



Community of Christ



COMMUNITY OF CHRIST LESSONS

CHILDREN

10 SEPTEMBER 2017 — 15 OCTOBER 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 18)

LESSON 42
10 September 2017

Focus Scripture Passage: Matthew 18:15–20

Lesson Focus: Jesus teaches us how to solve problems peacefully.

Objectives

The learners will...

- demonstrate compromise and sharing.
- practice working together to solve problems.
- discuss steps in sharing the peace of Jesus with others.

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*
- Yellow, red, and blue paint or markers (any medium that allows children to blend colors)
- Paper
- Paint brushes (if using paint)
- Mixing tray (plastic bowl or paper plate)
- Strips of paper with statements about the Enduring Principle Pursuit of Peace (see Respond section)
- String or yarn (four pieces, approximately 18 in/45 cm each)
- Rubber bands (approximately 2 in/5 cm in diameter)
- Plastic cups (six or more)

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 18:15–20 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 102, available through Herald House..

1 GATHER

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

Ask the children if they know what it means to compromise. (*When two people want different things, each person contributes something to the solution—creating a combined, shared solution.*)

Provide one color of paint or marker—red, blue, or yellow—and a piece of paper for each child. Say, “We are going to paint a picture. I would like you to start by painting some green grass.” (*Children will point out that there is no green paint.*) Ask for solutions. You may need to prompt the children by saying, “Let’s try having a person with yellow paint and a person with blue paint combine

their paint on the mixing tray.” Discuss how sharing colors gives us a new color. Paint grass on papers.

Now say, “Next I want you to paint orange flowers.” (*Children will point out that there is no orange paint.*) Ask for solutions. Children may need to be prompted, “Let’s try having a person with red paint and a person with yellow paint combine their paint on the mixing tray.” Discuss how sharing colors gives us a new color. Paint orange flowers on papers.

Now say, “Next I want you to paint purple flowers.” Repeat the process, this time combining red and blue paint to create purple. Paint purple flowers on papers.

Use the color wheel to illustrate how many beautiful colors are possible when working together. Put paint and papers to the side to dry.



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2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Read Matthew 18:15–20 or “How to Fix a Problem” from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, pp. 200–202.

Say, “This scripture story teaches us that when we work together to heal relationships, good things will happen. When we work together for peace, Jesus is with us.”

Ask children questions about the story:

- What was the problem, and who was involved?
- How did Jesus teach his friends to make peace? (*Go to the person with whom there is a problem and speak to him or her privately and gently. If the problem continues, take two friends with you to speak to the person. If the problem continues, discuss the problem with the person and the larger group. Give every opportunity to solve the problem peacefully, rather than announcing the problem to the group before talking gently to the person.*)
- Can you think of a time when you solved a problem peacefully? What did you do, and how did the person respond?
- Who can help you solve problems peacefully? (*family members, teachers, friends, pastor*)

Provide a scenario where there is a problem. Invite the children to act out a solution as Jesus instructed his friends in the scripture story. Help them remember each step of the peacemaking process.

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing

(35% of total lesson time)

Prior to class, prepare strips of paper with the following statements and hide them around the room.

Say, “Pursuit of Peace (Shalom) is both an Enduring Principle and a Mission Initiative in Community of Christ.” Invite the children to find the strips of paper with the following statements, and read (or have the teacher read) the statements they find.

- God wants shalom (peace and wholeness) for all of creation.
- Jesus Christ is an example of God’s shalom (peace).
- We create communities of shalom when we work together for peace.
- We share the peace of Jesus Christ with everyone!

- We work with God and others to bring shalom to all creation.
- We celebrate God’s shalom wherever people are working together for peace.

—adapted from “We Share Enduring Principles,” *Sharing in Community of Christ, 3rd Edition*, p. 13

Working Together for Peace game (view at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5JAx2bjeH8>)

This works best with four children, but it can be done with fewer if one person holds more than one string. The object of the game is to work together to stack six or more plastic cups into a pyramid while touching (holding) only the strings attached to the rubber band.

- Stack six plastic cups upside down in the middle of a table.
- Tie the ends of four pieces of string or yarn (approximately 18 in/45 cm) to a rubber band (approximately two in/five cm in diameter).
- Strings should be tied so the rubber band is divided into quarters. When all four strings are pulled, the circumference of the rubber band expands and can be placed over the end of a cup. When strings are released, the rubber band contracts to fit snugly around the cup, which can now be moved by pulling gently on the strings.
- One by one, move the cups into a pyramid. When a cup is in the desired place, all strings must be pulled hard enough to stretch the rubber band to release the cup.
- The game can be altered by having more or fewer cups to stack, requiring different stacked shapes, moving the cups a distance, or moving (transferring) objects from one cup to another.

Ask the children what connections can be made between this activity and the scripture story.

Say, “When we work together to solve problems, we are pursuing peace and sharing the peace of Jesus.”

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived

(10% of total lesson time)

Ask children to think about a problem they have, or one they have seen, with a family member or friend. Discuss the steps toward peace from today’s scripture story. Help children think of the first step they will take to share Christ’s peace with their family member or friend.

Invite each child who would like to complete the following challenge statement:

Today I will share Christ’s peace with _____ by

5 BLESS

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

Invite children to sing “I’m Gonna Live So God Can Use Me” CCS 581. Ask children for different actions to include in the song (I’m gonna pray, share, love, hug, dance) and demonstrate each action while singing.

Offer a closing prayer, or invite a student to offer a closing prayer.

Dear God,
Thank you for always being near us. Help us forgive and compromise when we argue and don’t get along so we can be friends and experience Jesus with us. Amen.

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 19)

LESSON 43
17 September 2017

Focus Scripture Passage: Matthew 18:21–35

Lesson Focus: We must forgive others as God forgives us.

Objectives

The learners will...

- share examples of forgiveness.
- discuss what the parable teaches about God's forgiveness and how we are to forgive others.
- explore the Enduring Principle Grace and Generosity.

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*
- Optional: three bowls, a container of ground black pepper, and dishwashing liquid
- Toothpicks or container with multiple small items

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Matthew 18:21–35 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 104, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Gather and ask children to describe the steps toward solving a problem peacefully from last week's scripture story (see p. 5). If children used any of the steps to help solve problems, invite them to share about their experiences.

Sing "God Forgave My Sin in Jesus' Name" CCS 627.

Ask children the following questions:

- What does it mean to forgive someone? Have you forgiven someone? How did you feel?
- What does it mean to be forgiven? Have you been forgiven for something you did or said? How did you feel?

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Ask, "Can anyone tell me what a parable is?" (a story used to teach a lesson)

Say, "Today's scripture story is a parable about forgiveness that follows the scripture story we read last week."

With older children, read Matthew 18:21–35. Explain that the parable is full of hyperbole (exaggerations) that seem shocking or unreasonable to the reader. Ask children to point out examples of hyperbole (forgiving someone 77 times; 10,000 talents represents many years' wages; strong language, such as "wicked slave;" being tortured for not paying a debt)

Ask, "Why do you think exaggerations were used in this parable? What do these examples tell us about God's forgiveness?" (*It has no limits.*)

With younger children, read "Over and Over and Over and Over" from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, p. 205. Ask the following questions:

- How many times was Susanna told to help her baby brother? (*over and over and over...*)
- How does this represent God's forgiveness? (*God forgives us over and over and over...*)
- Has anyone forgiven you over and over and over? Explain how that felt.
- How many times are we supposed to forgive others? (*over and over and over...*)

Optional story activity:

Retell the story from Matthew 18:21–35 using the following object lesson. Note: Practice the activity before demonstrating to the class.

- You will need three bowls filled with water, a small container of pepper, and a small bottle of dishwashing liquid.
- Place the bowls of water on the table where all can see.
- Shake some pepper over the surface of the water in the first bowl as you tell about the servant who owed lots of money. Say the pepper represents all the money he owed. When you tell that the king forgave the debt, put one drop of dishwashing liquid in the center of the bowl. (*The pepper will rush to the edges of the bowl.*) Explain that the servant now owed nothing. The king chose to push the debt aside and forgive it. The debt was no longer what was most important in their relationship.
- Sprinkle pepper in the center of the second bowl to represent the debt owed to the first servant by the second servant. Tell how the servant demanded payment from the other man, even though the man owed him only a little money. The poorer servant could not pay, and the ungrateful servant punished him instead of forgiving the debt, because he loved money more than people. (*Do not put the liquid soap in this bowl.*) If we do not add forgiveness, we allow the debt to overshadow the relationship.
- Sprinkle pepper in the third bowl. The pepper represents the things we do that hurt others and God. Like the king, God is willing to forgive us no matter what we do, or how many times we need to be forgiven.
- But sometimes other people hurt us. (*Give examples.*) If we do not forgive them, our hearts hold on to those things and get full of anger, and we hurt even more inside. God wants us to forgive others just like God forgives us. Put one drop of dishwashing liquid in the center of the bowl. When we forgive, it pushes away the darkness, and our hearts can be filled with peace.

3 RESPOND

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

One of Community of Christ's Enduring Principles is Grace and Generosity. God's forgiveness, or grace, is without

limit...no matter what! God is more generous than we can imagine in forgiving us, and God wants us to be generous in forgiving others.

In today's parable, Jesus said that because God forgives us, we should forgive others—not just seven times, but 77 times. In Greek 70 and seven were perfect numbers and this parable means we should forgive “without counting.” Invite children to gather around a table. Pour toothpicks (approximately 77) or other small items on the table. Begin counting, and then show frustration and give up. Ask if anyone can guess how many toothpicks there are. Tell them the toothpicks represent how many times we are to forgive others. Remind them that Jesus meant we should forgive “without counting.” Have the children form the toothpicks into a heart shape. Jesus promised us that God also forgives each of us when we forgive our brother or sister “from our hearts.”

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived

(10% of total lesson time)

Read together and memorize the following statement. Help younger children understand all the words, and create actions (or look up sign language motions on the internet) to help children remember the words.

God's grace (make a shepherd's crook motion with the right arm for “God”), **revealed** (hold left hand up and point to left palm with right forefinger) **in Jesus Christ** (touch each palm with middle finger of opposite hand), **is generous and unconditional** (touch heart with right hand, then roll hands forward).

Encourage each child to share this statement with at least two other people today!

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope

(5% of total lesson time)

Sing “Lord, I Want to Be a Christian” (stanza 2...more loving, stanza 3...forgiving, stanza 4...like Jesus). The song is included at the end of the lesson.

Lord, I Want to Be a Christian

Capo 1: E^b(D) A^b/E^b(G/D) E^b(D)

1 Lord, I want to be a Chris-tian in my heart, in my heart.
 2 Lord, I want to be more lov-ing in my heart, in my heart.
 3 Lord, I want to be more ho-ly in my heart, in my heart.
 4 Lord, I want to be like Je-sus in my heart, in my heart.

B^b(A)Cm(Bm)A^b(G) E^b(D) A^b/E^b(G/D) E^b(D)

Lord, I want to be a Chris-tian in my heart.
 Lord, I want to be more lov-ing in my heart.
 Lord, I want to be more ho-ly in my heart.
 Lord, I want to be like Je-sus in my heart.

A^b(G) E^b(D) Cm(Bm)

In my heart, in my heart,
 in my heart, in my heart,

E^b(D) B^b7(A7) Cm(Bm) A^b(G) E^b(D)

Lord, I want to be a Chris-tian in my heart.
 Lord, I want to be more lov-ing in my heart.
 Lord, I want to be more ho-ly in my heart.
 Lord, I want to be like Je-sus in my heart.



Text and Tune: Afro-American spiritual

PM
 LORD, I WANT TO BE A CHRISTIAN
www.hymnary.org/text/lord_i_want_to_be_a_christian_in_my_heart

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 20)

LESSON 44
24 September 2017

Focus Scripture Passage: Matthew 20:1–16

Lesson Focus: God extends grace freely and generously to all.

Objectives

The learners will...

- experience justice and sharing.
- discuss the scripture story and God's grace and generosity.
- recognize blessings in their lives and ways they can be generous.

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*
- (Optional) Individually wrapped candy
- Basket with small items or images (cut from magazines or drawn) representing ways children can be generous
- Paper and markers or crayons

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Matthew 20:1–16 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 105, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

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

Welcome children by name as they enter the space. Take a few moments to review the lesson about God's generosity from the previous lesson (see p. 8). Review with the children the memorized statement with motions: **God's grace, revealed in Jesus Christ, is generous and unconditional.**

If individually wrapped candy is available, say, "I have some candy I am going to share with you. If you are 6 or 7 years old, you get one piece of candy. If you are 8 or 9, you get two pieces of candy. If you are 10 or 11, you get three pieces, and the teacher gets a handful of candy."

Ask the following questions:

- Is it fair to give out candy according to age? Why or why not?
- What would be a fair way to share the candy? Invite the children to distribute the candy according to what they think is fair.

Invite children to enjoy one piece of candy, but share additional pieces of candy with someone else after class.

Sing "For Thy Gracious Blessing" CCS 126 or "I've (We've) Got So Much to Be Thankful For" (words included; see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G21RCo8w0HA> for demonstration of the song).

We've got so much, so much, so much, so much, so much,
So much, so much, so much, so much, so much,
So much, so much, so much (clap)
To be thankful for.

We've got _____ (insert whatever you are thankful for here)

To be thankful for.

We've got _____

To be thankful for.

We've got so much, so much, so much, so much, so much,
So much, so much, so much, so much, so much,
So much, so much, so much (clap)
To be thankful for.

(Repeat verse and chorus as needed)

—By Ray Watson, © 2005 Ray Watson

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Read Matthew 20:1–16 or “The Kind Farmer” from *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, pp. 207–208.

Ask children:

- What seemed fair or unfair about the master (or farmer) paying all the workers the same amount?
- Do you think the worker that started last should have been paid the same as the first worker? Why or why not?
- Did the master (or farmer) pay everyone what he promised them?

Say, “Imagine God is like the master (or farmer), and what God pays workers represents God’s grace (love and forgiveness). Because God loves all people, God extends God’s grace freely and generously to all people...no matter what!”

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing

(35% of total lesson time)

In a basket, place small items or pictures that represent ways the children can give generously: a clock (volunteer time), a toy (share possessions), a musical note (sing), crayons (create art), a happy face (smile), praying hands (pray), a flower (take care of planet), a toothbrush (take care of self), and a heart (love others).

Have children sit in a circle. Tell them God is generous, and there are many ways we can be generous with our time,

talents, treasure, and testimonies. Sing the song from the beginning of the lesson while the basket is passed from child to child. When the verse stops, have the child holding the basket reach in and get an item. Ask children what it is and how they can generously share it with others. Have everyone repeat, “God is generous, and I will be generous, too!” Then continue until the basket is empty or each child has an item. For each round of singing, change the words to match the item pulled from the basket.

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived

(10% of total lesson time)

Encourage children to draw a picture of what they have received from God and what they will generously share with others. Remind them to share their extra piece(s) of candy with someone else today.

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope

(5% of total lesson time)

Sing “For Thy Gracious Blessings” CCS 126 or “I’ve (We’ve) Got So Much to Be Thankful For.”

Close with a popcorn prayer by beginning a prayer statement and having the children shout their responses at any time.

Examples: Thank you, God, for...
I will generously share...
Amen!

ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 21)

LESSON 45
1 October 2017

Focus Scripture Passage: Matthew 21:23–32

Lesson Focus: Jesus wants us to do more than talk about his mission; he wants us to live his mission!

Objectives

The learners will...

- sing about following Jesus.
- act out the scripture story and talk about Responsible Choices to help others.
- explore the Mission Prayer and how it helps us respond in Christ's mission.

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*
- Copies of Mission Prayer
- (Optional) Video: *Open Your Eyes* at www.youtube.com/watch?v=uHRTBccnAW8&feature=youtu.be
- Crayons or markers

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Matthew 21:23–32 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 106, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

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

Welcome the children by name and gather in a circle on the floor. Tell the children *Fanana* means "be like Jesus." Ask, "What have you done this week to be like Jesus?"

Teach children the song "Fanana" CCS 596 in Chichewa. For the first line, the teacher sings the main text; children respond with "Fanana." Then sing the second line together. After children understand the flow of the song, sing the other stanzas. Tell children what each line means before you sing, and ask them to act out motions to walk, sleep, sing, dance, and talk like Jesus.

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

2 ENGAGE

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

Say, "Every day we can choose how we will live like Jesus. We cannot just talk about Jesus; we must also act like Jesus."

Read "The Sister and the Brother" from *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, pp. 211–212. Invite children to act out the story as it is read. Invite an older child to be the reader (narrator).

Setting the Stage: Have Jesus and two religious rulers stand on one side of the narrator. On the other side of the narrator, a mother, son, and daughter will act out the parable. When the story is complete, take a bow!

Discuss the following questions with the children.

- Which one of the children in this story talked like Jesus?
- Which child acted like Jesus?
- Which one made the better choice? Explain.

In the story, the religious rulers were upset with Jesus because he helped people that didn't live like the religious rulers thought they should live. Jesus was kind to all people, regardless of their choices or how they lived. The religious rulers talked about living God's way, but they didn't live God's way.

Jesus doesn't want us to *talk* about his mission; he wants us to *live* his mission! Ask, "Can you remember the five Mission Initiatives in Community of Christ?"

- Invite People to Christ
- Abolish Poverty, End Suffering
- Pursue Peace
- Develop Disciples to Serve
- Experience Congregations in Mission

Ask, "How can we live Christ's mission through the Mission Initiatives? What are some specific things we can do?"

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

Provide copies of the Mission Prayer. Tell children many people throughout Community of Christ are using the Mission Prayer to listen for God and follow Jesus in his mission.

Read: **God, where will your Spirit lead today?**

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

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

Ask, "What can you do to be fully awake and ready to respond?"

Read: **Grant me courage to risk something new...**

Ask, "Do you know what courage means? Courage is when you decide to try even when you are not sure what will

happen. When have you had courage to try something new?"

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

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

Optional Video: *Open Your Eyes*

Find the video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=uHRTBccnAW8&feature=youtu.be.

Ask:

- What did the jogger do that changed how he noticed others?
- What did the jogger do that took courage?
- How was the jogger a blessing of love and peace?
- What else happened in the video that shows what it means to be a blessing of love and peace?

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

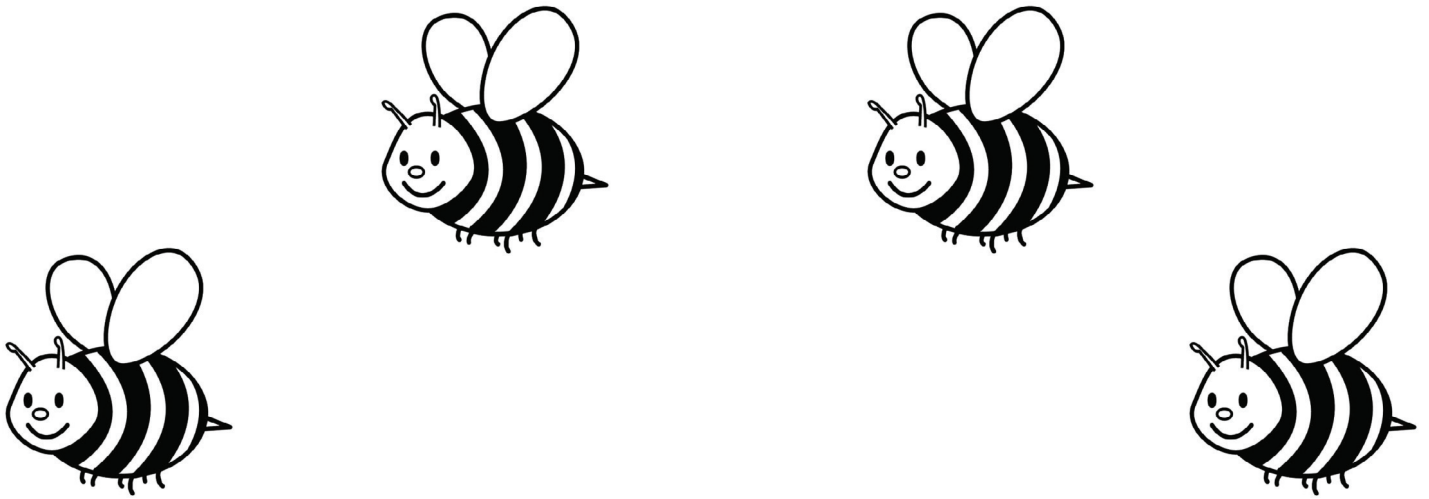
Invite the children to color the bees on their Mission Prayer. Under each bee, have them write or draw how they can "bee" like Jesus and live his mission. For example: "bee" loving, "bee" kind, "bee" generous, "bee" helpful, "bee" a peacemaker.

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

Sing "Fanana" CCS 596.

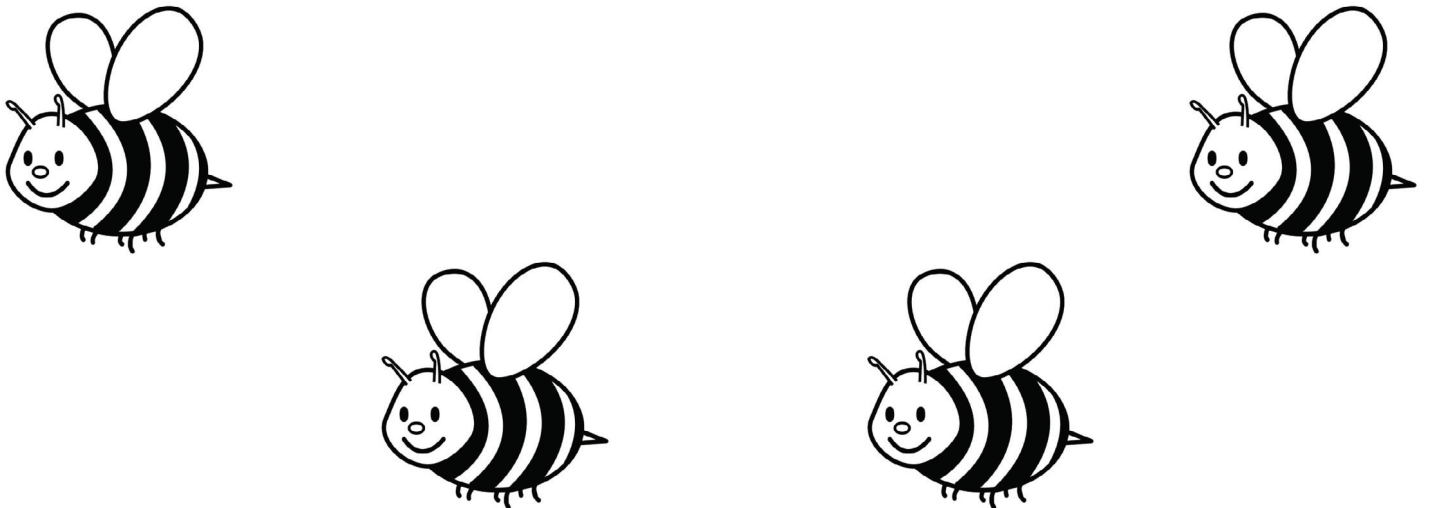
Start a sentence prayer: "Jesus, help us follow you in your mission."

Invite children to complete the sentence: "I want to share love by _____."



MISSION PRAYER

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



ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 22)

LESSON 46
8 October 2017

Focus Scripture Passage: Matthew 21:33–46

Lesson Focus: Jesus teaches us to love God, love others, and work together to create shalom.

Objectives

The learners will...

- listen to and share stories that teach a lesson.
- discuss the scripture passage and learn about God's shalom.
- experience working together to create shalom.

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)
- Large writing surface and marker
- Small paper plates, forks
- (Optional) Variety of pre-cut fresh fruit (bananas, apples, grapes, strawberries, pears)
- Large bowl, large spoon
- Paper or large paper plates
- Glue
- Fruit templates included with lesson
- Crayons

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Matthew 21:33–46 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, pp. 107–108, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Note to teacher: Be prepared to read or tell a favorite story of yours. It can be a Bible or Book of Mormon story, a favorite children's story, or a story about a special person in your life. Whether or not the story is true, it should be one that teaches a lesson.

Welcome children by name as they enter the space and gather in a circle. Ask, "Does anyone have a favorite story? Tell us why this story is your favorite."

Say, "I'd like to read (or tell) one of my favorite stories." After reading or telling the story, ask the children what lesson the story teaches.

Say, "A story doesn't have to be true (factual) to teach a lesson. Jesus often used stories to teach lessons about

God and about being a disciple. Today's Bible story is another parable, which is a story that may or may not have happened, but teaches a lesson."

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Read "Keep Your Promise!" based on Matthew 21:33–46 from *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, pp. 216–217, or tell the following story adapted from Matthew 21:33–46.

Today's story is about a man who owned some land. He planted grapes on the land, and then made an agreement with other farmers to work in the vineyard (which is a garden where grapes are grown). They would take care of the vineyard and give the owner a share of the harvested crops.

When it was time to harvest the grapes, the landowner sent his servants to collect his share of the harvest. The farmers who worked in the vineyard beat the servants and even killed one of them. They refused to give the landowner his share of the harvest.

The landowner sent even more servants a second time, but the farmers treated them the same way and refused to give the landowner his share of the harvest.

Finally, he sent his own son to them, saying, "They will respect my son."

But when the farmers saw the son coming, they said, "This is the landowner's son; let's kill him and take his inheritance."

Jesus asked the men listening to his story, "What do you think the landowner will do to those men?"

"He will destroy them and rent his land to someone else who will give him his share of the fruit at harvest time," answered his listeners.

On a large writing surface, make two columns with the following lists:

Landowner	Fruits of the Kingdom
Farmers	God
Servants	Jesus
Landowner's son	Moses, David, Elijah, Isaiah
Grapes	People of Israel

Read the parable a second time and ask the children to think about the characters (listed in the first column) and who or what they represent (listed in the second column). After reading a second time, have the children match the characters from the parable with the ones they represent. Talk about why they matched as they did.

Say, "In this parable that Jesus told, the landowner represents God. God sent leaders and prophets (servants) such as Moses, David, Elijah, and Isaiah to tell the people of Israel (farmers) about God's love and how to live in right relationship with God and others. Finally, God sent Jesus (son) to teach the people. He gave them a second chance, and a third, but they rejected Jesus as well. Jesus told his listeners, "The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to people that produce the fruits of the kingdom." Jesus teaches us to love God, ourselves, and others; we must also work together to produce

"fruits of the kingdom," which is God's shalom (peace and wholeness).

3 RESPOND

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

Making Fruit Salad

Note: If fresh fruit is not available, use the fruit templates at the end of this lesson or have the children draw their favorite fruit. You can use the same object lesson of working together and sharing generously for the good of all.

Give each child a small paper plate with one kind of fruit on it. (Example: one child will have all the bananas, one will have all the apples, one all the grapes.) Place a large bowl in the middle of the table. Say, "Having fruit is a good thing; however, sometimes we are tempted to keep our fruit all to ourselves. That is not a good thing. We want to make fruit salad, but the best fruit salad has all of these fruits. If we want to make the best fruit salad, we must all put our fruit in the big bowl." Ask students if they are willing to share their fruit this way. Tell the children that if everyone contributes to the salad, then everyone gets a little of all of the fruit. Mix and eat the fruit salad.

Say, "When we work together and share our gifts, everyone benefits! This is what Jesus meant by the 'fruits of the kingdom.'"

Ask, "How does this fruit salad represent God's shalom, or peace and wholeness?" (*Everyone worked together and shared for the good of the whole group.*)

4 SEND

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

Give each child a large paper plate and copies of each fruit from the attached templates. Help the children write "Shalom" in the middle of the plate. Brainstorm words that represent shalom (fruits of the kingdom), and make a list on a large piece of paper. Possible words: peace, justice, wholeness, kindness, generosity, love, patience, joy. On pictures of fruit, help the children write words from the list that represent shalom. Have the children color their fruit and glue to the plate around the word "Shalom."

5 BLESS

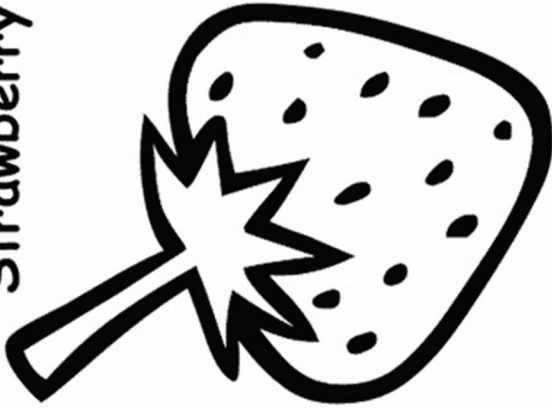
Time of prayer, praise,
blessing, and hope
(5% of total lesson time)

Start a sentence prayer and have each child complete the prayer with one of the words on their fruit.

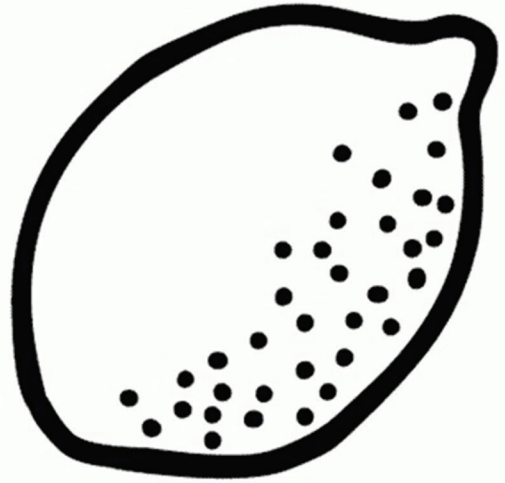
Thank you, God, for sending Jesus to teach us
about your love. Help us create shalom by sharing
_____. Amen.

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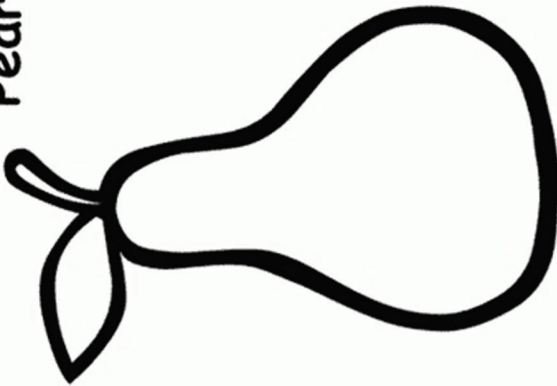
Strawberry



Lemon



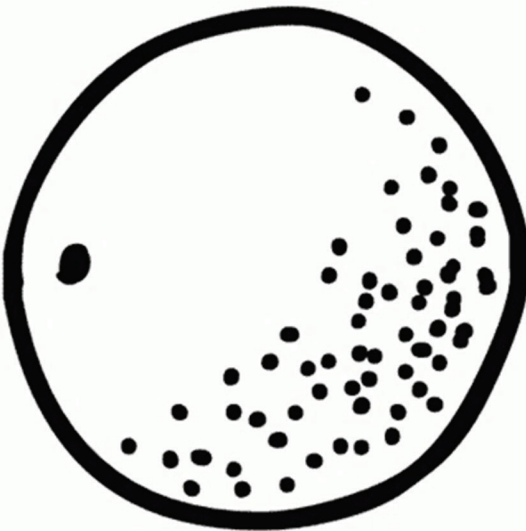
Pear



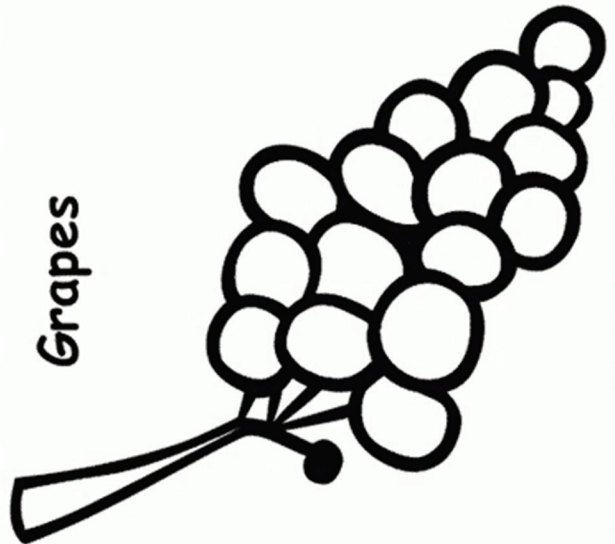
Raspberries



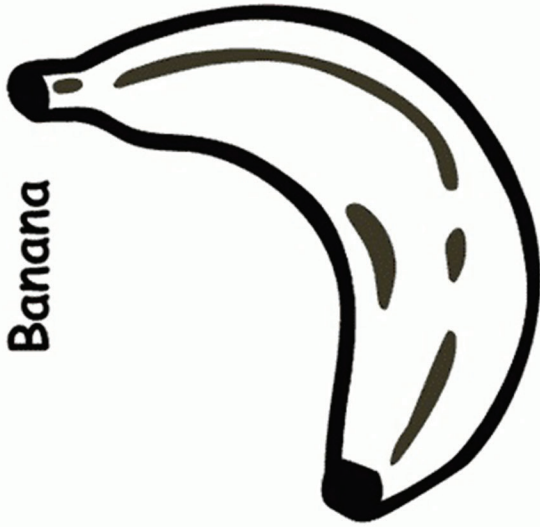
Orange



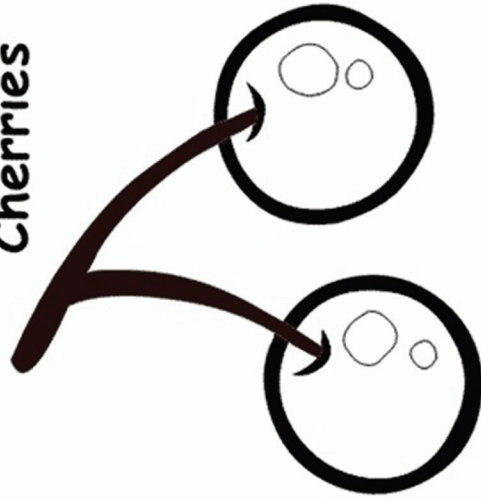
Grapes



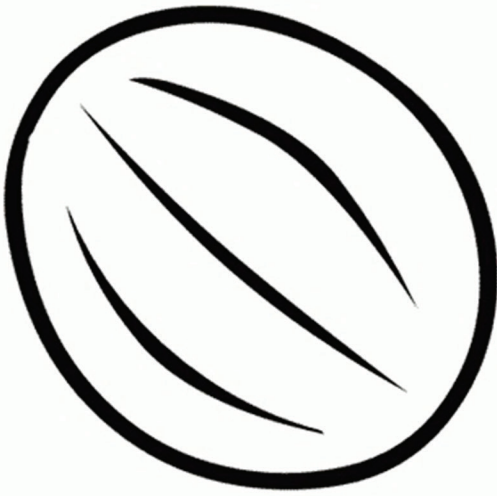
Banana



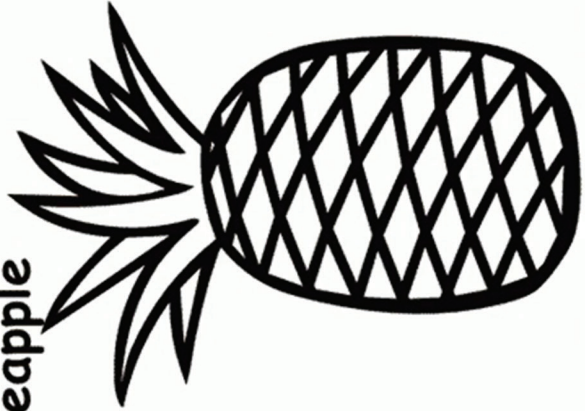
Cherries



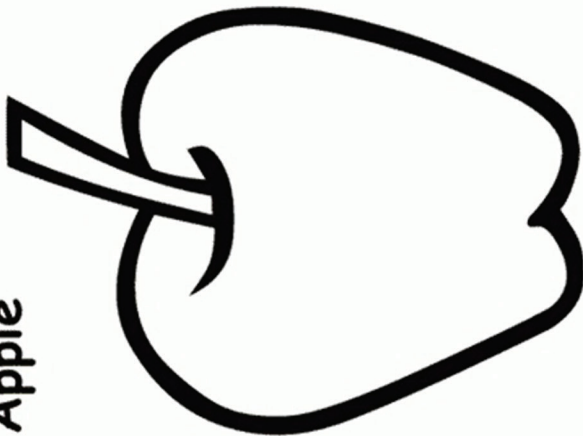
Cantaloupe



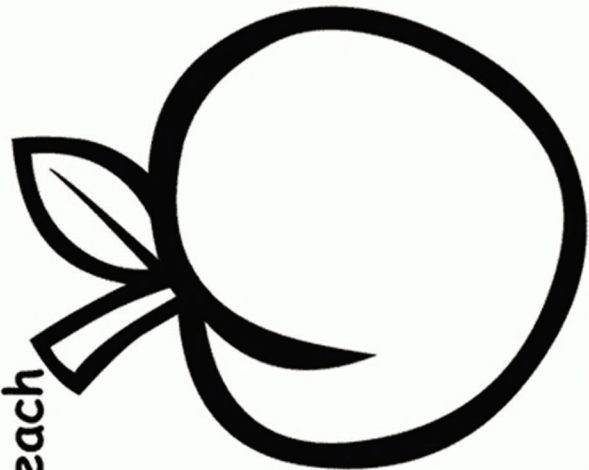
Pineapple



Apple



Peach



ORDINARY TIME (PROPER 23)

LESSON 47
15 October 2017

Focus Scripture Passage: Matthew 22:1–14

Lesson Focus: We must come to God prepared to celebrate God's purpose, or we will miss the blessing.

Objectives

The learners will...

- talk about invitations to special events.
- discuss the scripture story and Community of Christ mission statement.
- share joy, hope, love, and peace.

Supplies

- Bible or *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2007, ISBN 9781551455471)
- Copies of paper people and clothes (included with lesson)
- Scissors
- Crayons or markers
- Glue

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Matthew 22:1–14 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year A: New Testament*, p. 109, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

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

Draw or show a picture of a common uniform (such as worn by firefighters, nurses, or athletes) and ask the children to identify what it is and when it is worn.

Ask, "What are some activities or professions that require people to dress in particular ways?" Help children identify activities or professions such as sports (football, dance, hockey), scuba diving, firefighting, medicine, or law enforcement.

Ask, "What specific clothing or uniform is required for each of these situations? Why is the special clothing or uniform important or necessary?"

2 ENGAGE

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

Say, "For several weeks we have learned about parables Jesus used to teach about God's love and how to live as

disciples of Jesus. Today's story is another parable Jesus used to teach his disciples."

With younger children, read "The Best Bar Mitzvah Party" based on Matthew 22:1–10 from *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, pp. 220–221. With older children, read Matthew 22:1–14.

Ask:

- Have you received an invitation to a special event? Tell us about that event. Were you expected to wear something special?
- Who do you think the king (or parent) represents in this story? (*God*)
- What does the wedding banquet represent? (*shalom, blessings, joy, love, God's kingdom*)
- Why was the king angry? (*He prepared a great banquet or party, and the intended guests did not attend.*)
- What did the king (parent) do next? (*invited people who are not usually invited to banquets*)
- In Matthew's story, why was one man thrown out of the party? (*He did not wear the appropriate wedding robe; he was not making responsible choices.*)

Say, "God wants all people to experience joy, hope, love, and peace. In Community of Christ, this is expressed in the Enduring Principle Worth of All Persons. It is also expressed in our mission statement:

We proclaim Jesus Christ and promote communities of joy, hope, love, and peace.”

Practice this mission statement with the children until they have it memorized. Help children understand *proclaim* (tell about with our words and actions) and *promote* (help build or share).

3 RESPOND

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

Say, “Just as the guests were expected to wear wedding robes to the banquet, Jesus invites us to live as disciples who share joy, hope, love, and peace with everyone.

“God invites us to celebrate and share joy, hope, love, and peace. We need to dress ourselves correctly. This doesn’t mean fancy dresses or suits; it means preparing ourselves with attitudes and actions that promote joy, hope, love, and peace. What are some things we can do to prepare ourselves at home or at church?” (*pray, sing, be kind, be generous, love others, show compassion, read scripture, be thankful, be respectful*)

Have the children select a paper person and clothing. Have them write joy, hope, love, or peace on the clothing and color as desired. Let the children cut them out, or have them pre-cut, and glue clothing on their paper person.

4 SEND

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

Invite the children to show their paper person, and tell how they will share the word on the clothing with others this week.

5 BLESS

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

Invite children to form a circle and close the class with this prayer.

Dear God, help me be prepared for your celebration of joy, hope, love, and peace. Help me invite others by sharing joy, hope, love, and peace. Amen.

