



Community of Christ



COMMUNITY OF CHRIST LESSONS

CHILDREN

18 JUNE 2017 — 23 JULY 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 6)

LESSON 30
18 June 2017

Focus Scripture Passage: Matthew 9:35—10:23

Lesson Focus: Jesus sent twelve apostles in mission. Community of Christ has twelve apostles called to lead mission and share God's shalom for all people.

Objectives

The learners will...

- understand that the reign of God is about peace for all creation.
- design a Christ-centered community where Jesus' mission is made real.
- learn about Community of Christ's twelve apostles and the fields where they serve.

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Matthew 9:35—10:23 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, pp. 84–85, available through Herald House. This lesson focuses on Matthew 9:35–38 and 10:5–7.

Supplies

- Paper
- Pencils and markers
- World maps
- Copies of "Community of Christ Council of Twelve Apostles" handout (end of lesson)
- Tape or glue (optional)
- Video: Peace through All People www.CofChrist.org/resources?tags=English-Home-Resource#/930/peace-through-all-people (optional)

1 GATHER

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

Ask students if they do any chores or tasks at home to help their family. Invite students to act out chores or tasks they are expected to do. As each child acts, the rest of the group will try to guess what they are doing. Then invite students to act chores or tasks they enjoy doing. After everyone has had a turn, discuss these questions:

- How do you feel about doing chores?
- Do you ever do them without being asked?
- How does that make you feel? How does it make others in your family feel?

Share that today's scripture is about Jesus giving his disciples, and all of us, an important task that we can choose to do.

2 ENGAGE

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

Read Matthew 10:5–7.

⁵These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, ⁶but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ⁷As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.'

Ask: What is the good news that the twelve are supposed to proclaim? Explain that the good news ("The kingdom of heaven has come near") is God's shalom. Shalom expresses our commitment to bring God's peaceful kingdom on Earth by forming Christ-centered communities in families, churches, neighborhoods, cities, and everywhere in the world. Shalom is a Hebrew word that

means a completeness or fullness of peace. When Jesus Christ explained peace, he meant the most perfect peace imaginable: peace between people, between groups of people, and throughout all of creation.

Ask what the word *mission* means. Help them understand that mission means special tasks to help people. Remind them of the chores or tasks they do at home for their families. Similar to the chores or tasks they are asked to do at home, this scripture passage reminds us that we have a task from Jesus to complete—to proclaim the good news, “The kingdom of heaven has come near.”

In small groups, have students design a Christ-centered community that is an example of God’s shalom. If possible, you may choose to have students draw their community, build with recycled supplies, or form with play dough.

Let these questions guide their discussion and creation of the community:

- What would your community be called, and who would live in it?
- What does shalom look like in your community?
- What would be the different jobs of the community?
- How would people act in the community?

Have students share their drawings or creations and responses to the questions with the class.

3 RESPOND

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

Reread verses 5–7 to students or have a student read the passage to the class.

⁵These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, ⁶but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ⁷As you go, proclaim the good news, ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’

Ask: Who was given the mission to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of heaven being near? (*the twelve apostles*) Explain that one of the priesthood offices in Community of Christ is the office of apostle. The Council of Twelve Apostles has the same mission today—to proclaim the coming reign of God. Each apostle has a specific region of the world where he or she leads mission and shares in ministry.

Where Do Our Apostles Serve? *Note to teacher:* Adapt this activity as needed.

Form students in small groups. Pass out a world map to each group. Ask the students if they can name any of our current apostles. Give the students the handout with the names of the 12 apostles and the regions of the world where they serve (end of lesson). Have students locate each apostle’s assigned field(s) on a world map. You may want to have students write the apostles’ names and fields on small pieces of paper and tape or glue to the map. Make sure to point out to students which apostle serves your congregation. Note: if you have internet access, you can show students pictures of the Council of Twelve Apostles found at www.CofChrist.org/council-of-twelve-apostles. Click on apostles’ names to see their pictures.

4 SEND

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

Read verses 35–38 to the students or have an older student read to the class.

³⁵Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. ³⁶When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; ³⁸therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

Ask: What did Jesus mean by saying “the laborers are few”? Guide students to understand that Jesus could not complete his work alone. The needs were too great. He sent his disciples as laborers who were to recruit others to help.

Have a piece of paper or some other item that can be easily torn or broken apart and show the students. Tell students that the piece of paper represents the mission of Christ to build the kingdom of heaven on Earth (shalom). Tear the paper in half and give half to a student. Explain that now you know about God’s shalom, and the student who received the paper also knows. Continue tearing each piece of paper in half and giving a piece to someone else in the class until everyone has a small piece for themselves and an extra piece. Have students write “shalom” or “mission” on their extra piece of paper. Explain that Jesus needs not just the twelve apostles to be leaders of mission, but needs all of us to participate in sharing God’s shalom. We do this by sharing with others, treating all people with respect, and caring for the Earth. These are just a few things that help us create communities of shalom like we created earlier!

5 BLESS

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

Remind the students that the extra piece of paper is a reminder to share Christ's peace with other people this week.

Sing "Peace, Salaam, Shalom" CCS 310, or show the video Peace through All People www.CofChrist.org/resources?tags=English-Home-Resource#/930/peace-through-all-people.

COMMUNITY OF CHRIST COUNCIL OF TWELVE APOSTLES & MISSION FIELDS

Mareva Arnaud Tchong, Pacific & East Asia

Linda Booth, South Central USA

Barbara Carter, Southeast USA

Bunda Chibwe, Africa

Janné Grover, Central USA

Ron Harmon, West USA

Richard James, Eurasia

Robin Linkhart, North Central USA

Lachlan Mackay, Northeast USA

Rick Maupin, Caribbean, South Central/Southeast Asia

Carlos Mejia, Central & South America

Arthur Smith, Canada, Haiti, Mexico



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Ron Harmon, West USA

Arthur Smith, Canada, Haiti, Mexico

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 7)

LESSON 31
25 June 2017

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*

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 total 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 total 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 total lesson time)

Say: Today's worship theme is "Take up the cross and follow 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 total 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.

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 8)

LESSON 32
2 July 2017

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

- *Community of Christ Sings*
- 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)

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 total 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

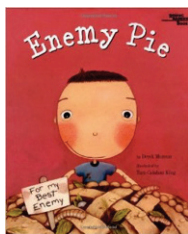
to others and making them feel welcome. Make the connection with the class that the things in your picture (and theirs) are examples of what hospitality means. Share aspects of their pictures that make them feel welcome.

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 total 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/).



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*, 3rd Edition, pp. 8–9 and 12–14.

Ask the following questions.

- 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 total 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 total 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.

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 9)

LESSON 33
9 July 2017

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.

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.

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*

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 total 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 total 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 total 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 total lesson time)

Sing "Prayer of Peace" CCS 164 with motions.

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 10)

LESSON 34
16 July 2017

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

- Bible
- 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

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 total 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 total 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 total 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 total 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!

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 11)

LESSON 35
23 July 2017

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

- *Community of Christ Sings*
- *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*, 3rd Edition, pp. 12–14, available from Herald House or online at www.CofChrist.org/common/cms/resources/Documents/Sharing-in-Community-of-Christ-3rd-edition.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

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 total 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 the following questions:

- 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 Community of Christ's Enduring Principle Responsible Choices (*Sharing in Community of Christ*, p. 13). 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 total 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 total 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 total 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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