten anything for days.

## Stop and ask the following questions:

- Have any of you felt hungry before?
- How long have you gone without food?
- What does it feel like to be really hungry?
- Have you ever complained to your mom or dad or a grandparent about being hungry?

## Continue reading:

<sup>2</sup>The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup>The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

## Stop and ask the following questions:

- Why did the Hebrew people want to go back to Egypt where they were slaves?
- Do you think the Hebrew people were justified in their complaints?
- The Hebrew people begin blaming Moses. How do you think Moses will answer?

## Continue reading:

"God doesn't want you to die...God got us out of Egypt. God will give us food. Trust God! Please!"

Sure enough, in the evening, a whole flock of birds flew into their camp. They were quail, a bird that looks like a small chicken. They make a funny "cwa-ka-koo" kind of noise. When you cook them, they taste really good.

So the people caught the quail and cooked them for food. They said, "Thank you, God, for sending the quail."

## Stop and ask the following questions:

- What did Moses tell the Hebrew people to do?
- Is it sometimes hard to trust in God when things seem hopeless?
- How did God feed the starving Hebrew people?



### Continue reading:

<sup>13</sup>In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. <sup>14</sup>When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. <sup>15</sup>When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, “It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat.”

### After finishing the story, ask these final questions:

- Aside from the quail, what else did God give the Hebrews for food? (manna)
- What did it taste like? (biscuit with honey)
- Where did it come from? (from God, it was growing on plants and the ground)

## 3 RESPOND

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

Grace and Generosity is one of the nine Enduring Principles of Community of Christ. God’s grace means that we are loved exactly as we are. We do not have to do anything to earn God’s love; we are loved just as we are. God’s grace is also “steadfast love,” which means God’s love will always be with us. (For more information on the Enduring Principle of Grace and Generosity, see *Sharing in Community of Christ*, 4th Edition, p. 28 or *Of Water and Spirit, Facilitator Guide*, pp. 50–51.)

### Ask:

- How did God show grace (steadfast love) to the Hebrew people?
- Did the Hebrew people “deserve” the miracle of food God provided?
- Is there a time someone has shown you grace?

Give everyone a small paper cup. Explain that God’s love is so great for us that it fills us up, even when we don’t deserve it. That is called “grace.” Walk around the classroom, filling each cup with the candy. Then explain that because God loves us, we are able to love others. That is called “generosity.” Tell the kids they have 30 seconds to get rid of as many pieces of candy as possible by putting them into the cups of others. If they knock over a cup, they have to put all the candy that spilled out into their own cup.

After the 30 seconds, compare each child’s cup. The cups will probably have almost the same amount of candy in them as when they started. Explain that being generous with our own things results in blessings of our own. During the game you didn’t stop to think: “Does he deserve this candy?” or “Should I save some for myself?” You just gave unconditionally. That is the kind of love God has for us and expects us to give to others.

## 4 SEND

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

When the Hebrew people asked God and stayed faithful, God provided food. The food wasn’t at all what anybody ever expected, but it nourished their bodies just the same. God always provides—not always in the way we expect.

Pass out a sticky note and pencil for each child. Help them each write on their sticky notes: “Ask and we shall receive.” Once completed, tell each child to post his or her sticky note somewhere around the

church building. As the children are posting their sticky notes, set out a biscuit with honey on the table in front of each child's seat so that when they've returned, they each have some "manna" to eat.

# 5 BLESS

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

Gather the class into a circle. Begin a circle prayer with the following prompt:

God, you are so good!

You always provide us with everything we need.

Thank you for giving me \_\_\_\_\_." (Ask each child to fill in the blank.)

Amen!

LESSON 44  
27 September 2020

# ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 21)

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Exodus 17:1–7

**Lesson Focus:** God continues to provide for the Hebrew people, even when they complain.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- experience thirst—like the Hebrew people were thirsty while wandering in the desert.
- place events of the sacred story in the correct order on a timeline.
- recognize a pattern to the sacred story.
- brainstorm how this story applies to living as a disciple today.

## Supplies

- Bible or *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- Tag game variation suggestions <https://activeforlife.com/transform-the-game-of-tag/>
- YouTube video for “God Is So Good” melody <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IlcsmEs6vfk>
- 1 Rock
- 1 Stick
- Large, white poster paper
- Black marker
- Timeline cards (cut out and mix up prior to class)
- Tape
- Drinking cups (one per student)
- Water or juice
- River stones or rocks (1 per child)
- Colored Markers

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Exodus 17:1–7 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament*, pp. 111–112, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Begin a game of tag; if the weather permits, bring the class outside. The purpose of the activity is to motivate the children to move around enough that they become thirsty. Ideas for a variety of different tag games are listed on the following website: <https://activeforlife.com/transform-the-game-of-tag/>

After about 5-10 minutes, gather the children back into your classroom space. If anyone asks, do not let them get a drink. Facilitate a discussion with the following questions:

- Is anyone thirsty?
- What do you like to drink when you're really thirsty?
- How easy is it to concentrate on other things (like this class discussion) when you're thirsty?

Do not allow children to get a drink until indicated in the lesson. If a child asks, just simply respond "trust me...you'll get a drink later."

## **2** ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Explain that last week we read about the Hebrew people complaining of hunger and doubting God. Today's scripture lesson continues with the Hebrew people still following Moses as they wander around the wilderness. Ask if anybody can predict what happens in the story today. Allow children to share their ideas.

Begin reading excerpts below of Exodus 17:1–7, and from "We Want a Drink!" pages 209–210 in the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*. Stop at various points in the story to ask the discussion questions below.

### **Read:**

The people of Israel had been very hungry. But God had given them a special food called manna, which tasted really good. And God had sent some quail—birds that look like small chickens. They cooked the quail on a fire, and they tasted good, too.

Now the people had enough to eat, but they were thirsty. There was no water anywhere. They started complaining again. "Stop it!" said Moses. "Stop saying that God isn't good to us."

### **Stop and ask the following questions:**

- What does it feel like to be really thirsty?
- What do you do when you're thirsty?
- Have you ever been in a situation where you are really thirsty but there's absolutely nothing around to drink?

### **Continue reading:**

<sup>2</sup>The people quarreled with Moses, and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?" <sup>3</sup>But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?"

### **Stop and ask the following questions:**

- Do you ever complain about being thirsty? (Now is a good time to point out any child who might have been complaining about not getting a drink after playing tag)
- People need water to live. Do you think the Hebrew people had a good reason for complaining?
- Should they have blamed Moses? Is there anyone to blame?

### Continue reading:

<sup>4</sup>So Moses cried out to the Lord, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." <sup>5</sup>The Lord said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff [stick] with which you struck the Nile, and go. <sup>6</sup>I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink."

### Ask the following questions:

- Have you ever seen or heard of a rock giving water when it has been hit with a stick?
- Would you have questioned God when asked to hit a rock with a stick?
- If you had been in the desert, would you have done what God asked?

**Say:** "Ok let's try!" Put the rock on the table in front of the class. Hold the stick in your hand and ask, "Do you think hitting this rock with a stick will give us water?" After children have replied, hit the rock with the stick. Then ask for volunteers; maybe it needs to be the right person. Then suggest maybe they haven't been holding the stick the right way. Allow several more children to try different methods of holding the stick. After everyone has had a turn, ask the class why it wasn't working. Then ask them to predict if it will work for Moses and the Hebrew people. Why or why not?

### Finish reading:

So Moses hit the rock with his walking stick. Clean, pure water came running out of the rock.

Then Moses said to the people, "God is with us. Remember that. God is with us. God will never leave us. We are God's people!"

But the people didn't always remember. It's hard to remember that God cares about you, when you are hungry and thirsty and tired and hot and homesick.

## 3 RESPOND

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

On large, white poster paper draw a thick line down the center with the black marker, creating a timeline. On the far left draw a hash mark and write the phrase "The Hebrews were slaves in Egypt." Place the timeline cards on the table and ask the children to put them in order along the timeline. Hang the timeline somewhere easily visible in the classroom space.

Once completed in the correct order, help the children see the pattern that God always provides. Explain that this sacred story of Moses leading the Hebrew people out of Egypt reminds us that even people thousands of years ago experienced many hardships while following God. As disciples, we sometimes have to face difficulties just as the Hebrew people did so long ago. Being a disciple isn't always easy; sometimes we are faced with many challenges. Ask the following discussion questions:

- What are some difficulties people experience today?
- Have you heard people complain about something at church? At home? At school?
- Have you ever complained about something?
- Based on the story, what should we do instead of complain?
- Given the pattern on our timeline, what do you think is going to happen next in the sacred story?

# 4

## SEND

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

Give a cup to every child and fill it with water or juice. Thank the children for trusting you to provide something to drink. While they are drinking, give a rock or stone to each child and place the markers in a place for everyone to share. Tell them to write the phrase “God is always with us” or “God will never leave us” on their rock or stone. Allow them to decorate it in a way that will help them remember this sacred story.

# 5

## BLESS

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

Sing the campfire song, “God Is So Good” with the class. If you don’t know the melody, use the provided YouTube link to hear and learn. The adapted lyrics are provided below.

### “God Is So Good”

By Paul Makai

Words adapted by Sarah Marolf

God is so good,  
God is so good,  
God is so good,  
God’s so good to me.

God cares for me,  
God cares for me,  
God cares for me,  
God’s so good to me.

God never leaves,  
God never leaves,  
God never leaves,  
God’s so good to me.

God is with me,  
God is with me,  
God is with me,  
God’s so good to me.

# Timeline Cards

<p>Hebrew people <u>complained</u> about how bad their lives were as slaves in Egypt.</p>	<p>God helped Moses convince the Pharaoh to let the Hebrew people go free by sending 10 different plagues.</p>
<p>The Hebrew people were freed from slavery and quickly fled, leaving so quickly they didn't even have time for their bread to finish rising.</p>	<p>Pharaoh's army chased the Hebrews to the Red Sea. The Hebrews <u>complained</u> they were trapped and would be killed.</p>
<p>God answers Moses' prayers by providing water flowing from a rock for everyone to drink.</p>	<p>The Hebrew people began <u>complaining</u> of hunger while wandering around in the wilderness.</p>
<p>God answered Moses' prayer by providing manna and quail for everyone to eat.</p>	<p>The Hebrew people <u>complained</u> they were thirsty and blamed Moses for bringing them into the desert.</p>
<p>God helped Moses part the Red Sea so that the Hebrew people could escape Pharaoh's army by walking across. Once all Hebrews made it safely across, the waters came crashing down on Pharaoh's army.</p>	

LESSON 45  
4 October 2020

# ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 22)

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Exodus 20:1–4, 7–9, 12–20

**Lesson Focus:** God gave the Israelites the Ten Commandments to teach us all how to live in God's way.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- recognize and acknowledge the importance of rules.
- explain how the Ten Commandments were received.
- list the Ten Commandments in order.

## Supplies

- *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- *Teaching Kids the Ten Commandments* video using hand motions from: <https://youtu.be/auBp1tiiD7c>
- Balloon
- Timeline (from previous Sunday school lesson) to reference
- Poster paper and marker
- Tape or glue
- Ten Commandment Cards (end of lesson)

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Exodus 20:1–4, 7–9, 12–20 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament*, pp. 113–114, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Toss a balloon into the air. Tell the children that the object of the game is to keep the balloon from hitting the ground for as long as possible. After they've been playing for a minute or so, change the rules by announcing, “Oh you have to start over again because \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank with the name of a child) hit the balloon with their left hand. You are supposed to keep your left hand behind your back.”

The children might complain that you hadn't explained that rule; just apologize and encourage them to continue playing. After a few more minutes, change the rules again by announcing, “Oh stop! \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank with the name of a child) touched the balloon twice in a row. That's against the rules; start over again.”



The children will undoubtedly complain that you're changing the rules, but just continue encouraging them to play. Follow this pattern a couple more times so that class members are quite exasperated with all the rule changes. Then facilitate the following discussion:

- What was the most difficult part of the game?
- I changed the rules a lot; what made that difficult?
- Would you ever be able to win the game if you didn't know the rules?

Explain that rules aren't always fun, but they're used to keep us safe and help us reach our goals. Rules and directions help us learn how to live safely with each other and to meet expectations. Without consistent rules, we wouldn't know what to do.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Remind the class that last week our story left off with Moses still leading the Hebrew people around a desert for many, many days. Point to the timeline on the wall and ask for volunteers to explain everything that has happened up until this point. Explain that today's story continues their journey in the desert.

Read Exodus 20:1–4, 7–9, 12–20 or “The Ten Commandments” pages 213–214 in the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*. After reading the story, ask the class the following discussion questions:

- Would it have been hard to wait at the bottom of the mountain while Moses got to climb to the top?
- What would you have been feeling if you saw smoke and fire, heard thunder, and felt the ground tremble like an earthquake?
- What do you think of the Ten Commandments? Are they fair rules? Are they difficult to follow?

Explain that just like you wanted to have an unchanging set of rules during the balloon game, the Israelites were also very thankful to finally have a list of rules they could follow to live as God wanted.

## 3 RESPOND

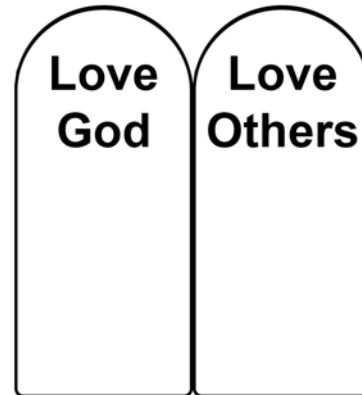
Takes the learners from  
hearing to doing  
(35% of lesson time)

Teach each of the Ten Commandments using hand motions. Use the video *Teaching Kids the Ten Commandments* for reference (<https://youtu.be/auBp1tiiD7c>). Each hand motion uses the number of fingers associated with the number order of the commandment. You can choose to show the video to the class or preview and learn the motions before class and teach it yourself. If time allows, have children form groups of two or three to practice.

# 4 SEND

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

Gather the class back to the table. Lay the poster paper on the table. Draw two stone tablets on the poster (find images on the internet for reference). At the top of the left tablet write the words "Love God." At the top of the right tablet, write the words "Love Others." Tell the children to work together as a class to separate all of the Ten Commandments cards into those two categories. Once completed correctly, tape or clue the cards in place and hang the poster somewhere visible in the learning space.



Refer to the posted timeline. Point out the pattern: the Israelites (Hebrew people) complain; Moses prays; God provides something for the Israelites so they rejoice; then the Israelites begin complaining again, so Moses prays again...and so on.

## Ask:

- Does anyone remember how the story ended today (answer: Israelites are thanking God for giving them the Ten Commandments).
- Can anyone predict based on the pattern, what will happen next (answer: the Israelites will begin complaining and break one of the rules).
- Which of the Ten Commandments are the most difficult for you to follow?

# 5 BLESS

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

Once everyone has chosen the commandment that will be most difficult to follow, form a circle with everyone in the class standing, holding hands, facing the center. Explain that they will each be asking God to help them with their most difficult commandment by saying the following:

"Please help me to \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank with the commandment), so I can live as you want me to live."

Each child around the circle will share. Begin and end with you as the leader. Begin the circle prayer by saying:

"Wonderful and loving God, we want to thank you for providing everything we need.

You provide for us just like you have provided for so many people for thousands of years.

We are your children and we want to live like you command.

Please help me to \_\_\_\_\_, so I can live as you want me to live."

Continue with the child on your right. End with the statement

"God, we want to serve you in everything we do.

Thank you so much for your loving presence here today.

Amen."

## Ten Commandments Cards

Don't pretend there are any other gods. I am the only God.	Don't bow down and pray to any pictures or statues you've made.
Be careful how you use my name. When you speak my name, you must mean what you're saying.	Remember the Sabbath day. Respect God's day of rest.
Treat your mother and father with respect.	Don't kill anyone.
Respect your marriage and respect your body. Be faithful to your husband or wife.	Don't steal.
Don't tell lies.	Don't wish you had things that belong to other people.

LESSON 46  
11 October 2020

# ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 23)

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Exodus 32:1–14

**Lesson Focus:** Responsible disciples always choose to follow and pray to God—even when the journey gets difficult—because nothing humankind can create is greater than the works of God.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- create statues.
- participate in guided discussions about the scripture story.
- recognize the “idols” in their own lives and community.
- create a model of something that acts as a reminder to always turn to God.

## Supplies

- Bible or *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- Play-Doh or modeling Clay (enough for each student)
- “Idol objects”—items that represent different idols in the lives of your students (cell phone, video games, money, pictures of celebrities, athletes, and YouTubers, etc.). Keep items hidden in a bag until needed.
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Exodus 32:1–14 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: Old Testament*, pp. 115–116, available through Herald House.

# 1 GATHER

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

As the children enter, give them each some Play-Doh or modeling clay. Set a timer for five minutes. Challenge the class to make the best statue they can within the five minutes. Explain that the class will vote on the best statue after the time is up.

Once the timer goes off, ask each child to display their statue so that everyone in the class can see. Allow some time for each child to explain their creation if necessary. Take a vote to determine which of the class statues is the best. Put that statue somewhere prominent where everyone can continue to see throughout class. All other statues should be smashed placed back into the container.

Lead a quick discussion about the activity:

- What was difficult about making these statues?
- Point to the statue on display. What makes this statue the very best?
- Could someone else make a better one? How?
- Can anything we make with our own hands be better than what God can create?

Explain that after learning the Ten Commandments, the Israelites continued following Moses on their journey to the Promise Land. In today's story, it doesn't take them long to break one of those commandments by building a statue made of gold.

## 2 ENGAGE

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

Begin reading excerpts below of Exodus 32:1–14, and from “The People Do a Bad Thing” on pages 218–219 in the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*.

### Read:

Moses often went up to the top of the mountain. He felt really close to God when he was up there.

It was hard being a leader for the people of Israel. The people walked through the hot desert every day. They shivered in the cold every night. They were tired and cranky.

### Stop and ask:

- Do you ever need a break from being around people?
- Where do you go to be closer to God?

### Continue reading:

“Why is Moses up on that mountain so often?” said the people.

“That is where he can talk to God,” said Aaron. Aaron was Moses’ brother.

“We never get to talk to God,” said the people. “We don’t really like that God Moses talks about. We want a god we can see. We want a god we can pray to.”

### Stop and ask:

- Is it sometimes hard to believe in a God you cannot physically see?
- Do you have an image in your mind of what God looks like? What is the image?

### Continue reading:

<sup>2</sup>Aaron said to them, “Take off the gold rings that are on the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.” <sup>3</sup>So all the people took off the gold rings from their ears, and brought them to Aaron. <sup>4</sup>He took the gold from them, formed it in a mold, and cast an image of a calf; and they said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!” <sup>5</sup>When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation and said, “Tomorrow shall be a festival to the Lord.” <sup>6</sup>They rose early the next day, and offered burnt offerings and brought sacrifices of well-being; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to revel.

### Stop and ask:

- Did anybody have a golden calf as their image of God?
- How do you think Moses is going to react?
- How do you think God is going to react?
- Refer to the Ten Commandments poster on the wall. Which one of the Ten Commandments are the Hebrew people breaking?

**Continue reading:**

<sup>7</sup>The Lord said to Moses, "Go down at once! Your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have acted perversely; <sup>8</sup>they have been quick to turn aside from the way that I commanded them; they have cast for themselves an image of a calf, and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!'" <sup>9</sup>The Lord said to Moses, "I have seen this people, how stiff-necked they are. <sup>10</sup>Now let me alone, so that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them..."

**Stop and ask:**

- Have you ever thought God would be so angry at people that God would want to kill them?
- What made God so mad?

**Continue reading:**

"Please don't!" said Moses. "If you do that, the people in Egypt will laugh. They will say that the people of Israel were not your special chosen people after all. 'Their god got them out into the desert, and then their god burned them up!' That's what the Egyptians will say."

"Well, okay," said God. "But you get down there right now. Tell them to get rid of that golden calf!"

So Moses hurried down. "Aaron!" he yelled. "What is going on? Why are the people praying to a golden calf?"

Aaron looked very guilty. "I don't know," he said. "They just brought me all their gold. I didn't know what to do with it. So I threw it into the fire. And out came this calf."

**Stop and ask:**

- Did Aaron tell Moses the truth? Why not?
- Have you ever been too scared to tell the truth? Why were you afraid?

**Continue reading:**

Moses gathered all the people together. "Listen to me!" he said. "You did a bad thing. Because of that, I have ground up your calf into a powder. I have put that powder into the water you drink. That will make it taste bad. It will make you feel bad. That is your punishment."

"Oh no!" said the people.

"Oh yes!" said Moses. "Now listen to me. Those of you who are sorry for what you did—those of you who want to pray to the real God—you go stand over there. Those who don't want to pray to the real God—well, you can just go away. I don't want to see you anymore!"

**Stop and ask:**

- What punishment did the people get for worshiping the golden calf?
- Would you want to follow the man who punished you or would you decide to leave?
- These people had been starving and thirsty in the desert, wandering around for a really long time, and now they were being punished by having to drink water with gold powder in it. Was it easy for them to follow God? Is it easy for you to follow God?

**Finish reading:**

Some of the people were really angry at Moses. They liked praying and singing to the golden calf. So they just walked away.

Then Moses turned back to the people who hadn't gone away. "Do you want to pray to the real God? Do you want to pray to the God who brought you out of Egypt? Do you want to pray to the God who gave you food and water in the desert? Do you?"

"Yes, we do!" the people all shouted. "Yes we do!"

"All right. Then right now I want you to pray. Tell God you are sorry for what you did. Then you must promise God not to do bad things again."

And so the people of Israel were very quiet. They were all praying to God. "I'm sorry, God," they said. "I will try very hard to live in your way."

**Ask:**

- Describe a time you've had to ask someone to forgive you. Was it hard?
- Now that they've learned, do you think the Israelites will continue to sin?

## 3 RESPOND

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

Take the "idol objects" out of your bag and place them in the middle of the group. Allow time for the children to look at and talk about the different items. Challenge them to figure out what they all have in common. You may need to help guide their guesses by answering questions or giving hints.

Once they've figured out the answer (all of the items represent things that people love or want to have). Explain that we may not want to build a calf out of gold, but there are many other things around us today that make us lose sight of God. An idol is something or someone we worship, greatly admire, or love so much that we no longer turn to God. If we aren't careful, objects such as these can become idols; they can distract us from God.

**Say:** It is not always easy to be a disciple of Jesus. Sometimes when situations in our lives become difficult, we want to give up and turn to something we can physically see or use—like the idols on the table—rather than continuing to follow God.

Remove the Play-Doh or modeling clay statue from its location. Ask the class what happened when Moses came down from the mountain and found the Israelites worshiping the golden calf (he ground it into dust and put it in their water). Allow children—one at a time—to "smash" the statue. Explain that as responsible disciples, it is our job to make sure we don't let idols such as the items on the table get in our way of turning to God. Remember: even though we may not be able to see God, all of God's plans are greater than anything humankind can make.

## 4 SEND

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

Refer to the timeline poster on the wall. Ask the class to list several hardships the Hebrew people faced on their journey following Moses out of Egypt to the Promise Land. Emphasize that God never promised an easy journey; sometimes it was easier to complain or even walk away from God. But the true disciples persisted, always relying on God to provide.

Explain that today we may not have to wander through a desert running away from an Egyptian army but we still face challenges. Ask the class to share some examples of challenges they face while trying to be faithful disciples. (If children are struggling, offer some examples such as: 1) Always telling the truth even though you know you're going to get in trouble; 2) Listening to your parents and following directions

the first time they ask you to clean your room; 3) Leaving your group of friends to join a lonely classmate at the lunch table.)

Continue explaining that Moses had to continually remind the Israelites to turn to God when their journey got tough. Pass out the Play-Doh or modeling clay so that every child gets a handful. Explain that instead of making idols or statues that distract us from God, this time make something out that will remind you to turn to God. Some examples include a cross, praying hands, a dove, the Bible, etc. If there is time, allow the children to show and explain their creation.

These creations can be kept in the classroom to dry out over the next week. They can either be kept in the classroom or brought home as a daily reminder.

# 5

## **BLESS**

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

Once all the children have completed their creations, gather the class together to sing “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus” CCS 499.



LESSON 47  
18 October 2020

# ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 24)

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Matthew 22:15–22

**Lesson Focus:** When faced with deciding what is really important in life, disciples of Jesus are called to place God at the center of living—top priority!

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- understand that all we are and have come from God.
- understand the meaning of generosity.
- discuss how to share generously in all aspects of their lives.
- identify their personal gifts and talents.

## Supplies

- Bible or *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*
- Items to decorate treasure chest—paint, markers, crayons, stickers, etc.
- Strips of paper
- Pens or pencils

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 22:15–22 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 110, available through Herald House.

# 1 GATHER

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

Welcome children to the group and gather them in a circle. Tell children you are going to ask them some tricky questions so they need to be listening very carefully! After you ask each question allow several children to share their thoughts before giving the answer.

- A farmer had 15 sheep, and all but eight died. How many are left?  
Answer: Eight are left because “all but eight died.”
- A rooster laid an egg on top of the barn roof. Which way did it roll?  
Answer: It didn’t roll—roosters don’t lay eggs.
- How can a man go eight days without sleep?  
Answer: No problem. He sleeps at night.

Explain that sometimes questions are tricky and require careful thought before answering.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Share with children that in today's scripture story some of the leaders of Israel were trying to trick Jesus with their questions. Let's listen to how Jesus handled the questions.

Read "Trouble for Jesus" based on Matthew 22:15–22 from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, pp. 224–225. When you have finished reading the story, consider these questions as a group:

- Whom do you belong to?
- What does "generosity" mean? How can you be generous in your life?
- What do you have to offer God?

Hand out supplies to create a treasure chest (you could use shoeboxes, egg cartons—cut into three sections (example can be found at [www.redtedart.com/2013/07/31/egg-carton-crafts-treasure-box-craft/](http://www.redtedart.com/2013/07/31/egg-carton-crafts-treasure-box-craft/)), or print out a paper template such as this one: <https://www.timvandevall.com/pirate-printables/pirate-treasure-chest-template/>). Give children time to decorate their treasure chests.

## 3 RESPOND

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

Ask children what goes in a treasure chest. Expand their understanding of the word treasure from just money to gifts and talents as well. Talk about the treasure they each have to offer. Discuss the Enduring Principle Grace and Generosity. Share the idea that because we have received God's generous grace, we respond generously and graciously receive the generosity of others.

Give the children strips of paper to write down gifts they can generously give to God and to others. Have them put their gifts in their treasure boxes to remind them of the treasure that they are.

### Going Deeper

Discuss these questions with older students:

- What are priorities in your life?
- How does an awareness of God's generosity influence your decisions?

## 4 SEND

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

Brainstorm two or three things children could do today to give generously to others. Check in with them after church or the following week to see how they were able to be generous toward others.

## 5 BLESS

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

Sing together "From You I Receive" CCS 611 three times as your prayer of blessing.

LESSON 48  
25 October 2020

# ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 25)

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Matthew 22:34–46

**Lesson Focus:** Love is at the center of discipleship: love God, love your neighbor. Love knows no boundaries.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- learn the first and second commandment.
- discuss Community of Christ mission statement.
- connect the mission statement to the focus scripture passage.
- generate ideas of how to share love with your neighbor, the community, and the world.

## Supplies

- Bible or *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- Heart cut-outs
- Markers
- *Sharing in Community of Christ*, 4th Edition (downloadable at [www.CofChrist.org/common/cms/resources/Documents/Sharing-in-Community-of-Christ-4thEd-WEB.pdf](http://www.CofChrist.org/common/cms/resources/Documents/Sharing-in-Community-of-Christ-4thEd-WEB.pdf))
- Chart paper
- Tape

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 22:34–46 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, pp. 111–112, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Welcome children and invite them to sit in a circle. Read or sing together “Love the Lord Your God.” There are several renditions on YouTube you can sing along with if you want.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart  
and all your soul and all your mind  
and love all of humankind  
as you would love yourself.

Love, the Lord your God  
with all your heart  
and all your soul and mind and love all humankind.

We've got Christian lives to live,  
we've got Jesus' love to give,  
we've got nothing to hide  
Because in him we are but LOVE!

—Author Unknown

Give children heart cut-outs and ask them to write some of the important words from the song on the hearts. (Example: Love, God, soul, humankind, Jesus, etc.)

## 2 ENGAGE

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

Let the children know the song they just sang actually comes from scripture. Read Matthew 22:34–40 or “The Most Important Things” from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, p. 228.

Sing the opening song again and encourage children to listen to the similarities. Have them add any additional words they feel are important.

Explain that in Community of Christ we share a mission. The church's mission statement points the way: We proclaim Jesus Christ and promote communities of joy, hope, love and peace.

Add more words to the heart cut-outs to reflect Community of Christ beliefs about our mission to share love with others.

### Going Deeper

Take some time to discuss our Mission Initiatives and how they relate to the scripture. See *Sharing in Community of Christ, 4th Edition*, pp. 20–24.]

## 3 RESPOND

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

### Ask:

- How do you love your neighbor?
- How does your congregation love the neighborhood?

## Going Deeper

For older children, discuss these questions:

When has your congregation stood for justice against powers of oppression?

What are the barriers to loving your neighbor?

Acknowledge that while it might be easy to think of ways for you to love someone you know, it can be harder to imagine how you might share love with a community or with the world. Brainstorm ideas together.

Divide a large sheet of paper into three sections. Label one section “Neighbor,” one section “Community,” and the last section “World.” Attach the hearts you created around the edges of the paper. Then have the children write or draw ways that they can show love in each of those categories.

## 4 SEND

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

Have each child choose one new way they want to share love this week. Ask them to share their plans with the group.

## 5 BLESS

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

Use Community of Christ’s Basic Belief statement on “The Church” as adapted below for your final moment of blessing.

God intends Christian faith to be lived in companionship with Jesus Christ and with other disciples in service to the world. The church of Jesus Christ is made of all those who respond to Jesus’ call. Community of Christ is part of the whole body of Christ. We are called to be a prophetic people, proclaiming the peace of Jesus Christ and creating communities where all will be welcomed and brought into renewed relationship with God, and where there will be no poor.

Invite children to stand in a circle and offer this blessing:

Today we learned that God calls us to work with other disciples to proclaim the peace of Jesus Christ and create communities where all will be welcomed and shown the love of God, and there will be no poor. As we go forth today, help us remember your call to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Amen.

## LESSON 49

1 November 2020

# ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 26)

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Matthew 23:1–12

**Lesson Focus:** We are called to be humble servants of God.

### Objectives

*The learners will...*

- explore the concept of practicing what you preach.
- understand what phylacteries and fringes are.
- consider how they can serve others.

### Supplies

- Bible (NRSV)
- Paper
- Pencils, markers, or crayons

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 23:1–12 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, pp. 114–115, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Welcome the children to class and tell them they are going to play a variation of Simon Says. In this variation of Simon Says, the kids will have to pay extra special attention to Simon’s instructions.

Have all of the kids stand up, staying a full arm’s length away from each other. Make sure everyone in the room can both see and hear you, and instruct them to listen carefully for each move.

Simon will give a simple instruction verbally (for example, pat your head), but act out something completely different (for example, touch your nose). After each instruction, any kids who followed what you did must sit down, while the kids that followed what you said stay standing for the next round. Mix it up after a few rounds, making your instructions and demonstration match to see if there is hesitation. Continue until there is only one child left standing.

**Say:** “Do you know what I noticed in that game? It was easier for you to follow what you saw than it was to follow what you heard. I wonder why that is?”

*(Activity found at [ministry-to-children.com/do-as-he-says-lectionary-lesson-from-matthew-231-12/](http://ministry-to-children.com/do-as-he-says-lectionary-lesson-from-matthew-231-12/). Used with permission.)*

# 2 ENGAGE

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

Gather students in a circle and read Matthew 23:1–12.

<sup>1</sup>Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, <sup>2</sup>“The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat; <sup>3</sup>therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach. <sup>4</sup>They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them. <sup>5</sup>They do all their deeds to be seen by others; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long. <sup>6</sup>They love to have the place of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues, <sup>7</sup>and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have people call them rabbi. <sup>8</sup>But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students. <sup>9</sup>And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father—the one in heaven. <sup>10</sup>Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah, <sup>11</sup>The greatest among you will be your servant. <sup>12</sup>All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.

Acknowledge that there are some tough words in this scripture. Help children act out the scripture as you read it again.

Pick a few children to be the Pharisees and scribes. The rest of the class will represent the crowds. As you read vv. 1–3, have them stand tall and proud like they are the most important persons in the room. They may even look down their noses and point at the rest of the children as if they are telling them what to do.

Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat; therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach.

As you read v. 4, have the Pharisees and scribes tell the other children to pick up heavy items. Encourage the rest of the class to pretend they are carrying something heavy.

They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them.

Before you read v. 5, have the children switch roles so the crowds are now scribes and Pharisees and the scribes and Pharisees are now the crowds. Invite the new scribes and Pharisees to prance around the room showing off how important they are as you read v. 5.

They do all their deeds to be seen by others; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long.

Before moving on to the next verse, explain what phylacteries and fringe are and what that section meant in Jesus’ time.

## Going Deeper

What are phylacteries, and what is Jesus talking about making fringe long? Phylacteries were small leather boxes containing Scripture verses that were tied to the forehead and arms while praying. According to Mosaic Law, Israelites were instructed to wear tassels (fringe) on the corners of their clothes (Numbers 15:38) as outward reminders to follow God's commandments.

In Jesus' time, many of the Pharisees made their phylacteries larger than necessary and the fringe on their robes longer in order to appear more pious (holy or righteous). Jesus knew their hearts though and knew that they were hypocrites, only seeking the praise of men.

As you read vv. 6–7, have the scribes and Pharisees continue to prance around as the crowd greets them with respect and offers them the best seats in the room.

They love to have the place of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have people call them rabbi.

As you read vv. 11–12, have the scribes and Pharisees become the servants of the crowd.

The greatest among you will be your servant. All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.



## 3 RESPOND

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

Ask the children to think back to the opening game of Simon Says. Explain to them that if our church leaders were telling us one thing and doing another it would be really hard to know which to follow. That's how it was in the early Christian church. The author of Matthew was Jewish, writing to Jewish people who were familiar with how the Pharisees and scribes didn't follow the teachings they were imposing on the Jewish people.



It was written during a time when the early Christian church was struggling with who it was and what it meant to be the church. This scripture passage is telling us it is important to be humble. The one we need to follow is God, and we shouldn't be concerned about looking good or getting praise from others.

In Community of Christ, some disciples are called and ordained to take on special ministry tasks. These ministers are priesthood who follow the model of Jesus' ministry and serve the church in a special way. Priesthood offices in Community of Christ are deacon, teacher, priest, elder, seventy, high priest, bishop, evangelist, apostle, and presidency.

### Going Deeper

Discuss how the different Community of Christ priesthood offices model the ministry of Jesus.

**Deacon**—as minister of comfort and welcome

Giving nurture and comfort to individuals and families welcoming them into the congregation and community

**Teacher**—as minister of peacebuilding with individuals

Helping individuals and families in the congregation and community find peaceful resolutions

**Priest**—as minister of presence with families

Sharing friendship with families, in congregations, and in community

**Elder**—as minister of sacred and spiritual community building

Giving clear expressions of the spiritual ministry of the gospel

**Seventy**—as minister of witness and invitation

Inviting and witnessing to people who seek to commit their lives to Jesus Christ

**High Priest**—as minister of vision

Helping the church see the world in new ways, and guiding congregations and individuals in becoming disciples

**Bishop**—as minister of generosity

Helping congregations and individuals share their gifts of true capacity

**Evangelist**—as minister of blessing

Serving as spiritual companions, counselors, and guides especially in times of change

**Apostle**—as minister of global witness proclaiming Christ's peace

Sharing the message of the gospel and creating signal communities of justice and peace throughout the world

There are 12 apostles.

**Presidency**—as minister of prophetic leadership

Leading the church through visionary and prophetic guidance

The Presidency includes the prophet-president of the church and two counselors, also called president.

Jesus didn't believe that church leaders could do whatever they wanted. Jesus taught that if you tell others to do something, then you should do it, too; the leaders of the church, even the pastor, should be serving and helping others. It's our job to take care of others no matter who we are.

Have children trace their hands on a sheet of paper and write or draw ways they can serve others and share their gifts as disciples of Jesus. Once they have finished, invite them to share their ideas with the rest of the class.

## **4 SEND**

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

Review the last two verses of the focus scripture passage, “The greatest among you will be your servant. All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.” Then sing together “Humble Yourself” CCS 211.

## **5 BLESS**

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

Read this adapted version of “Make Me a Servant” CCS 597 as your closing.

Loving God, make me a servant, humble and meek.

Lord, let me lift up those who are weak.

And may the prayer of my heart always be,

make me a servant today.

Amen.

LESSON 50  
8 November 2020

# ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 27)

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Matthew 25:1–13

**Lesson Focus:** We are called to be prepared for the coming of God's kingdom. Preparation for the kingdom involves genuine acts of discipleship, which include acts of love and mercy.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- discuss the concept of being prepared.
- understand that we are called to be prepared by loving God and loving our neighbor.
- discuss ways to share acts of love with others.

## Supplies

- Bible or *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- Undecorated cookies
- Items needed to decorate cookies (frosting, sprinkles, plates, plastic knives, napkins, etc.)
- Paper
- Pencils

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 25:1–13 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, pp. 116–117, available through Herald House.

# 1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge,  
prepares and motivates for lesson

*(15% of total lesson time)*

Before class begins, make sure you have the decorating supplies out of sight.

Welcome children to the group and gather them in a circle. Let the children know that you are going to be having a cookie decorating party this week and would love their help to figure out exactly what you are going to need. Give each child a sheet of paper and a pencil and ask them to write a list of what you will need. Most children will write cookies, frosting, perhaps even sprinkles, but they might forget knives, plates, or napkins. Once everyone has completed their list, gather them up and thank the children for their help in making sure you were prepared for your cookie party.

### Optional Activity:

Instead of cookies and decorating supplies, gather supplies for a different snack or possibly a craft project—anything that students would be familiar with.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Share with children that in today's scripture passage Jesus told a story about being prepared for a wedding. Read "The Wedding Party" based on Matthew 25:1–13 from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, pp. 236–237.

### Ask:

- Have you ever found yourself unprepared for an important event? (If children are having a hard time with the question, you might suggest a couple of examples: school assignment, sporting event, or party.)
- What happened?

Let the children know that your cookie party is actually happening now! Return the preparation lists for the cookie party and have them take their lists to the table. Give each child the things that were on their list and nothing more. Allow them time to start decorating the cookies. If someone doesn't have something they need, they might want to borrow from someone else. Don't allow that at this point. Smile and let them know that they can only use what is on their list.

## 3 RESPOND

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

After the students have had some time to decorate their cookies, pause the "party." Gather them back in a circle and discuss these questions:

- Was there anyone who wasn't quite prepared for the cookie party? How did that feel?
- What did you think when I said you couldn't share supplies with one another?
- What do you think Jesus is teaching us in today's parable?

Share with the children this statement adapted from *Sermon & Class Helps*, p. 116:

The church is called to be prepared for Christ coming again through responsible acts of love and mercy. This is not something that can be borrowed from someone else; rather it is our responsibility to respond, for we do not know when we will see Jesus again. We are called to be prepared by loving God and loving our neighbor. This cannot be done at the last minute. Rather it forms who we are and shapes our faith and how we understand God's kingdom. This is what it means to "be ready."

Allow children to return to the tables and ask them how they could act out of love to take care of their neighbor and make sure everyone enjoys the cookie party. Help them generate ideas to make sure everyone has what they need to finish decorating their cookies. Once they are done, the children can eat their cookies. Encourage acts of love that also include cleaning up the party once it is finished.

# 4 SEND

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

Discuss ways that the children could take acts of love into the congregation today. If there are additional cookies, perhaps they could prepare some to share with others. Whatever ideas they generate, encourage the children to do them as they leave class.

# 5 BLESS

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

Sing this song to the tune of “Sarasponda” as your closing prayer. If you chose the optional activity, substitute “cookies” with the items you created.

These are cookies, these are cookies, these are cookies made with love.

These are cookies, these are cookies, these are cookies made with love.

We will share them, with people that we love.

Christ called on us to be prepared, and share our love with all.

LESSON 51  
15 November 2020

# ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 28)

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Matthew 25:14–30

**Lesson Focus:** God trusts us to make Responsible Choices in using our talents. Making Responsible Choices requires us to break free from our fears and our wish to “play it safe” and take risks as Jesus did.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- realize that scripture stories require study to understand their meaning.
- explore the gifts and talents they have.
- discuss how to move past fear and hesitancy when sharing our gifts and talents.

## Supplies

- Favorite story to read or tell
- Bible or *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- Variety of Frisbees™ or other flying discs (preferably different sizes/materials)
- Paper plates
- Art supplies to decorate plates (markers, crayons, colored pencils, stickers, etc.)

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 25:14–30 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, pp. 118–119, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Welcome children to class and hand out a few Frisbees™ (discs). Take the children outside, or to a location where they can spend a few minutes throwing them. Ask the children to pay close attention to what the different discs do when they throw them.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration  
and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Return to class and gather to listen to the scripture story. Read “An Upside Down Story” based on Matthew 25:14–30 from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, pp. 240–241.

**Note to teacher:** Finish the story halfway through p. 241 with the rich man's statement, "I don't ever want to see you again. You can go work for somebody else. Give me my money and just get out of here!" If you read the final section of the story as written, it will confuse the focus of this lesson.

**Ask:**

- What did you think of this story? Acknowledge concerns students may have about the way the third slave was treated.
- What do you think Jesus was trying to teach people with this story?

Tell students that sometimes we have to look for the meaning in scripture stories. Even teachers have to study in order to understand what the scripture passage is trying to teach us. Read this excerpt from the *Sermon & Class Helps*:

Through this parable, Jesus is trying to help people trust in what God has already done for us...

The return on investment by the slaves who received five and two talents was amazing. Although the master praises their efforts, his response seems understated given the significance of their earnings. The focus of the story quickly moves to the slave who chose to bury his single talent. The master's response to this slave seems extreme and harsh from the perspective of the slave who was trying to keep the master's talent safe. The slave's action seems lazy and misguided from the perspective of the master who trusted the slave to make responsible choices about the use of the talent.

As we go deeper in the story, we realize the slave who buried the talent makes his choice out of fear. The slave does not trust the nature of his master. He is afraid of what the master might do so the slave chooses what he thinks is the least risky path by burying the talent to protect it. The master asks why the slave would lose the safe opportunity to earn interest in the bank if he thought the master was so demanding. Ironically, we recognize the slave's fear blocked him from making a responsible choice.

**Ask again:**

- What do you think Jesus was trying to teach people with this story?

## **3 RESPOND**

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

Let the children know that the version of the story we read talked about bags of money, but the Bible uses the word "talents." Let them know that the biblical version also refers to money. It is important to remember that God gives us more than money to share generously. God also gives us gifts and talents.

Pull the discs back out. Say to the children, "These discs may not look like much. Some of them may be worn and well used. What did you notice about them when we were playing with them earlier? What did they do?"

Help the children understand that a Frisbee™ is meant to fly. Ask the children if the Frisbees™ would be able to do their job if they were buried? Acknowledge that they look different, they may even fly differently, but they were all meant to fly.

**Ask:**

- What gifts has God given you that you can use?
- Have you ever felt afraid to use your gifts? How can you move past your fear?

Hand out paper plates and art supplies. Tell the children to pretend that this Frisbee™ (disc) is them. Ask them to decorate them with the talents they have.

## Going Deeper

Ask students these additional questions:

- Where is God acting in your world and calling you to risk getting involved?
- What do you fear about taking risks to use your gifts to help change the world?
- How do you overcome your fear and follow the Holy Spirit's leadings to use your gifts to engage in mission?

# 4

## SEND

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

When the students have finished their paper discs, ask them to share how they can use their talents to grow God's love in the world.

# 5

## BLESS

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

Take the children back to where you threw Frisbees™ (discs) earlier. Ask each child to say a thank you prayer to God for their talent as they fly a Frisbee™ (disc).

**Note to teacher:** For this activity use the real Frisbees™ (discs) rather than the ones the students made. The paper plates won't fly quite as well, and you want their prayers to soar!



## LESSON 52

22 November 2020

# REIGN OF CHRIST ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 29)

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Matthew 25:31–46

**Lesson Focus:** Jesus is a loving shepherd who cares deeply about his flock. Our choices matter. We are called to serve “the least.” God is in the world in the form of people who are dispossessed, vulnerable, and weak.

### Objectives

*The learners will...*

- understand the analogy of the sheep and the goats.
- discuss what it means to help the “least” in society.
- spend time creating cards for those in need.

### Supplies

- Bible (NRSV)
- Items for sorting (such as blocks, silverware, art supplies, etc.)
- Construction paper or card stock
- Art supplies (crayons, markers, stickers, etc.)
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 25:31–46 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, pp. 120–121, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Welcome children to class and invite them to sit in a circle. In the middle of the circle place a pile of items that could be sorted (such as socks, blocks, silverware, or art supplies). It is preferable to have items that could be sorted in more than one way (color, shape, size, or use). Ask the children how they could sort the pile into two groups. Take suggestions and have several children show how the items could be sorted.

## 2 ENGAGE

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

Share with children that in today's scripture story Jesus did a bit of sorting, too. Tell the students that in Jesus' time sheep and goats were the most common domesticated animals. Flocks in Palestine would contain both goats and sheep. Owners raised sheep for wool, milk and its byproducts, dung, meat, bones, and horns. Although goats were hardier, they were not as desirable or valuable as sheep.

Read Matthew 25:31–40 from the NRSV Bible. When you have finished reading, let the children know that the early Christian listeners would understand that the king, as a shepherd, would separate the more valuable sheep from the goats.

### Ask:

- Why sheep and goats? What characteristics do sheep have? (listen and follow their leader) What are goats like? (stubborn and resist being told what to do, eat almost anything, even garbage)
- What message is Jesus teaching in this scripture story?
- When and where have you encountered Jesus in the form of the "least"?

### Going Deeper

Ask students these additional questions:

- Is your congregation engaged in acts of compassion, as outlined in this scripture?
- Does your congregation show hospitality to strangers?
- Have you ever been surprised in your service and ministry to others?

## 3 RESPOND

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

Ask children to make a list of Community of Christ Enduring Principles. Write the list in a place where all can see and refer to later in the lesson.

Grace and Generosity

Sacredness of Creation

Continuing Revelation

Worth of All Persons

All Are Called

Responsible Choices

Pursuit of Peace (Shalom)

Unity in Diversity

Blessings of Community

Verbally share with students a list of actions and have them decide if it the action is more like a sheep or a goat. Examples might include:

- Help a neighbor rake leaves (s)
- Ignore a new student at school (g)
- Donate food and clothes to a shelter (s)
- Take flowers to someone in the hospital (s)
- Keep all your money for yourself (g)
- Make cards for the sick (s)

Let the children know that today you will be working on your sheep skills by creating cards for members of the congregation that are sick or homebound. Help students generate a list of persons who might appreciate receiving a card. Spend time decorating and writing meaningful messages on the cards. While the children are working on their cards, discuss which Enduring Principles they are practicing by helping others.

## **4 SEND**

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

Ask each child to share at least one way they will be a sheep in the coming week.

## **5 BLESS**

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

Read the following selection from “Whatever You Do” CCS 355 as a closing prayer. Go around the circle with each child reading a line until the prayer is complete.

1. Whatever you do to the least ones of these, I tell you in truth that you do unto me!
2. Lord Jesus, you taught us! May we learn anew that when we serve others, we also serve you.
3. When poor, waiting children pray hunger will end, when those long forgotten cry out for a friend,
4. when thirsty ones whisper, “O Lord, where are you?”
5. we hear, in their longing, that you’re calling, too.
6. “Lord, when did we see you?” Your teaching is clear that when we serve others, we’re serving you here.
7. And when your church heeds you and helps those in pain,
8. then out of the chaos, hope rises again!

Amen.