



Community of Christ



COMMUNITY OF CHRIST LESSONS

CHILDREN

30 JULY 2017 — 3 SEPTEMBER 2017

COMMUNITY OF CHRIST LESSONS



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

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

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

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

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

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

Youth (ages 12–18): Engage 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.

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 12)

LESSON 36
30 July 2017

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*
- 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 total 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.

³¹He put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; ³²it 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.”

³³He 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.”

⁴⁴“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 total 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!



4 SEND

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

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!*)



Source: <http://www.cometogetherkids.com/2012/02/elephant-toothpaste-foaming-science.html>

Ask the children: How does this experiment demonstrate Blessings of Community? What small acts of kindness and generosity have you seen magnified when a community works together?

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
(5% of total 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.

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 13)

LESSON 37
6 August 2017

Focus Scripture Passage: Matthew 14:13–21

Lesson Focus: When people are willing to share, there is enough for everyone.

Objectives

The learners will...

- experience the importance of sharing gifts.
- explore how God uses even the smallest gifts in miraculous ways.
- understand Grace and Generosity.
- understand that we help God's purposes (which can seem like miracles) when we follow the example of Jesus.

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Matthew 14:13–21 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, pp. 94, available through Herald House.

Supplies

- Bible or *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471) (optional)
- *Community of Christ Sings*
- Wrapped card game or board game (one that can be played quickly with the group)
- Small containers with different amounts of small foods (crackers, raisins, pieces of fruit or vegetables, or any small food items available)
- (Optional) Supplies for fish-and-loaves craft
 - 1 ½ paper plates per child
 - Construction paper, preferably brown and orange, but any color will work
 - Scissors
 - Markers or crayons
 - Hole punch
 - Yarn

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Greet children as they enter the classroom. Invite them to sing together "Prayer of Peace" CCS 164, stanzas 1–4, with the motions:

Before us (hands extended forward)
Behind us (hands extend backward)
Under our feet (sweep hands toward the ground)
Within us (hands placed together over chest)
Over us (hands extended upward)
All around us (turn in a circle while moving hands above head)

Show children the wrapped game and ask what they think it could be. Unwrap it and play the game with the children. Explain that the gift may belong to the teacher, but it is only useful when shared with others.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Ask:

- Can anyone remind me what our parable (story that teaches a lesson) was about last week? (*parable of the mustard seed*)
- What did we learn from that parable? (*Even the smallest acts of kindness and generosity are magnified by God and through community.*)

Say: We are going to learn about another story of generosity, but first I want to share something with you.

Prepare small containers with different amounts of small food pieces (crackers, raisins, pieces of fruit or vegetables,

or any small food item available). Some containers should have one food item, some should have more than one, and some containers should be empty. Give each child a container and tell them they can open their containers and eat the snack. The children will notice the containers do not have equal amounts of food. Invite the children to figure out a way to solve the problem. Ask:

- How did it feel to receive an empty container when others had more?
- How did it feel to receive several food items when others had little or nothing?
- How did it feel when you came up with a solution?

Take turns reading Matthew 14:13–21, or read “A Child Helps Jesus” from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, p. 173.

¹³Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. ¹⁵When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.” ¹⁶Jesus said to them, “They need not go away; you give them something to eat.” ¹⁷They replied, “We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.”

¹⁸And he said, “Bring them here to me.” ¹⁹Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ²⁰And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. ²¹And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Talk about the story using the following questions to guide discussion.

- What seemed like a miracle in this story? (*Jesus fed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish; a child gave up what he had so that others could eat.*)
- How do you think the child in this story felt when Jesus used his gift to help others?
- How is this like the parable of the mustard seed? (*God can use even the smallest acts of kindness and generosity to help others.*)

In Community of Christ one of our Enduring Principles is Grace and Generosity. The Enduring Principles express what God is like and how we are called to live like Jesus. Grace and Generosity reminds us: We receive God’s love

and share God’s love with everyone. Have the children memorize the following phrase, and invite them to share it with as many people as possible throughout the coming week!

We receive God’s love and share God’s love with everyone!



Going Deeper

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*, 3rd Edition, p. 12

Ask:

- How does today’s Bible story teach us about God’s grace and generosity?

3 RESPOND

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



Adapt the following craft as supplies and class needs allow. For younger children, prepare craft pieces ahead of time. If supplies are not available, you may choose to have children draw fish and loaves, or act out ways they will share generously their time, talent, treasure, and testimony in the coming week.

Instructions:

1. Begin by drawing five circles or loaf shapes for each child on the brown paper. Cut out loaves.
2. Use the fish template at end of lesson to trace two fish for each child. Cut out fish.
3. Cut a paper plate in half and lay it over another paper plate.
4. Punch holes in both plates at the same time, lining up the holes to form a type of basket.
5. Lace yarn through the holes to secure the plates together.
6. Place the five loaves and two fish inside and write the following on the outside of the half plate:

Matthew 14:13–21

Grace and Generosity

We receive God's love and share God's love with everyone!

7. On each fish, have the children write or draw how they receive God's love. On each loaf, have the children write or draw how they will share God's love by generously sharing their time, talent, treasure, and testimony with others.

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived

(10% of total lesson time)

Have two teams line up in relay-style lines. Say: Sharing brings joy to others and it is easy to do. The little boy

offered his lunch of fish and bread to Jesus to share with the crowd which made everyone happy. We are going to see how sharing can bring joy and happiness.

Instruct the first person in each line to turn to the person behind and make a happy face. That person imitates the face to the person behind him or her until the face reaches the end of the line. That person runs to the front of the line and makes a different face. Play continues until everyone has had a turn.

Say: Sharing something as simple as a smile or happy face brings joy to others—enough to share even after class is over.

5 BLESS

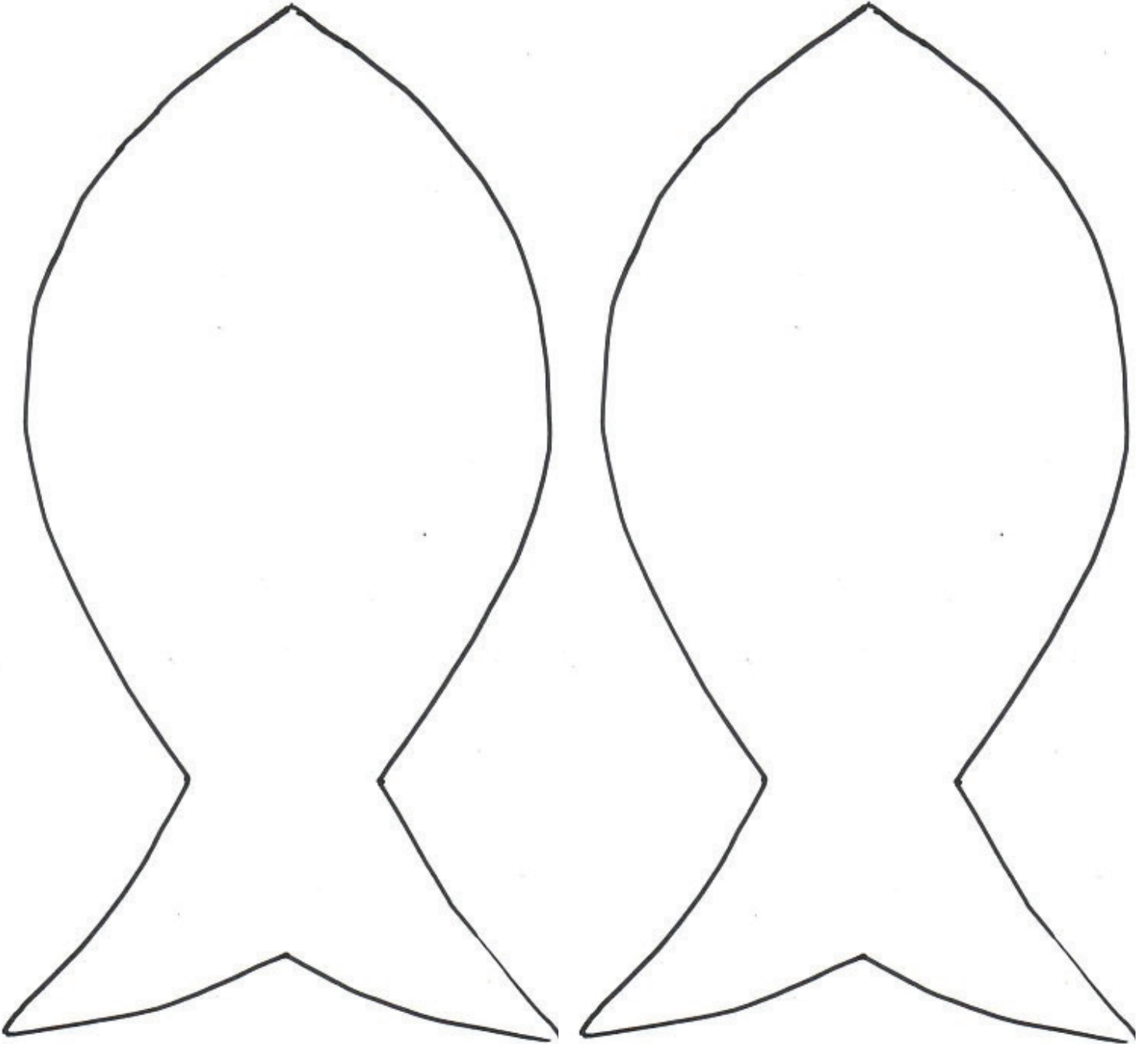
Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope

(5% of total lesson time)

Sing "Prayer of Peace" CCS 164, stanzas 1–4, with motions.

Invite a child to read the following prayer, or offer their own closing prayer.

Dear God,
Thank you for listening to me right now. Help me love, care, smile, and share. Help me give, laugh, and grow. Help me know that I can share with everyone. And help me show others that you love them. Amen.



ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 14)

LESSON 38
13 August 2017

Focus Scripture Passage: Matthew 14:22–33

Lesson Focus: Follow Jesus and share the peace of Jesus with others.

Objectives

The learners will...

- experience properties of water and rocks.
- explore the focus scripture passage.
- discuss ways to experience and share the peace of Jesus.

Supplies

- *Community of Christ Sings*
- Bible or Lectionary Story Bible, Year A, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- Optional: bucket or large container and water, rocks (various sizes, one for each child), string, one object that can float on water
- Optional: paper, paint, and paint brushes or crayons

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 14:22–33 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 95, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Greet children as they enter in classroom. Invite children to sing “Jesu, Tawa Pano (Jesus, We Are Here)” CCS 71. Sing it through several times in multiple languages. Add motions.

Prepare a bucket or large container with water. Give each child a rock (various sizes).

Ask:

- What will happen when you drop your rock into the

water? (*Encourage children to respond; suggest multiple results.*)

- Is it possible for the rock to float on the water? Why or why not?

Have children put their rocks in water and describe what happens based on the size of their rock and how they put it in the water (dropped or placed gently).

- What would need to change in order for the rock to float? (*The water, such as heavy salt water, needs to be denser than the rock.*)
- What kind of object can float on water? Explain why that is possible.

Provide an object that can float on water. Discuss why it is able to float on the water without sinking.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration
and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Take turns reading Matthew 14:22–33 or “Peter Walks on the Water” (*Lectionary Story Bible, Year A, p. 179*).

²² Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. ²⁵And early in the morning he came walking towards them on the lake. ²⁶But when the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out in fear. ²⁷But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, “Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.”

²⁸ Peter answered him, ‘Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.’ ²⁹He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came towards Jesus. ³⁰But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, “Lord, save me!” ³¹Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” ³²When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

Ask:

- Why were the disciples afraid?
- Are you afraid of storms? Explain.
- What are things that scare you?
- Have you ever tried something that seemed impossible? Were you afraid to try?
- How has someone helped you do something when you were afraid?

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from
hearing to doing

(35% of total lesson time)

When Peter focused on following Jesus, he found peace and was able to do something he never thought possible! When we read or hear stories of Jesus, we learn what

God wants for us. Jesus Christ was God’s living example of shalom. We call this “the peace of Jesus Christ.” Write the following statement and have the children repeat and memorize.

We share the peace of Jesus Christ in our words and in our actions everywhere.

Jesus wants us to follow him, to be his disciples. We do that best by being our very best selves. We also do that in our personal relationships, becoming friends with others. And we do that by being in communities, sharing our gifts and the peace of Jesus Christ.

Take the rocks out of the bucket. Help the children tie a piece of string to their rock. Have them put their rocks back into the bucket while holding onto the string. Ask the children if there is a way to help the rocks stay on top of the water and not sink. (Encourage and discuss responses.) Have the children lift their strings slowly until their rocks are just at the surface of the water. Explain that the string is like the peace of Jesus Christ that helps us when we are afraid. When we share the peace of Jesus with others, we are like the string helping others.

Ask:

- How can we share the peace of Jesus so others are not afraid?
- How can we help others accomplish something difficult?

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson
might be lived

(10% of total lesson time)

Invite the children to give this affirmation. Use call-and-response.

“Follow me” is what you said. (children repeat)

“Follow you” is what I’ll do. (children repeat)

Will you follow Jesus? (children answer “Amen!” or “Yes!”)

Will you share the peace of Jesus? (children answer “Amen!” or “Yes!”)

Have the children write, draw, or tell their response to the following action challenge.

This week, I will share the peace of Jesus with _____ by...

Repeat the following statement together:

We share the peace of Jesus Christ in our words and in our actions everywhere.

5 BLESS

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

Form a circle and sing "Jesus Loves Me" CCS 251.

Begin the following prayer statement and invite each child to complete the statement.

Dear God,
Thank you for the peace of Jesus that helps us when we
are afraid.
Help me share the peace of Jesus with others by...
Amen.

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 15)

LESSON 39
20 August 2017

Focus Scripture Passage: Matthew 15:10–28

Lesson Focus: People will know who we are and what we believe by how we interact with them.

Objectives

The learners will...

- understand how we talk to people, and how we treat them, is important.
- recognize that both kindness and cruelty can be expressed through words.

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 15:10–28 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 97, available through Herald House.

Supplies

- *Community of Christ Sings*
- Bible or *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- Optional: *My Friend the Monster* by Eleanor Taylor, ISBN 9781599902326 (For a visual reading, go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=dGioMnpu_lw.)
- Travel-size toothpaste for each child (or one large tube for the group)
- Wooden craft sticks (one for each child)
- Small paper plates (one for each child)
- Red construction paper
- Glue, scissors
- Paper

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Gather children and invite them to sing “Jesus’ Hands Were Kind Hands” CCS 585. Include the following third stanza.

Jesus’ words were kind words, bringing hope to all.
Teaching, singing, praising, answering his call.
Teaching his disciples of God’s kingdom near.
Jesus spoke with kindness, knowing we would hear.

Note to teacher: The following experiment is designed to illustrate how difficult it is to “undo” a mistake or a choice that is not responsible. If supplies are not readily available, you may adapt with available supplies, create your own demonstration, or discuss different examples with the children.

Toothpaste Experiment

Give children a small plate, a travel-size toothpaste, and a wooden craft stick. Say, “Squeeze some of the toothpaste onto the plate” (then pretend to look at “directions”). Looking dismayed, say, “Oh, my goodness! This was not right; this was not what we were supposed to do! We need to put the toothpaste back in the tube.” Provide opportunity and encouragement as children try to put the toothpaste back in the tube.

Ask:

- What would prevent us from having this mess? (*reading instructions first, thinking before acting*)
- Imagine the toothpaste represents unkind words or a choice that is not responsible. What does this experiment help us understand? (*We cannot change unkind words once we say them.*)

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Read Matthew 15:21-28 or “A Woman Teaches Jesus” from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, pp. 184–185.

²¹Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²²Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.” ²³But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, “Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.” ²⁴He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” ²⁵But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.” ²⁶He answered, “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” ²⁷She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” ²⁸Then Jesus answered her, “Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed instantly.

Discuss the following questions:

- What does Jesus do and say in this story that is surprising? (*He ignores the woman, and then he says he cannot help her. He says, “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.”*)
- Has someone ignored you or said mean things to you?
- How did it make you feel?
- Have you ever been tired or frustrated and said mean things to someone else?
- Can you be nice and say mean things at the same time?
- What can happen when we choose to say only kind things?

Read *My Friend the Monster* by Eleanor Taylor. For a visual reading, go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=dGioMnpu_lw.

Discuss the following questions:

- How does this story compare with today’s Bible story?
- What does the story teach us about how we treat others?

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing

(35% of total lesson time)

Today’s story reminds us that following Jesus can be challenging. Just like Jesus, we need to rest and pray so

we can be close to God. We are also reminded that we must make responsible choices with our words and our actions. One of the descriptions of the Enduring Principle Responsible Choices reminds us, “Human choices contribute to good or evil in our lives and in the world.” What we do and what we say matter!

Think before You Speak art activity

Cut out hearts from construction paper. Have the children wrinkle them up, representing how unkind words or actions can hurt others. Then try to smooth out the hearts to represent kindness and healing.

In the center of a plain piece of paper, help children write one of the following statements or create their own statement.

- Kindness Heals Hurting Hearts
- I Choose Kindness
- Kindness Matters
- Kindness Is a Responsible Choice
- Share Christ’s Peace with Kindness

Glue wrinkled hearts around the statement.

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived

(10% of total lesson time)

Invite the children to complete the following action challenge.

I will share the peace of Jesus and choose kindness by...

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope

(5% of total lesson time)

Sing “Jesus’ Hands Were Kind Hands” CCS 585. Include the following third stanza.

Jesus’ words were kind words, bringing hope to all.
Teaching, singing, praising, answering his call.
Teaching his disciples of God’s kingdom near.
Jesus spoke with kindness, knowing we would hear.

Dear God,
Thank you for sending Jesus to show us how to be kind to each other. Help us as we learn to be a friend to everyone.
Amen.

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 16)

LESSON 40
27 August 2017

Focus Scripture Passage: Matthew 16:13–20

Lesson Focus: We see the created potential in Jesus and others.

Objectives

The learners will...

- affirm that Jesus is the Son of God.
- look past outward identities and recognize that we are all children of God.
- explore the Enduring Principle All Are Called.

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 16:13–20 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, pp. 98, available through Herald House.

Supplies

- *Community of Christ Sings*
- Bible or *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- Jesus picture (end of lesson)
- Robe pictures (end of lesson)
- Child picture (end of lesson) one per child
- Shirt pictures (end of lesson) 5–7 per child
- Markers or crayons

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Greet children by name and welcome them into the space. Gather in a circle and sing stanza one of “I Have Called You by Your Name” CCS 636. Teach by call and response and add motions to help the children remember the words.

Ask the children, “Who am I?” If they can only come up with “teacher” or your name, help them name more descriptors (mother or father, son, daughter, fisherman, hiker, camper, grandma, or grandpa). Ask, “How do you know who I am?”

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Prior to class cut out the Jesus figure and seven robes. Staple the seven robes along the left side of the Jesus

figure so they will turn like book pages. Starting with the top robe, write “Jesus,” “carpenter,” “son of Mary,” “brother of James,” “friend of Lazarus,” “traveler,” “healer,” and “Son of God”—one on each robe (“Son of God” should be on the body of Jesus). You may choose your own descriptions and alter the number of robes as needed.

Ask the students who Jesus is to them and discuss their responses. Turn the pages of Jesus’ robes so the children can see the different “identities” of Jesus written on each one until they reach the one labeled “Son of God.” Talk about each identity.

Say, “Jesus asked his disciples this same question. He asked, ‘Who do you say I am?’”

Read Matthew 16:13–20 or “Simon Becomes Peter” from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, pp. 189–90.

¹³Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say that the Son of Man is?’ ¹⁴And they said, ‘Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’ ¹⁵He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ ¹⁶Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.’

¹⁷And Jesus answered him, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven.¹⁸And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. ¹⁹I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.'²⁰Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

Guide discussion about the story using the following questions:

- What were responses from the disciples when Jesus asked, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" (*John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, one of the prophets*)
- How did Simon Peter respond when Jesus asked, "Who do you say that I am?" (*Messiah, Son of the living God*)
- Why does Jesus change Simon Peter's name to Peter, and what does it mean? (*Peter means "rock;" Jesus wants Peter to be a strong foundation for building the church.*)
- When Jesus tells Peter he will be the solid rock on which the church is built, how do you think Peter felt? Explain.
- How would you feel if Jesus wanted to build the church beginning with you?

3 RESPOND

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

Say: Jesus wants to help make the church bigger and stronger using each one of you. How amazing is that? In Community of Christ, our Enduring Principle All Are Called reminds us:

We all are given gifts from God. We use them to do good.

Have the children learn this by repeating several times.

Just as Peter helped build the early church, each of us can use our time, talent, treasure, and testimony to help others and help the church grow today.

Provide one of the girl or boy images and multiple shirts for each child. Provide scissors for older children to cut out their images. Cut out child and shirt images ahead

of time for younger children. Help younger children write (or prepare in advance) "Child of God" on the child image. On each shirt, have the children write or draw something that represents a gift (time, talent, treasure, or testimony) they can share to help others and the church. Staple their shirts to the left side of the child image so they turn like book pages. Have the children share their images with the rest of the class.

4 SEND

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

Simon Peter recognized Jesus as the Son of the living God. Each person is a beloved child of God. That is important for us to recognize about ourselves, and it is also important for us to recognize about others.

Ask:

- How can we show others (family, friends, neighbors) they are children of God?
- How can we treat people with whom we disagree or people who are not nice to others to recognize they are children of God? (This is much harder to do, but it is an important part of being a follower or disciple of Jesus.)

Have each child choose at least one person in their home, congregation, school, or community they will recognize as a child of God...and share it with that person!

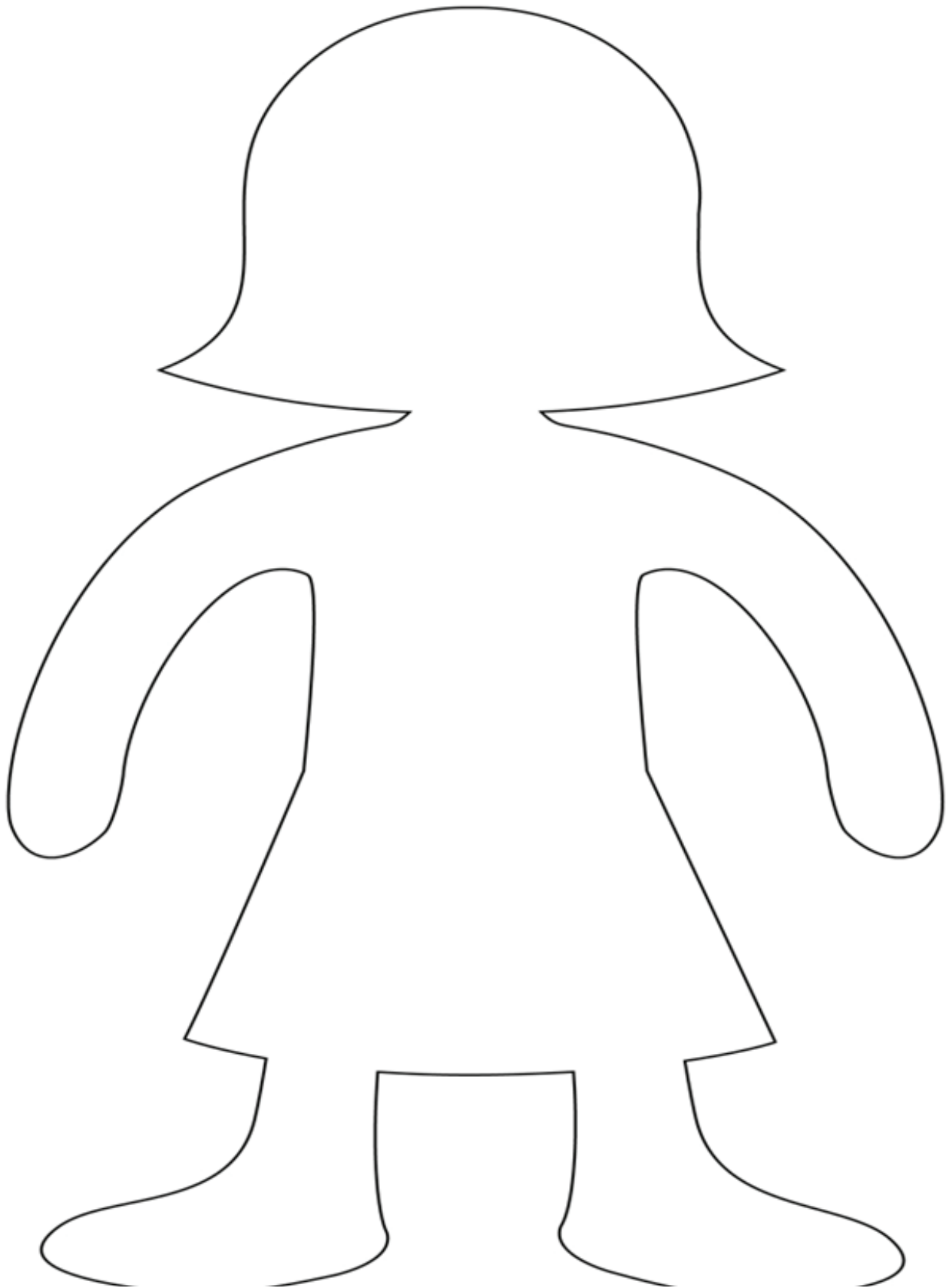
5 BLESS

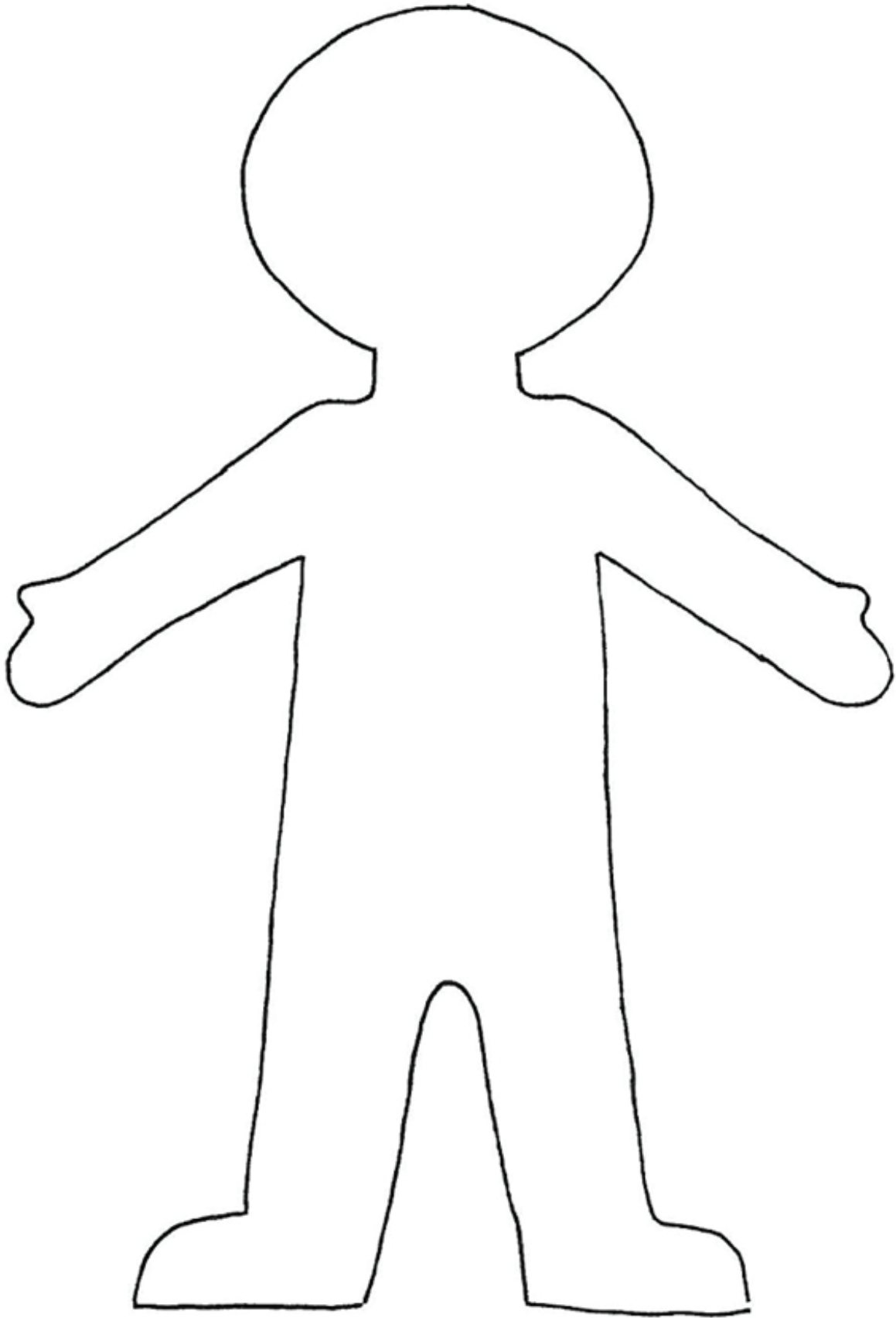
Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope
(5% of total lesson time)

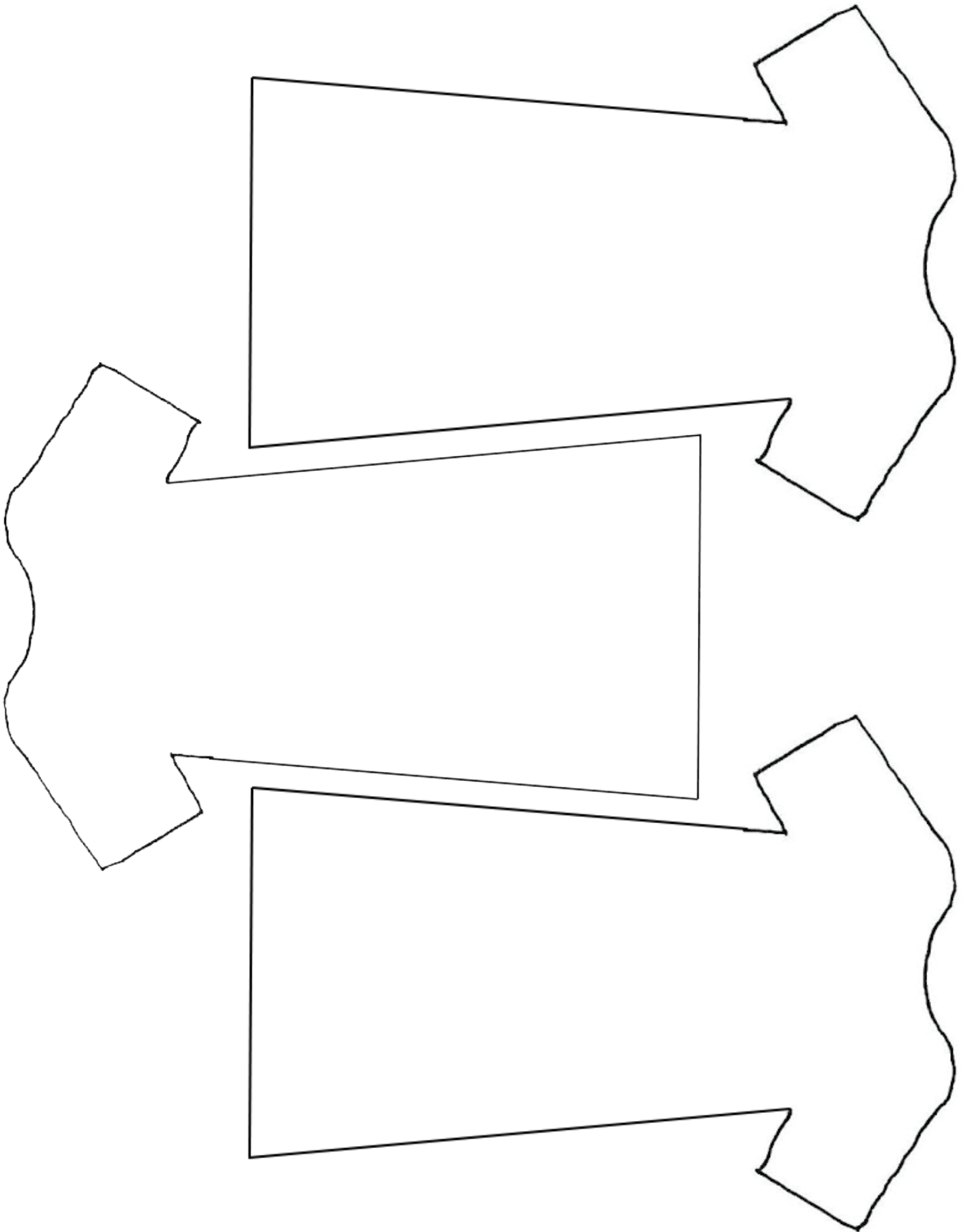
Sing "I Have Called You by Your Name" CCS 636 stanzas one and four, or "Kanisa Litajergwa (Oh, who will build the church now?)" CCS 338. Teach the fourth stanza by call and response.

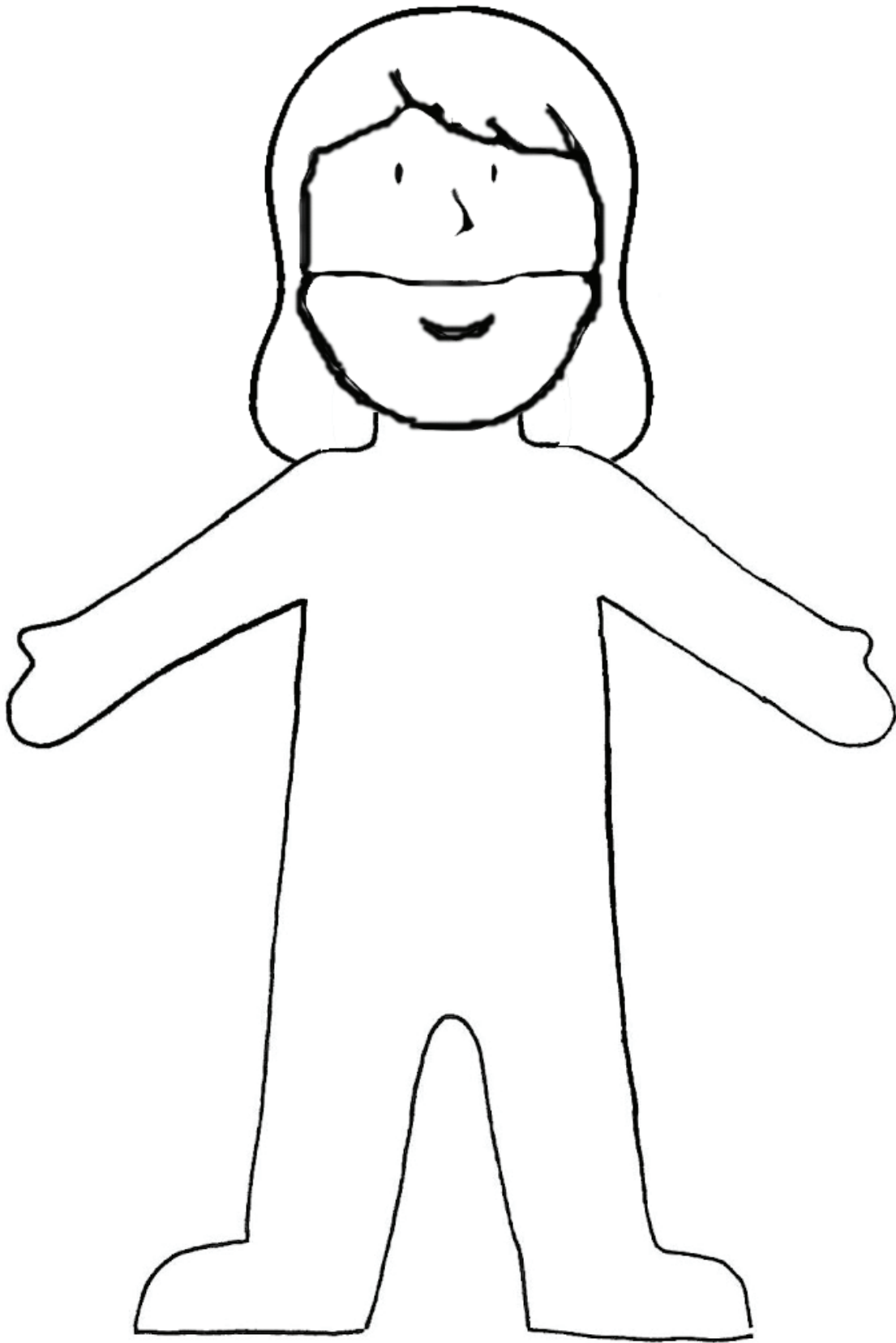
Close by inviting a child to read the following prayer or offer their own prayer.

Dear God,
Thank you for helping us recognize that Jesus is your Son. Thank you for the example that he is for us. Thank you for giving each of us special gifts to help others and help the church grow. May we grow in your image and help others recognize they are gifted children of God. Amen.









ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 17)

LESSON 41
3 September 2017

Focus Scripture Passage: Matthew 16:21–28

Lesson Focus: Following Jesus means being part of Christ’s mission.

Objectives

The learners will...

- experience the joy of giving and practice sharing.
- discover the joys and challenges of Christ’s mission through the Mission Initiatives.
- commit to being part of Christ’s mission, our mission.

Supplies

- *Community of Christ Sings*
- Bible or *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- Basket with small wrapped food items or candy
- Images of Mission Initiatives
- Paper and markers or crayon

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 16:21–28 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 100, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Say, “We are going to play a game of follow the leader. I will be the leader.” Proceed to move about the room, jump, skip, hop, make a silly face, and end with sitting down.

Reach into a basket and take a piece of candy. When all of the children have also reached for a piece of candy, give your candy to one of the children. Remind them that they are still playing follow the leader. (They will either all give their candy to the same child you shared with, or they will give to each other randomly.) Encourage children to continue giving candy until all children have a piece of candy.

Invite children to sing “From You I Receive” CCS 611. Practice singing this song as the children exchange candy.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Read the scripture Matthew 16:21–28 or “Going to School” from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, pp. 196–97.

²¹From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.²²And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, ‘God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.’²³But he turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.’

²⁴Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. ²⁶For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?

²⁷ 'For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. ²⁸Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.'

Discuss the following questions:

- What did Jesus tell his disciples that upset them? (*He had to go to Jerusalem where he would have to suffer.*)
- What did Peter say to Jesus? (*This must never happen to you. I hate it.*)

Say: Sometimes we are afraid to do the things Jesus wants us to do. Sometimes those things seem difficult or require us to give up something else we want. But this is what Jesus meant when he said, "Take up your cross and follow me." It means we have to risk or give up some things in order to be the kind of people God wants us to be.

Ask: What is something difficult to give up in order to be like Jesus? (*be kind to people we don't know or who are mean to others, give or give up something we don't need so that others can have what they do need, take time away from playing to help others*)

3 RESPOND

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

Say: Jesus was preparing his disciples for the difficult work of carrying out his mission. In Community of Christ, we proclaim Christ's mission as our mission. We understand Christ's mission through five life-changing, world-changing Mission Initiatives.

Display the Mission Initiative images and descriptions. Use the following questions to guide discussion about each Mission Initiative. You may also choose to have children act out examples of each one.

- How would you describe this Mission Initiative to a friend?
- In what ways is this Mission Initiative difficult to live out? In what ways is it easy?
- What could you give or give up that would help you live this Mission Initiative?

Examples:

Invite People to Christ: Give (*love, kindness, smile*), give up (*fear, playing a game by yourself instead of inviting someone to play with you*)

Abolish Poverty, End Suffering: Give (*time, talent, treasure, and testimony to help others*), give up (*purchasing something you don't need in order to donate the money to others in need*)

Pursue Peace: Give (*encouragement to others, smile, time to peacemaking activities*), give up (*choices that do not help me care for myself, others, or the environment*)

Develop Disciples to Serve: Give (*time to learn about Jesus*), give up (*anything that keeps me from being a follower of Jesus*)

Experience Congregations in Mission: Give (*time, talent, treasure, and testimony*), give up (*playing a video game so I can spend time helping others*)

4 SEND

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

Provide paper and markers or crayons for each child. Have the children draw each Mission Initiative symbol and write or draw something they will give or give up to be part of Christ's amazing mission.

5 BLESS

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

Close by saying the mission prayer together.

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

MISSION INITIATIVES



Invite People to Christ
Christ's mission of evangelism



Abolish Poverty, End Suffering
Christ's mission of compassion



Pursue Peace on Earth
Christ's mission of justice and peace



Develop Disciples to Serve
Equip individuals for Christ's mission



Experience Congregations in Mission
Equip congregations for Christ's mission