



Community of Christ



COMMUNITY OF CHRIST LESSONS

CHILDREN

18 FEBRUARY 2018 — 27 MAY 2018

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 B: New Testament* (with focus on the gospel according to Mark).

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.

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

LESSON 12
18 February 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 1:9–15

Lesson Focus: Jesus' role was to show us how to live and bring about God's shalom.

Objectives

The learners will...

- read about Jesus' baptism.
- discuss shalom and God's vision for creation.
- learn about covenant relationship with God.
- brainstorm ways to share the good news.

Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended) or *Lectionary Story Bible, Year B*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2008, ISBN 9781551455648)

- Butcher paper and masking tape, marker board/ chalkboard, or paper
- Large colored poster paper (16 in x 20 in/ 42 cm x 59 cm), one for each child
- White paint
- (Optional) dove template, included with lesson, and glue
- Markers or crayons
- Pens or pencils

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Mark 1:9–15 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 48–49, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

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

Greet children as they enter and have them form a circle. Sing "This Is the Day." See lyrics and hear the music on this video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRLxugEtqx8>.

Have the children share good news in their lives.

- How do you feel when you hear or share good news?
- If you are having a bad day, how does hearing good news help?

2 ENGAGE

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

The people in today's story were desperate for good news. The story takes place in Galilee in the year 70 CE. A group of Jews were revolting against the Romans (the government that ruled them). Jerusalem was surrounded by an army. People were stressed and caught between those who didn't like the government and those who were trying to take control for themselves. More than likely the prices of food and essential items were rising because the city was surrounded. But God was about to do something!

Read together Mark 1:9–15 or “You Are Chosen” from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year B*, pp. 78–79.

- Who is Jesus? (*God’s son*)
- What good news did Jesus bring? (*God is here now. God has a plan.*)

Jesus is saying that the kingdom of God is here. God’s kingdom is something new. The kingdom is not a place, but is a different way to live (*Sermon and Class Helps*, p. 48). “Community of Christ understands that God’s vision for how we should live is captured in the word *shalom*. Shalom is a Hebrew word which means a fullness or completeness of peace. Jesus showed his disciples and others how to live a life of shalom in community. It involves living God’s way instead of our own way (*Of Water and Spirit*, pp. 29, 56).

- What does shalom look like to you?

Hang a long piece of butcher paper horizontally on the wall for the entire Lenten season. Divide into seven columns. At the top of the first column, write “Week 1: Create Shalom.” Have the children create a description under the words. Alternatively, write the list on a whiteboard or chalkboard or on a piece of paper.

3 RESPOND

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

It is hard to always do what is right or to know how to act, but we have Jesus as a model. God invites us to follow Jesus, which is to be in covenant relationship with God. Covenant is “when we are in a community that loves God and follows Jesus” (*Of Water and Spirit*, p. 58). One way we can respond to God’s invitation is to be baptized. When you are baptized you make a promise to follow Jesus.

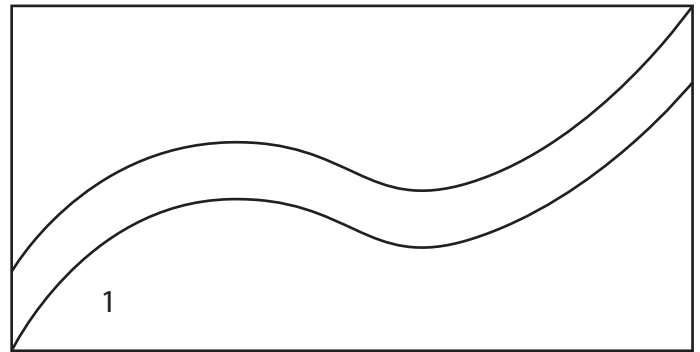
Community of Christ believes that baptism is for those who are old enough (age 8 and older) to decide for themselves to make that covenant (*Of Water and Spirit*, p. 59). A priesthood member and the baptismal candidate stand together in water and the priesthood member states the baptism prayer from Doctrine and Covenants 17:21c: “Having been commissioned of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.” The baptismal candidate is gently lowered completely under the water and then quickly raised back up. Today’s scripture tells the story of when John baptized Jesus.

- What symbol did God send after Jesus was baptized? (*dove*)

God is always with us and we have Jesus as a guide to know how to act and what choices to make. A dove is also a symbol of God’s Spirit and of peace, or God’s shalom.

Give each child a piece of large, colored poster paper (16 in x 20 in/ 42 cm x 59 cm). Draw and color a path from the

bottom left corner to the top right corner as shown. Place a handprint dove in the position marked “1.” Have the children leave their papers in the classroom so you can add to them each week of Lent.



To make a dove, paint the palm of one hand white and place it with fingers spread on the poster paper. Once the paint dries, draw feet, eyes, a wing, and a beak with markers. Alternatively, you can cut a handprint out of white paper and add details. Or print out the dove template at the end of this lesson for the children to color, cut out, and attach to poster.



4 SEND

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

The stories in the Gospel of Mark show us how to follow Jesus. It is not always easy to follow Jesus’ teachings, but the Holy Spirit can help us along the way.

- What can you do to help create a community of shalom around you?
- With whom can you share the good news of Jesus?

Have each student brainstorm something he or she can do this week to create shalom or share the good news (sit with someone new at lunch, invite a friend to church, offer to help a parent with a household task). Each can write and finish the following sentence under his or her dove: “This week I will...”

5 BLESS

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

Gather together and have the children state what they will do this week to bring about shalom. Offer a prayer to thank Jesus for showing us how to create shalom.

All together shout, “God is here NOW! Share the good news!”



SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

LESSON 13
25 February 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 8:31–38

Lesson Focus: Being a disciple involves doing God's will rather than our own.

Objectives

The learners will...

- experience making a difficult choice.
- discuss the decision to be a disciple in community.
- share examples of discipleship.

Supplies

- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*
- Bible (NRSV recommended) or *Lectionary Story Bible, Year B*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2008, ISBN 9781551455648)

- Small, wrapped pieces of candy, two per child
- Deck of playing cards
- Class poster created first week for Lent
- Large colored posters (16 in x 20 in/ 42 cm x 59 cm) created last week (Have extras available for new students.)
- Red paint
- (Optional) red construction paper and glue
- Practices of Discipleship cards, included with lesson
- Markers or crayons
- Pens or pencils

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Mark 8:31–38 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 50–51, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Greet children as they enter. Hand them each a small, wrapped piece of candy. Instruct them not to open it, and ask them to form a circle.

You each have a choice to make today. You can eat the candy in your hand, or, if you trust me, you can give me your candy and wait for something else.

Allow time for the children to make their choices. Those who keep their candy may eat it. Those who choose to surrender their candy should give it to you.

Sing stanzas one and two of "The Summons" CCS 582.

- Tell about a time when you had to make a choice. Was it difficult?

- How did you make your decision about the candy? Was that decision easy or difficult?
- If there was a difference in the children's decisions about the candy, ask: Did the decisions of the other students affect your decision?

Today's scripture passage is about making a decision to be a disciple. God did not promise that the decision would be simple or that being a disciple would be easy, but God does promise to be with those who follow Jesus and to bless them.

If any children chose to surrender their candy, hand them back two pieces of candy. Say: Those of you who decided to trust me and give up what you had will be rewarded with a second piece of candy. The decision was completely yours to make.

If no one chose to surrender their candy, explain what you would have done. Say: If you had decided to trust me and give up what you had, you would have been rewarded with a second piece of candy. The decision was completely yours to make.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration
and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Read together Mark 8:31–38 or “A Very Hard Thing to Do” from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year B*, pp. 82–83.

Jesus knew his teachings about God’s kingdom would make some leaders angry, so angry they wanted to have him killed. Just like us, he did not want to suffer. But he chose to keep teaching about God’s kingdom of justice, compassion, and generosity.

This card trick is found at sermons4kids.com/easy_way_out.htm (©2001–2017 Sermons4Kids, Inc. Used with permission.).

I have a really cool card trick to show you this morning. (Shuffle the cards a couple of times.) First, I need a helper. (Choose a helper and continue.) I want you to pick a card out of this deck. Don’t show it to me, but you can show everyone else. I’ll cover my eyes so I can’t see it. Now, I want you to carefully slide that card right into the middle of the deck. Don’t let me see it! Now, this is the amazing part. I am going to snap my fingers, and the card that you selected will move from the middle of the deck to the top of the deck. Are you ready? (Snap!) Here it is! Here is your card right on top. (Pick up the card and show it to your helper.)

That is your card, isn’t it? It isn’t? Well, I don’t understand what happened. I bought this book to teach me how to do this trick and it didn’t work. It said I should let you choose a card and put it in the middle of the deck and when I snapped my fingers it would move to the top. Oh, there was a bunch of other stuff I was supposed to do, but that stuff was all too complicated. I skipped over that part. It is supposed to be a magic trick, so I thought it would work at the snap of my fingers.

That was pretty foolish of me, wasn’t it? Well, sometimes we think life should be that easy too, don’t we? We think that everything should happen at the snap of a finger. When life is hard, we look for the easy way out.

Jesus did not take the easy way out. He decided to trust God and obey. Jesus showed us how to live as a disciple.

As we discussed last week, Community of Christ believes choosing to follow Jesus Christ through baptism is the first step of discipleship. The next step is to be confirmed in Community of Christ, because discipleship is best expressed through covenant with God and others in

sacred community. During the sacrament of confirmation, two priesthood members lay their hands on the head of the candidate, while one of the priesthood members says a prayer aloud to God extending to the candidate membership into the Community of Christ. Becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ means accepting God’s incredible love, beginning to see the world in new ways, and being open to God’s guidance (*Of Water and Spirit*, p. 87).

- What does discipleship mean to you?
- What does it mean to be a disciple?

Refer to the butcher paper you hung last week. At the top of the second column, write “Week 2: Discipleship.” Have the children create a class description underneath the words. Each child can share and write what it means to them to be a disciple. Alternatively, write the list on a marker board, chalkboard, or a piece of paper.

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from
hearing to doing

(35% of total lesson time)

Can we be a disciple alone, all by ourselves? (Accept all answers and ask follow-up questions to support their answers.)

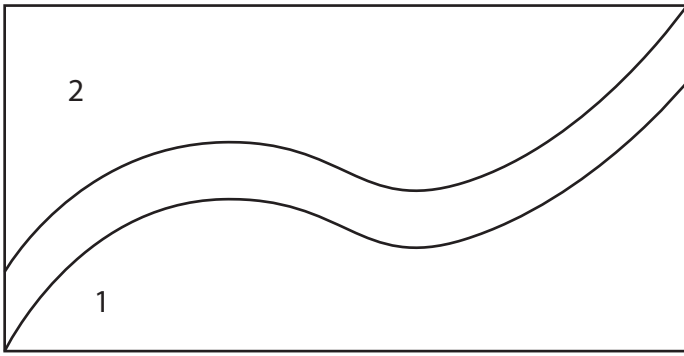
God calls us to be disciples in sacred community with other disciples. We learn and grow with others. We can learn from and share with each other. Jesus showed us how to share our gifts with others. He showed us how to practice being a disciple (*Of Water and Spirit*, p. 90).

The eight Practices of Discipleship are experiences that draw us closer to God and help us know how to follow Jesus (www.CofChrist.org/common/cms/resources/Documents/lessons-children-practices-of-discipleship.pdf).

Cut apart the Practices of Discipleship cards at the end of the lesson and distribute to children. The children can each have more than one card. Have the children read their cards to themselves and become familiar with the information. Each child should take a turn sharing with the class what they learned about the practice on their card. They can add a personal example. Alternatively the class can go over the list together.

To be a disciple, you have to accept God’s love and make decisions that will help you become whom God calls you to be. This is not always easy, but God promises to bless you and be with you.

Give children their large, colored poster papers (16 in x 20 in/ 42 cm x 59 cm) from last week. Place a handprint heart in the position marked “2.” Have the children leave their papers in the classroom so you can add to them each week of Lent.



To make a heart, paint the palms of both hands red. Place one hand, fingers together, at a diagonal on the poster paper. Remove that hand and place the other hand at the opposite diagonal so the fingers overlap. Alternatively, you can cut hearts out of red paper to attach to the poster.

(You may put a small heart on the paper before making the handprints.)



If time allows, ask the children to report on the goals they wrote last week. What did they do this past week to create shalom or share good news?

4 SEND

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

God loves us, and we are instructed to love others. But love is not always easy. Many countries recently celebrated Valentine's Day, a holiday celebrating love. People give cards, flowers, or gifts to those they love. But we are called to love each other *all* the time, even when it is difficult. It is one thing to give someone a store-bought Valentine's Day card, but it is another to choose to help your sister with her homework instead of watching your favorite show. Being a disciple means choosing to do what is right, helpful, and loving, and that may not mean putting ourselves first.

Have each student brainstorm something he or she can do this week to choose to follow Jesus. (*step in if someone is being teased, sit with someone new at lunch, or offer to help a sibling with a chore*) Each can write and finish the following sentence under his or her heart: "This week I will..."

5 BLESS

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

Gather together and have the children state what they will do this week to be a disciple. Offer a prayer thanking God for the blessings promised to us if we choose to follow Jesus.

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

PRACTICES OF DISCIPLESHIP

Scripture and Theological Study—Learn scripture stories

Jesus learned scripture stories.

How do you learn the stories of Jesus and God? Where do you learn what the church believes or the church's story?

Personal Relationships—Be a friend

Jesus made friends.

What friend or friends do you have who can depend on you, and you can depend on? What new friends have you made this year? How do you feel about having friends?

Missional Encounters—Help God by helping others

Jesus helped others.

When have you given money at church (tithes), helped others, or recycled? What groups do you belong to that help others locally or across the world? How do you help your parents, grandparents, teachers, friends?

Shared Experiences in Community—Be with family and friends

Jesus enjoyed time with others.

You can feel close to God doing things that aren't at church, like sports events, concerts, going to camp, and skating parties. What are some activities you like to do? Do you feel close to God there? Tell about it.

Personal Spiritual Practices—Learn to pray

Jesus prayed and listened to God.

When do you like to pray? Where? What ways are there besides praying that help you feel close to Jesus? Do you like to write in a diary or journal? Listen to music? Make music? Take walks in nature? Be alone?

Witnessing and Storytelling—Hear and tell about Jesus' love

Jesus told others about God.

Do you like to hear the personal stories of others? Do you tell stories about your experiences with Jesus? Do you tell others about Jesus or invite them to learn about him?

Community Spiritual Practices—Go to church

Jesus worshiped and praised God with others.

Have you helped with Disciples' Generous Response, shared a prayer, or sung in the choir? Do you share your ideas in meetings or play an instrument for others to hear? Do you go to church dinners or potlucks? Vacation church school? Camps or reunions?

Lifelong Learning—Grow and learn to follow Jesus

Jesus learned more each day.

Where can you keep learning about God and the world, and about Jesus all your life? Do you study hard on schoolwork, take music classes, art, or dance? Have you learned a new language, or visited new places to meet others? How will you keep learning? What do you want to learn?

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

LESSON 14
4 March 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: John 2:13–22

Lesson Focus: Our actions should reflect God’s mission in order to fulfill God’s vision of shalom.

Objectives

The learners will...

- identify the purpose and meaning of sanctuary and mission.
- discuss the scripture story and God’s mission.
- explore the Mission Initiative Abolish Poverty, End Suffering.

Supplies

- Room Charades cards included with lesson
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*
- Bible (NRSV recommended) or *Lectionary Story Bible, Year B*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by

Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2008, ISBN 9781551455648)

- Sample mission statements, included with lesson
- Class poster for Lent
- Large colored posters (16 in x 20 in/ 42 cm x 59 cm) created earlier (Have extras available for new students.)
- Brown paint
- (Optional) church template and glue, template included with lesson
- Markers or crayons
- Pens or pencils

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for John 2:13–22 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, p. 52, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Greet children as they enter and ask them to form a circle. Play Room Charades. Have the children take turns drawing a room from the cards included at the end of this lesson. They should each act out their rooms without any sounds and allow other children to guess the room. Use the “Church Sanctuary” card last. You may choose to act out that one yourself.

We do different things and act in different ways depending on where we are. Our church sanctuary is a place where we worship, praise, and learn about God. Church can be fun, but we act differently in the sanctuary than we do on the playground or at a sporting event. In the sanctuary we try extra hard to be aware of and focus on God.

Invite the children to sing “Lord, Prepare Me” CCS 280.

Today’s scripture is about a time when Jesus found people using the church and sanctuary for activities that were not God’s purpose.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Read together John 2:13–22 or “The Moneychangers” from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year B*, p. 86.

- Have you ever done spring cleaning at your house or at school?
- What sort of jobs do you do to help clean?
- What was Jesus cleaning out of the Temple? (*moneychangers and those selling animals*)

Jesus came to the temple in Jerusalem during the Passover festival, a big Jewish holiday celebration. He wanted to pray in the house of worship, but instead found himself distracted by and angry at those who were using the temple to make money. People came to the temple to pray and worship, but also to give offerings. Church officials decided to make people buy special temple money to donate, and charged them hefty fees. It would be like our pastor requiring us to exchange our own money for something she or he created. We would put that fake money in the offering plate and the pastor would keep our real money for her or himself.

- Did the actions of the moneychangers fulfill the mission or purpose of the temple? (No) Why not?
- Do you know what mission means? If we're on a mission, what are we doing?

Every company, school, and organization has a mission statement. And if they don't, they should! That is how everyone involved in the organization knows what the overall goals and purposes are.

Have children take turns reading the mission statement examples included at the end of the lesson. Children may want to guess the company after the statement is read. Alternatively, for older children you can find mission statement quizzes online at www.purposegames.com/game/match-the-mission-statement-to-the-company-quiz or www.restaurantbusinessonline.com/quiz-10-chains-rocking-modern-mission-statements.

Jesus Christ came on a mission to show us how to live as God's people. Let's define mission as "special ministries that help people in the community" (*Of Water and Spirit*, p. 106).

- What are some examples of Jesus' mission? (*Children may need help getting started. Some examples include: share the good news, heal the sick and injured, invite and welcome all people, bring blessing to those who are poor.*)

Refer to the butcher paper used in previous lessons. At the top of the third column, write "Week 3: Mission." Have the children create a class description underneath the words. Each child can share and write what mission means to them. Alternatively, write the list on a marker board, chalkboard, or a piece of paper.

3 RESPOND

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

Christ's mission is our mission. The mission statement for Community of Christ is "We proclaim Jesus Christ and promote communities of joy, hope, love, and peace."

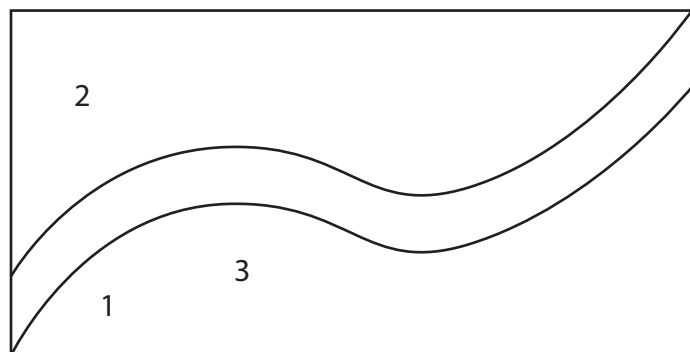
Community of Christ also has five specific Mission Initiatives that help us focus on how to do Christ's mission. One of those Mission Initiatives is Abolish Poverty, End Suffering (*Of Water and Spirit*, p. 109).

In our scripture story, the moneychangers' actions were not only soiling the sacred place of the temple and opposing God's purpose (*Sermon and Class Helps*, p. 52), but they created injustice and cheated people, especially the poor. Can you name some injustices in the world—things that aren't fair, just, or right?

God gives us everything we need in life and then some, but still some people are suffering, hungry, or without clothes or shelter. Remember that God's vision for creation is a life of shalom in community.

- How can you work to abolish poverty and end suffering in your community?
- How can our class work to abolish poverty and end needless suffering in our community?
- How can our congregation work to abolish poverty and end needless suffering in our community?

Give children their large, colored poster papers created previously. Place a handprint church in the position marked "3." Have the children leave their papers in the classroom so you can add to them each week of Lent.



To make a church, paint the palm of one hand brown and place it fingers-together on the poster paper. Once the paint dries, add a door, windows, and a cross with markers as desired. Alternatively, you can print out the church template at the end of this lesson for children to color, cut out, and attach to poster.

i.pinimg.com/originals/f7/27/75/f72774caf9829328ced78edddf6676.jpg

If time allows, ask the children to report on the goals they wrote last week. What did they do this past week to choose to follow Jesus?



4 SEND

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

The church is the body of Christ able to complete God's mission here on Earth. Jesus came to show us how to be his disciples. If we strive to fulfill God's purposes, we will realize God's vision of shalom.

Have each student brainstorm something he or she can do this week to fulfill Jesus' mission to Abolish Poverty and End Suffering (*donate money during the Disciples' Generous Response, offer to share your lunch with a classmate who has little or no food, step in if someone is being teased or bullied*). Each can write and finish the following sentence under his or her church: "This week I will..."

5 BLESS

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

Gather together and have the children state what they will do this week to fulfill Jesus' mission. Offer a prayer thanking God for the blessings we are given and to help us share with others.

Invite children to sing "Lord, Prepare Me" CCS 280. Think about what God's mission for the church is and how we can fulfill that vision.

ROOM CHARADES

Bedroom

Bathroom

Kitchen

School classroom

Church sanctuary

Gymnasium

School lunchroom

Music room

Sample Mission Statements

- To refresh the world...
- To inspire moments of optimism and happiness...
- To create value and make a difference.

(Coca-Cola)

Our vision is to be earth's most customer-centric company; to build a place where people can come to find and discover anything they might want to buy online.

(Amazon)

To inspire and nurture the human spirit—one person, one cup, and one neighborhood at a time.

(Starbucks)

Saving people money so they can live better.

(Walmart)

To be our customer's first choice when it comes to top quality products, outstanding service/cleanliness, and great value for money.

(McDonald's)

To create a better everyday life for many people.

(IKEA)

To empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more.

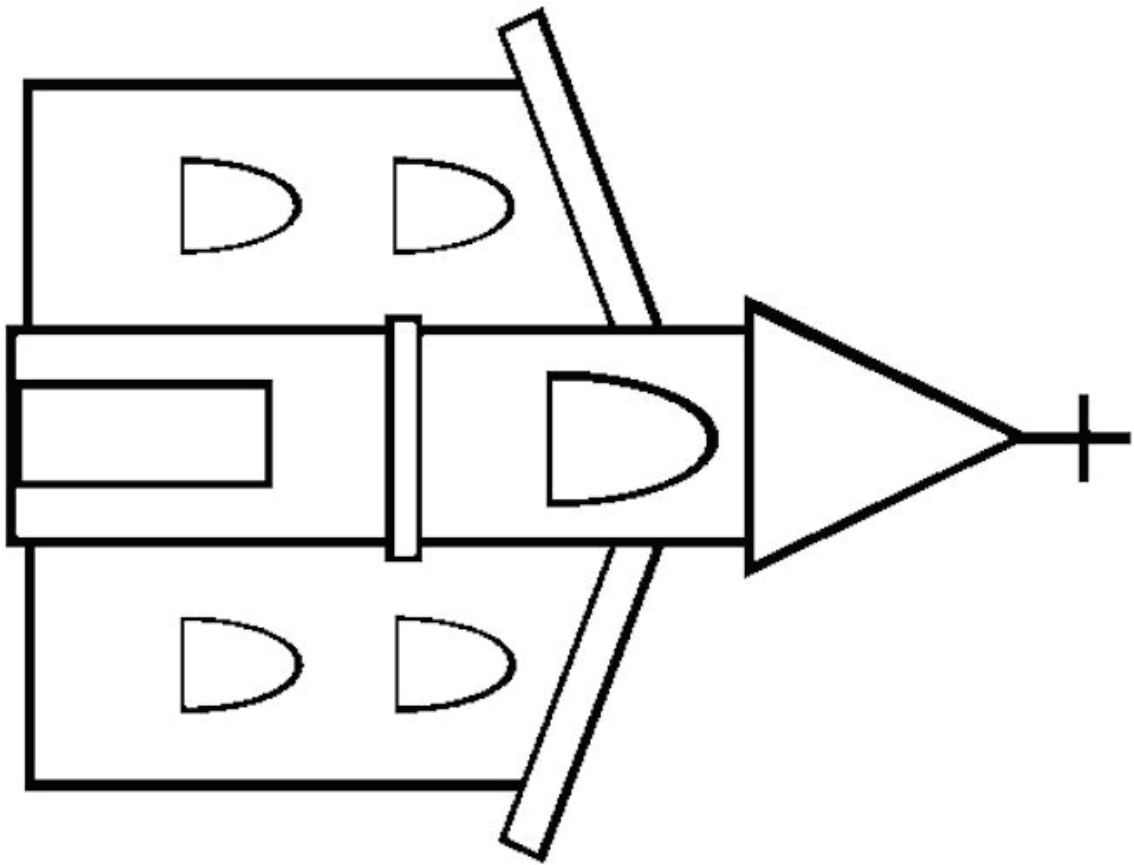
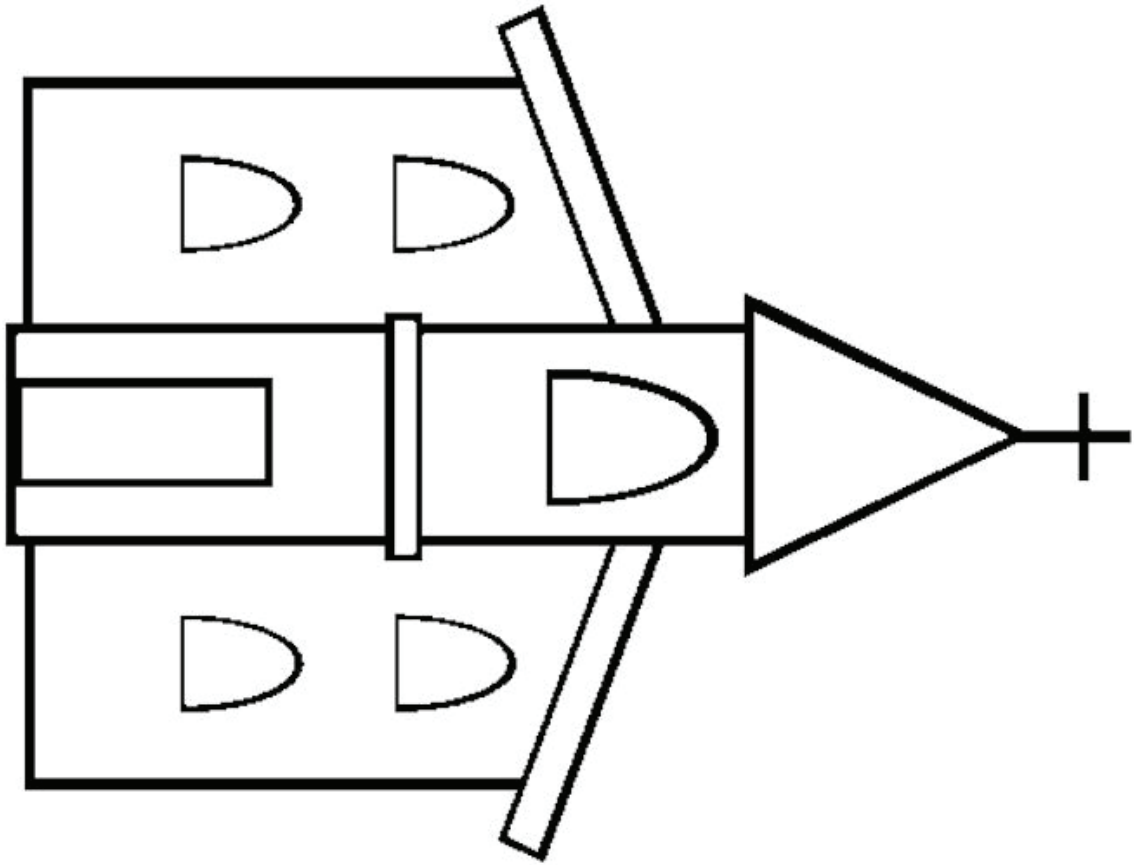
(Microsoft)

To bring the world closer together.

(Facebook)

To organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful.

(Google)



FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

LESSON 15
11 March 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: John 3:14–21

Lesson Focus: God loves us unconditionally, and we are challenged to share generously and graciously from our hearts.

Objectives

The learners will...

- explore God's unconditional and immeasurable love for us.
- discuss the concepts of grace and salvation.
- learn about the Enduring Principle Grace and Generosity.

Supplies

- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*
- (Optional) measuring tools such as ruler, measuring cup, or watch
- (Optional) report cards for each student—see the Gather section, included with lesson
- Bible (NRSV recommended) or *Lectionary Story Bible, Year B*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by

Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2008, ISBN 9781551455648)

- (Optional) storybook—see Engage section
- Class poster created for Lent
- Cross template, included with lesson
- Scissors, glue
- Large colored posters created earlier (Have extras available for new students.)
- Blue and green paint
- (Optional) Earth template, included with lesson
- Markers or crayons
- Pens or pencils

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for John 3:14–21 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 53–54, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Greet children as they enter and ask them to form a circle. Invite them to sing "Jesus Loves Me" CCS 251.

Display several measuring tools and ask the children what each of the tools is for. Relate each item to God's love. For example, hold up a measuring cup and ask, "What is this?" (a measuring cup) "What could it be used for?" (measuring sugar to make cookies) "How much love does God have for us?" A watch is used to measure time, so how long will God love us? A ruler is used to measure length, so can we measure God's love from beginning to end? (adapted from

sermons4kids.com/measuring_gods_love.htm. Used with permission.)

Alternate activity: Do you get report cards at school? What are they for? (*they measure how well you are doing*) If God gave us a report card, what sort of categories would it have? (*allow students to respond*) What grades do you think God would give us? (*Accept all responses, but help the children understand that God wants to give us all "A's" because God loves us and wants us to be the best that we can be. You could use the report card at the end of this lesson or prepare all-A report cards for each child ahead of time with categories such as kindness, courage, peace, forgiveness, and joy.*) (adapted from worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.com/2015/02/year-b-fourth-sunday-in-lent-march-15.html. Used with permission.)

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Today's scripture passage is about how much God loves us. Read together John 3:14–21 or "Everyone Needs a Bright Light" from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year B*, pp. 87–88.

The gospel is good news, and part of that good news is that God loves us no matter what. Read a story about unconditional love, or look one up on YouTube. Suggestions include *Mama, Do You Love Me?* by Barbara M. Joosse, *The Runaway Bunny* by Margaret Wise Brown, or *Guess How Much I Love You* by Sam McBratney. Alternatively, have children list people who love them and describe what those people do for them because of that love.

God loves us and wants what is best for us. Do you know what "grace" means?

We do not have to earn God's love. Similarly, we cannot do anything to lose God's love. Of course, we sometimes do things that God does not like, but God will always love us more than we can imagine. That is called grace. It's an unconditional love—love that we receive no matter what. Simply out of love, God offers us the gift of salvation through Jesus. Community of Christ describes salvation not only as the forgiveness of sin, but also being healed from separation, brokenness, and...violence. This healing is for everyone and can be ours through faith and repentance. Jesus represents our salvation; we know God's grace has no bounds, and God's love is greater than we can know (*Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition, p. 15).

Refer to the butcher paper you hung in a previous lesson. At the top of the fourth column, write "Week 4: Grace." Have the children create a class description underneath the words. Children can share and write what grace means to them. Alternatively, write the list on a marker board, chalkboard, or on a piece of paper.

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing

(35% of total lesson time)

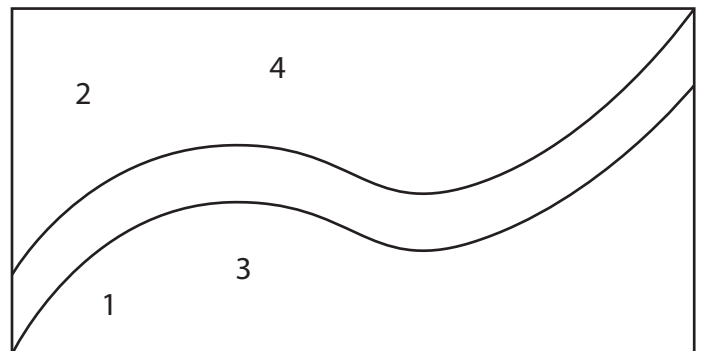
Community of Christ has nine Enduring Principles that define who we are as a faith community. One of those Enduring Principles is Grace and Generosity. God's grace is generous and unconditional. After receiving God's grace, we respond by generously and graciously sharing with others. God loves and forgives us despite our mistakes, and we should do the same for others.

Hand each child a cross copied from the end of this lesson. Have them cut out the cross, or do so yourself ahead of time.

God loves us so much God allowed God's son, Jesus, to come to earth as a human and teach us about love. Jesus' radical words of God's unconditional love that includes **all** people—no matter what—led to his crucifixion on a cross. Our challenge is to love others as God loves us. Sometimes we know people who are hard to like or even tolerate. But God calls us to graciously and generously show them love, too. Think of some people or groups of people whom you find difficult to love. Draw pictures or write their names on your cross as a reminder that God's love is unconditional and ours should be, too. (adapted from *worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.com/2015/02/year-b-fourth-sunday-in-lent-march-15.html*. Used with permission.)

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life" (John 3:16). Have the children repeat this scripture several times until they have it memorized. They can whisper it, shout it, say it with various accents, or say it in a high or low voice.

Give each child their large, colored poster paper created previously. Place a handprint Earth in the position marked "4." Have the children leave their papers in the classroom so you can add to them each week of Lent.



To make an Earth, paint the palm of one hand blue with some green splotches and place it on the poster paper. Alternatively, you can print out the Earth at the end of this lesson for children to color, cut out, and attach to poster.



If time allows, ask the children to report on the goals they wrote last week. What did they do this past week to fulfill Jesus' mission to abolish poverty and end suffering?

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived

(10% of total lesson time)

Faithful disciples respond to an increasing awareness of the abundant generosity of God by sharing according to the desires of their heart (Doctrine and Covenants 163:9). As disciples we share our lives in response to the overwhelming gifts God has given...God loves us with an everlasting love, with abundant grace and generosity, out of God's heart...We are called to also give from our hearts (*Of Water and Spirit*, p. 97).

Have each student brainstorm something he or she can do this week to practice grace and generosity (*reach out to someone with whom you have had a disagreement, try not to complain or gossip, sit or eat with someone you usually*

avoid). Each can write and finish the following sentence under his or her earth: "This week I will..."

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope

(5% of total lesson time)

Gather together and have the children state what they will do this week to generously share God's love. Offer a prayer of blessing and reconciliation for the names written on the crosses.

Invite children to sing "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands," thinking about how much God loves everyone, including each of them.



_____’s Report Card

Year: _____

Teacher: GOD

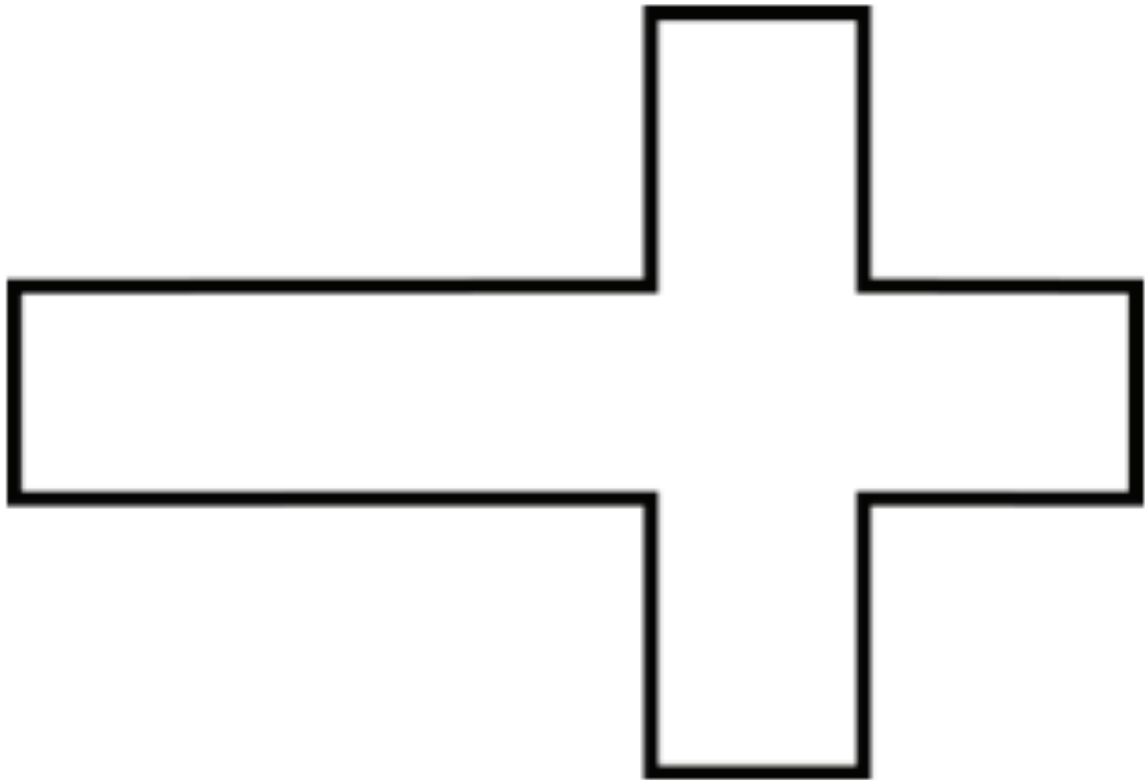
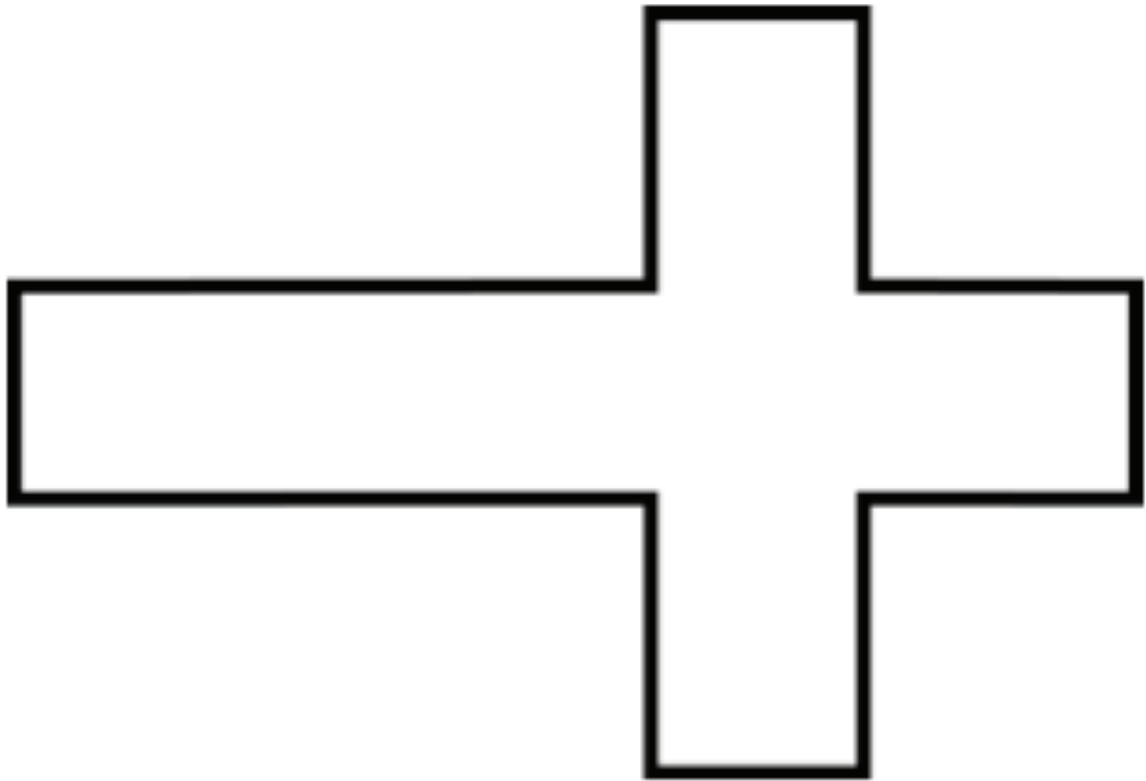
CLASS	GRADE
Joy	A
Courage	A
Kindness	A
Peace	A
Forgiveness	A
Love	A
Patience	A

_____’s Report Card

Year: _____

Teacher: GOD

CLASS	GRADE
Joy	A
Courage	A
Kindness	A
Peace	A
Forgiveness	A
Love	A
Patience	A



FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

LESSON 16
18 March 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: John 12:20–33

Lesson Focus: God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit make up a loving, eternal community known as the Trinity. Jesus planted the seed to let the love of God and grow through all of creation.

Objectives

The learners will...

- examine the scripture passage.
- explore the concept of the Trinity.
- discuss ways to spread the love of God.

Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended) or *Lectionary Story Bible, Year B*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2008, ISBN 9781551455648)
- Apple and knife (you may use one apple to demonstrate or several apples to pass out as snacks afterward)

- (Optional) craft sticks (three per child), glue, and string or ribbon
- (Optional) Trinity shamrock, included with lesson
- Class poster created for Lent
- World map
- Large colored posters created earlier (Have extras available for new students.)
- Brown and green paint
- (Optional) plant template, included with lesson
- Markers or crayons
- Pens or pencils
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for John 12:20–33 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 55–56, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Greet children as they enter and ask them to form a circle. Invite them to sing “Flower Garden” (lyrics included with lesson) to the tune of “The Farmer in the Dell.”

Take the children on a mini field trip outdoors to find various plants. Examine the plants to find roots and seeds. Discuss how each seed found its resting place, grew into a plant, and then produced more seeds to make more plants. For more information about how seeds are dispersed, visit <http://theseedsite.co.uk/dispersal.html>. Alternatively you can show pictures of plants or discuss plants the children are familiar with.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

In today’s scripture passage, Jesus compared himself to a seed that must be planted in order to grow. He told the disciples he was going to die so that bigger, more amazing things could happen.

Read together John 12:20–33 or “A Seed Planted in the Ground” from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year B*, pp. 90–91.

What are some things that must change or end in order for something new to begin? Allow time for children to respond. (*Ideas include caterpillars, school years, an exciting game, vacation, or other experience.*) Sometimes

the end of one thing only means it's time for the beginning of something else. Jesus used the metaphor of a seed because people at that time were very familiar with farming and plants.

When Jesus compared himself to a seed that must be planted, what was he trying to say? (*he would die to rise again, he would be planted so his message could spread*)

Jesus came to Earth to teach us more about God. Through Jesus we see that God is full of love, grace, mercy, and peace. Jesus' suffering on the cross is not needless suffering, but suffering done in love for the sake of others. Jesus died on the cross not because God needs to literally replace our mistakes with a punishment. Instead Jesus gave himself out of love so that God could "reconcile all Creation, ...to draw the world close in the wide circle of transforming love" (*Sermon and Class Helps*, p. 55). This is one example how Jesus and God interact, but we are also blessed with the Holy Spirit.

- Have you heard of the Trinity? What do you think that it means?
- In what ways do you experience God? In what ways do you experience Jesus Christ? In what ways do you experience Holy Spirit?

Cut an apple in half and let the children view the different parts of the fruit.

An apple has a core (including seeds), meaty flesh, and skin. They are all separate parts, but they are still part of the whole apple. This is like the loving community of the Trinity: God, Jesus Christ, and Holy Spirit.

Give each child three craft sticks. Write "God" on one stick, "Jesus Christ" on another, and "Holy Spirit" on the third. Glue the sticks together at the ends to form a triangle. When the glue dries, tie a string or ribbon through the triangle to serve as a hanger. Alternatively, have the children color the Trinity shamrock at the end of the lesson.

Refer to the class poster you hung in a previous lesson. At the top of the fifth column, write "Week 5: Trinity." Have the children create a class description underneath the words. Children can share and write what Trinity means to them. Alternatively, write the list on a marker board, chalkboard, or a piece of paper.

3 RESPOND

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

Show the children a map of the world. Locate Jerusalem and other places mentioned in the Bible story. Talk about

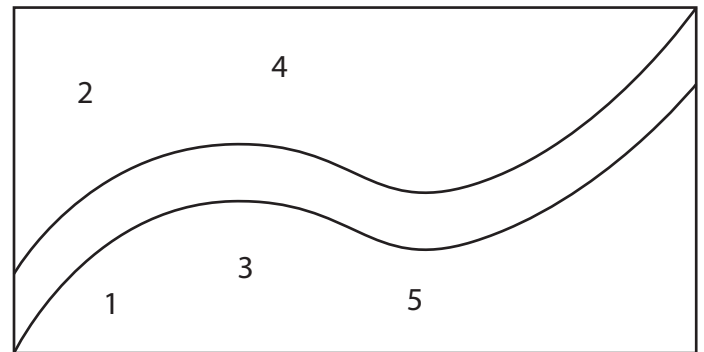
the relatively small geographic area that Jesus traveled. Locate your home on the map and measure how far it is from Jerusalem.

Jesus' message spread all the way over here! Where else do you think Jesus' message has traveled? Community of Christ has 250,000 members in nearly 60 nations.

Give children a list of countries in which Community of Christ has a presence, found at www.CofChrist.org/a-worldwide-church. Locate some of these countries and discuss their distance from Jerusalem.

Though Jesus' message of love and teachings about God started small like a seed, over time they grew and spread so that many more people knew about God's love. It can be overwhelming to think about all the people in the world who need to know about God, or all of the problems in the world that need to be solved. After all, you are just one person. However, remember that Jesus was one person and he was able to talk about God to a few people, who talked to a few more people, who talked to a few more people. And that is how God's message of love spreads! It spreads through many individuals each doing a few small things to change the world.

Give each child their large, colored poster paper created previously. Place a handprint plant in the position marked "5." Have the children leave their papers in the classroom so you can add to them each week of Lent.



To make a plant, paint the palm of one hand brown and place it on the paper pointing down with fingers spread. Paint the other hand green and place it fingers pointing up and spread apart on the paper so the palms of each hand overlap slightly. Embellish as desired with crayons or markers. Alternatively, you can print out the plant template at the end of this lesson for children to color, cut out, and attach to poster.



If time allows, ask the children to report on the goals they wrote last week. What did they do this past week to practice grace and generosity?

4 SEND

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

Read Doctrine and Covenants 162:7a.

There are many lives waiting to hear the redeeming words of the gospel, or to be lifted from hopelessness by the hands of loving servants. But they will be lost to you without the generous response of disciples who share from their own bounty that others may know the joys of the kingdom.

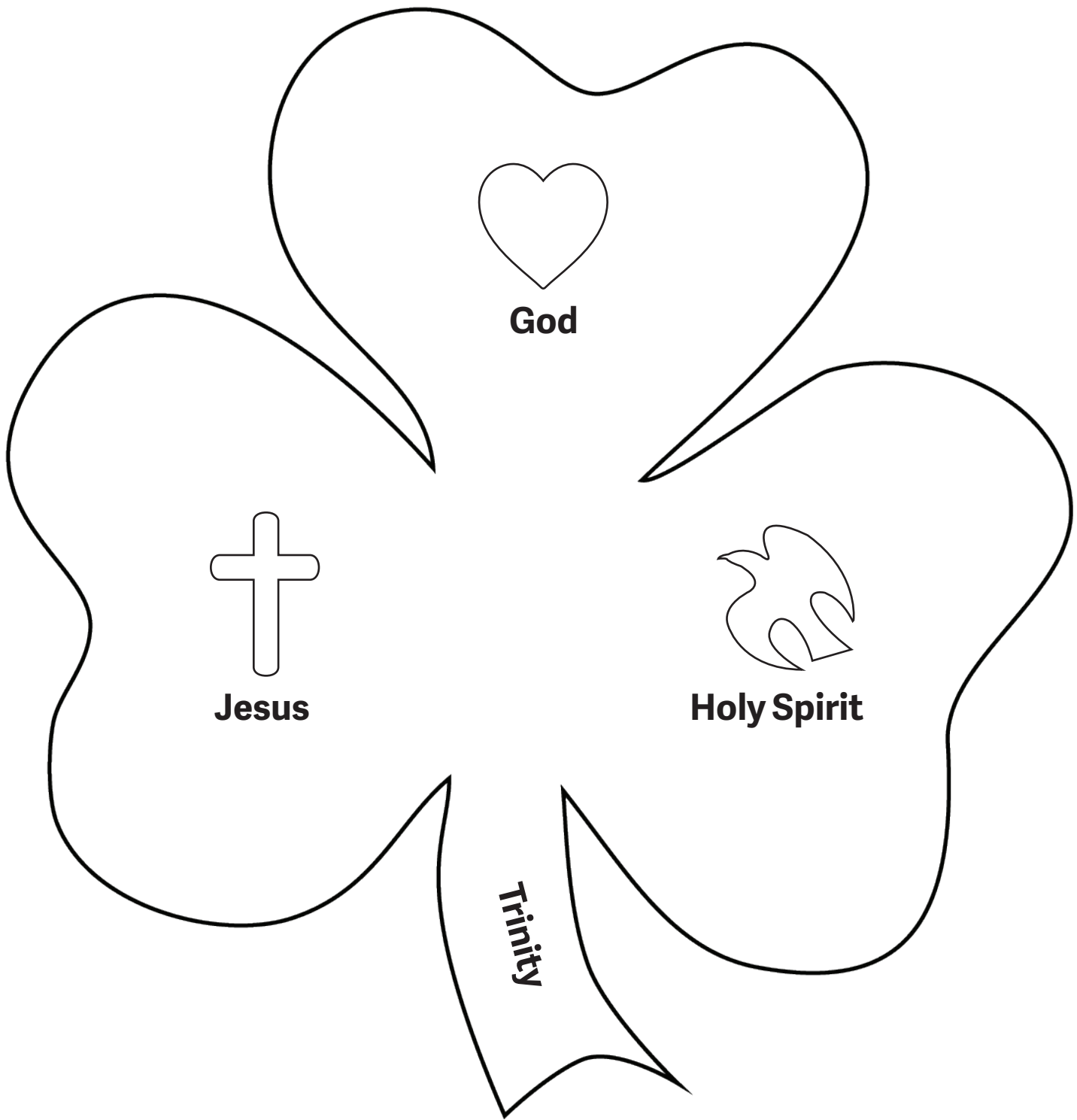
Have each student brainstorm someone with whom he or she can spread the news of Jesus this week. Each can write and complete the following sentence under his or her plant: "This week I will tell _____ about Jesus."

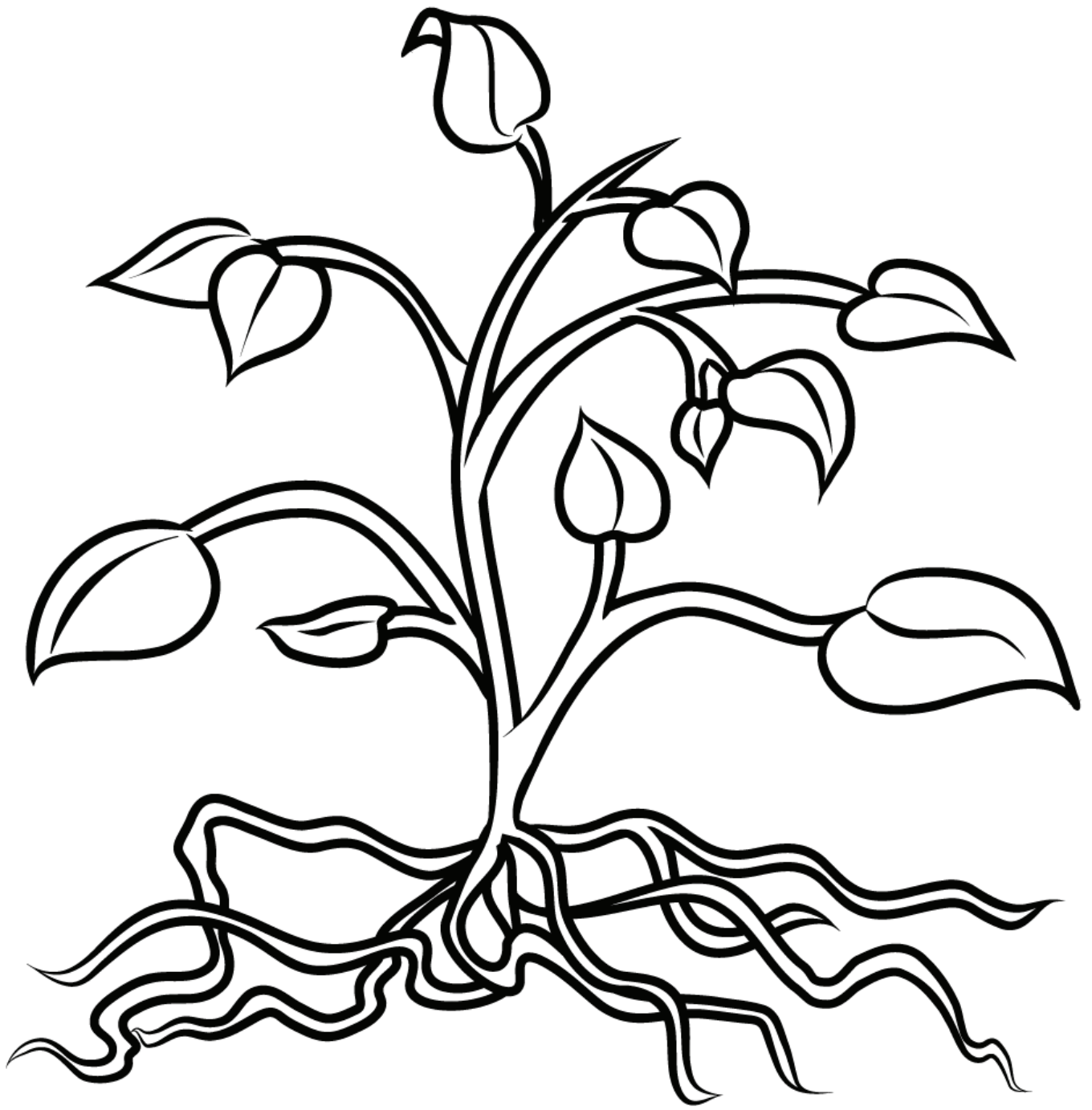
5 BLESS

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

Gather together and have the children say the name of someone they want to tell about Jesus. Offer a prayer of blessing for those who were mentioned.

Invite children to sing "In the Bulb There Is a Flower" CCS 561, thinking about how God's love can spread if we respond wholeheartedly.





PALM SUNDAY

LESSON 17
25 March 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 11:1–11

Lesson Focus: Jesus entered Jerusalem humbly, portraying peace and compassion.

Objectives

The learners will...

- discover how our mannerisms and actions portray different expectations.
- discuss the meaning of the scripture story.
- define the term Messiah.
- explore how we can pursue peace and act with compassion.

Supplies

- Scrap paper or random worksheets (see the Gather section)
- Bible (NRSV recommended) or *Lectionary Story Bible, Year B*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2008, ISBN 9781551455648)

- Jesus and knight pictures, included with lesson
- Class poster created for Lent
- Small, sweet treats (like mini marshmallows) and ice cubes
- Large colored posters created earlier (Have extras available for new students.)
- Green paint
- (Optional) palm branch template, included with lesson
- Markers or crayons
- Pens or pencils
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Mark 1:1–11 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 57–58, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

In the manner of a drill sergeant, greet children as they enter and instruct them to form a circle. Be direct and strict, but not rude or mean. “Hi, Tom! Sit here!” Continue to give gruff directions to the class for a minute or two. “Take out a pencil! Fill out this paper! Write your name and today’s date!”

- Do you notice anything different about how I am acting this morning?

Discuss how the children felt and how willing (or not) they were to follow your directions. Explain how it matters what words you use, how you present yourself, and how you speak to people.

Allow each of the children an opportunity to play drill sergeant by playing a version of the game Simon Says. The person who is “it” can gruffly or directly instruct the rest of the class to perform a task (*for example, jump on one foot, bend over and touch toes*), but the class does not have to obey. When the person who is “it” instructs the class politely (*for example, “Will you please jump on one foot?”*) the class should follow those instructions.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration
and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Today's scripture passage tells about when Jesus entered Jerusalem and how he chose to present himself.

Read together Mark 11:1–11 or "Jesus Goes to Jerusalem" from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year B*, p.95.

Jesus made specific choices how he entered the city of Jerusalem. He had been there before so he was able to have a donkey ready and waiting for him. In ancient Palestine, donkeys were noble creatures. Jesus specifically chose a donkey. Kings rode horses into battle, but kings rode donkeys when they came in peace.

Display the pictures of Jesus on a donkey and a king on a camel found at the end of this lesson.

- How would you describe the knight? What is he ready to do? What message is he trying to convey?
- How would you describe Jesus? What is he ready to do? What message is he trying to convey?
- What are the differences between Jesus and the king?

Like we discussed earlier, the message is important. The crowds in Jerusalem gathered around Jesus as he entered, shouting "Hosanna!" which meant "O, Save." They thought Jesus was coming to literally save them from their oppressors and to physically drive away the government and armies that were making their lives difficult. They hoped for war, not peace; they hoped their persecutors would find judgment and punishment, not grace and forgiveness. But they completely misunderstood Jesus (*Sermon and Class Helps*, p. 57).

- Have you heard Jesus described as the Messiah? What do you think that means?

The Messiah is the one chosen to save a world in need. But what does it mean to save the world? Does it mean to stop bad things from happening? (No.) In the first week of Lent, we learned about shalom. Who remembers what that means? (Refer to your description on the butcher paper.) Shalom means a fullness or completeness of peace. Jesus did not come as the Messiah to lead us into battle against our enemies. Jesus showed us how to live a life of shalom in community, to live God's way instead of our own.

Refer to the class poster you hung in a previous lesson. At the top of the sixth column, write "Week 6: Messiah." Have the children create a class description underneath the words. Children can share and write what Messiah means to them. Alternatively, write the list on a marker board, chalkboard, or a piece of paper.

3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from
hearing to doing

(35% of total lesson time)

Invite the children to sing the campfire song "Alleluia, Praise Ye the Lord." To make the song a friendly competition, divide the class in half and have one half sing "Alleluia" and the other half sing "Praise Ye the Lord." The idea is to get the children excited.

- Have you ever been to a parade?
- What was the parade celebrating?
- Describe the atmosphere and your feelings.

As we discussed, the people of Jerusalem celebrated Jesus' entrance because they thought Jesus was going to lead the fight against those who threatened the Jewish people. But Jesus turned that expectation upside-down. Instead, God is full of love and compassion. "Because God created us (and saw that all was good), we can look for the good in others" (*Of Water and Spirit*, p. 33). "Understanding the basic goodness built into creation impacts how we treat one another and the world" (*Of Water and Spirit*, p. 29). If we remember this, we can treat everyone with the same love and compassion that God shows us.

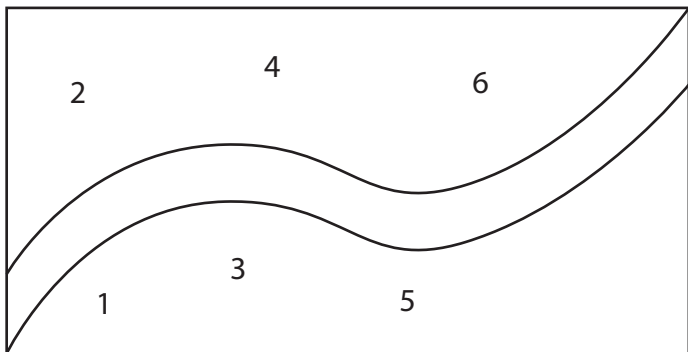
Give each child a small, sweet treat to eat, like a mini marshmallow. Ask the children to describe how it tastes. Next, have each child place an ice cube in his or her mouth for as long as they can stand. Immediately after they remove the ice cube, give them another treat to eat. Again, ask them to describe how the treat tastes. Because their tongue is so cold, they won't be able to taste the sweetness!

God created and loves each of us. All people are made good by God, just like the treats were all sweet. But sometimes we let our own thoughts and opinions get in the way of how we see other people, just like the cold ice cube kept you from tasting the sweet treat. Jesus taught us to love others as God does, so we should strive to remove our attitudes about other people (the ice cubes) and see people how God sees them (the sweet treat before the ice).

(adapted from: <http://playeatgrow.com/2013/12/helping-kids-to-begin-to-notice-needs.html/>. Used with permission.)

"Because God created each of us...with great love and compassion, we can share that love and compassion with others. We can help create shalom" (*Of Water and Spirit*, p. 32). One of our Enduring Principles is the Pursuit of Peace. To pursue means to seek after—to set it as a goal. So our goal is to create peace on Earth. This is why Jesus' entrance was humble rather than triumphant. "Jesus Christ taught us to live a life of peace and caring" (*Of Water and Spirit*, p. 33).

Give each child their large, colored poster paper created previously. Place a handprint palm branch in the position marked "6." Have the children leave their papers in the classroom so you can add to them each week of Lent.



To make a palm branch, draw a brown or green line (branch) on the paper. Paint the palm of one hand green and stamp it several times on either side of the branch overlapping the branch slightly. Alternatively, you can print out the palm branch template at the end of this lesson for children to color, cut out, and attach to poster.

If time allows, ask the children to report on the goals they wrote last week. Whom did they tell about Jesus this past week?

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived

(10% of total lesson time)

The Good Samaritan is a story Jesus told to demonstrate true compassion. A man was attacked and left injured by the side of the road. A priest and a Levite both passed by the injured man without offering assistance. But a Samaritan stopped to help the man get safely to a hotel and receive medical attention. The Samaritan and the injured man came from very different backgrounds, yet the Samaritan felt compassion for the man. He saw through God's eyes that the injured man was in need of help and chose to act with love.

Have each student brainstorm someone or a group of people she or he has a hard time liking (*someone who is different, a group of people who think or act differently, someone who is negative or complains a lot*). Remind them that Jesus taught us to "live together...and care about one another, despite [our] differences" (*Of Water and Spirit*, p. 32). Each can write and complete the following sentence under his or her palm branch: "This week I will treat _____ with compassion and love."

5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope

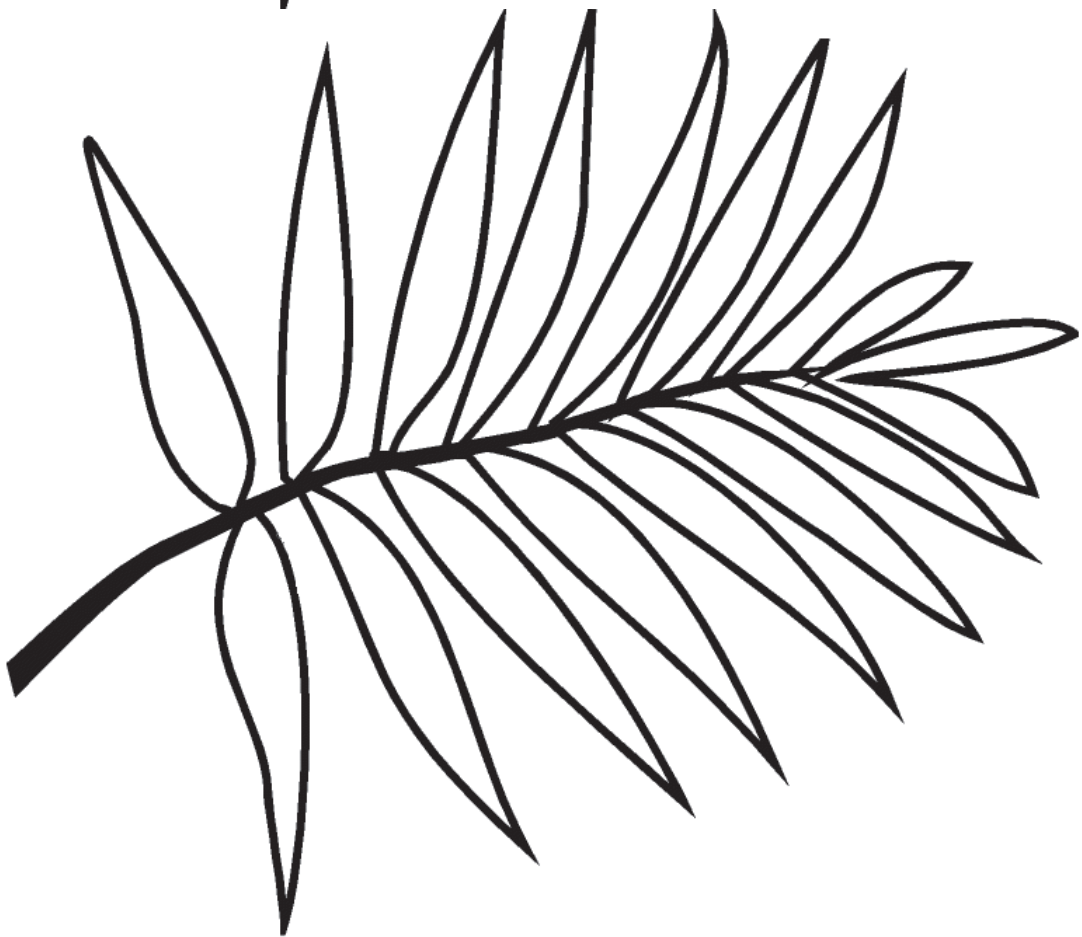
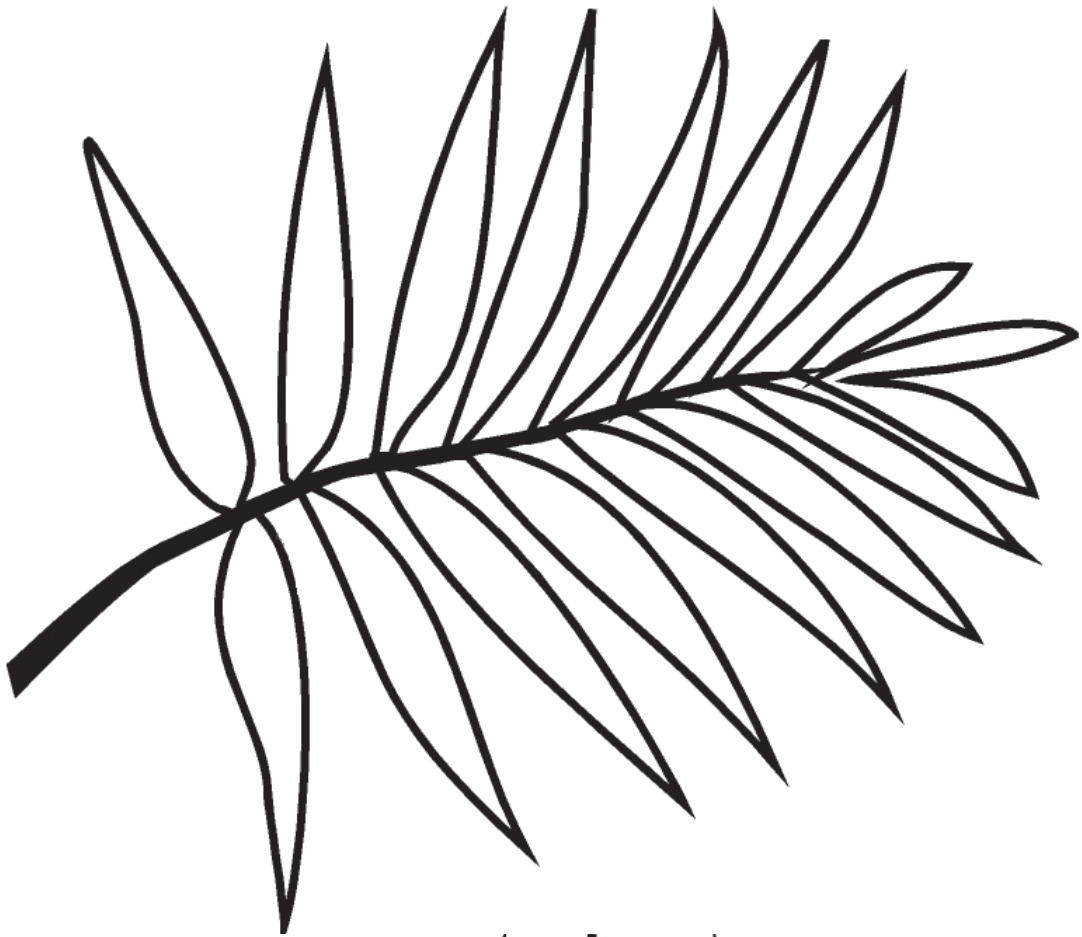
(5% of total lesson time)

Gather together and have the children say the name of someone they want to see through God's eyes—as a beautiful part of creation. Offer a prayer of blessing for those who were mentioned.

Invite children to sing "Sanna, Sannanina" CCS 469, imagining they are in a crowd welcoming the Messiah. You can learn the tune and pronunciations at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CWOqkg5JdHk>.







EASTER SUNDAY

LESSON 18
1 April 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Mark 16:1–8 and John 20:1–18

Lesson Focus: Mary and others experienced the empty tomb; the Resurrection story continues today as we live Jesus' mission.

Objectives

The learners will...

- discuss how expectations can affect how people respond to circumstances.
- explore and compare two scripture texts.
- learn about our sacred story.
- identify ways to live in mission.

Supplies

- (Optional) video *Will You Pass the Attention Test?* found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=U1saQoMRD8A
- Bible (NRSV recommended) or *Lectionary Story Bible, Year B*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2008, ISBN 9781551455648)

- Pack of stick gum prepared ahead of time (see Engage section)
- Large colored posters created earlier (Have extras available for new students.)
- Black, yellow, and gray paint
- (Optional) empty tomb template, included with lesson
- Class poster created for Lent
- Markers or crayons
- Pens or pencils
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Mark 16:1–8 and John 20:1–18 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 64–67, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Before the children arrive for class, move things around in your classroom. Reorient a table, turn chairs upside-down, or put supplies in different places. Try to make the room look as shockingly different as possible. Observe the reactions of the students as they enter.

- What is the matter? Why do you look so surprised?

Discuss how the children felt and what they thought when they first entered the room. Lead them to understand that the room did not meet their expectations.

Show the video *Will You Pass the Attention Test?* found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U1saQoMRD8A>.

Discuss what the children saw and what they didn't notice. Were you expecting something to happen with the car and missed what happened with the buildings? Alternatively, ask the children to share times when they had specific expectations that were not met. When we have certain expectations, it's hard for our minds to switch gears if something else happens.

2 ENGAGE

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

Today's scripture passage tells about some women visiting Jesus' tomb after he died, but their expectations were altered by the reality of the empty tomb.

Read together Mark 16:1–8 or "Jesus Is Alive Again" from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year B*, pp. 100–101.

This passage in Mark begins three days after Jesus died. Mary Magdalene and the other women came to the tomb to prepare Jesus' body and to mourn his death. But instead they found an empty tomb and were told Jesus was back in Galilee. Because this was not what they expected, they simply could not understand. In terror, they ran away and told no one what happened.

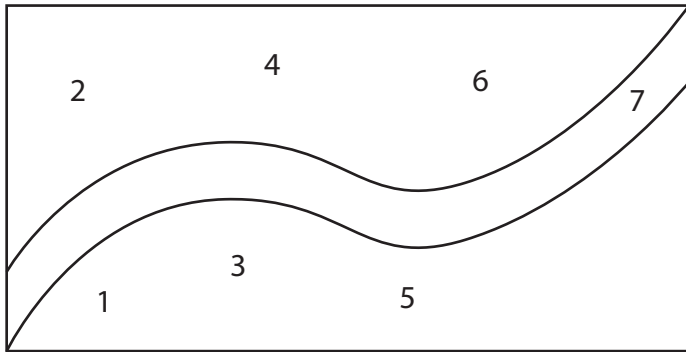
Before class, prepare a pack of gum with empty wrappers. Offer the children sticks of gum. Observe and discuss their reactions to the empty wrappers.

Directions can be found here, beginning at 4:05: <https://dskidsermons.com/2015/03/04/april5th2015/eastersunday/>. Used with permission.

Just like Mary Magdalene, you were focused on the shock of getting an empty wrapper instead of a stick of gum. It probably took you a moment before you started to try to figure out how it happened. This is an example of how confused Mary Magdalene was and possibly why she didn't tell anyone what she saw.

(You may choose to offer the children actual gum now or later in the lesson.)

Give each child their large, colored poster paper created previously. Place a handprint empty tomb in the position marked "7." Send the completed Lenten paths home with the children today.



To make an empty tomb, paint the fingers of one hand yellow and the palm of that hand black. Place the hand on the paper fingers-up and spread wide. Draw a brown "hillside" between the black "tomb" and yellow "sunrays."

After washing the hand, make a fist and paint the small surface grey. Place the fist to the side of the black hole to create a stone that has been rolled away. Alternatively, you can print out the empty tomb template at the end of this lesson for children to color, cut out, and attach to poster.



If time allows, ask the children to report on the goals they wrote last week. Whom did they choose to treat with compassion and love this past week?

3 RESPOND

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

Most stories that have been around for a while have different versions. There are many books written that tell the story of the "Three Little Pigs." Some versions change the characters; some add or take away specific scenes. All of them tell the basic story that two characters built houses out of materials that the villain could destroy, so they had to take refuge in the strong house built by the third character. Though the specifics are different, the broad message and lesson remains the same. The same goes for Bible stories. If you read the same story in different books of the Bible, you will hear different particulars and perspectives. Now we will read the story of the empty tomb as told in the book of John.

Read together the version of John 20:1–18 that follows or "Mary of Magdala Sees Jesus" from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year A*, pp. 98–99. You may choose to act out the story.

When the Sabbath was over, Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices to embalm Jesus. Soon after sunrise on the first day of the week they went to the tomb, and they said to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the door?" But they found that the stone, although very large, had been rolled to one side. On entering the tomb they saw a young man in a white robe sitting on the right, and they trembled and were afraid. But he said to them, "Do not be afraid. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen; he is not here. See the place where he was laid! But go and tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you.'"

Then they remembered Jesus' words, and returning from the tomb they told these things to the eleven disciples and to all the others; but to them, the story seemed to be nonsense, and they were not believed. Peter, however, ran to the tomb, but when he looked in, he saw only the linen bandages; and he went home wondering what had happened.

But Mary of Magdala stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she stooped down and looked into the tomb and saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said, "Because they have taken away my Master and I do not know where they have laid him!"

When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. "Woman," said he, "Why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?" Supposing that he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned to him and cried out, "Master!" Jesus said, "Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and to your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary went to the disciples with the news, "I have seen the Master," and to tell them what he had said to her.

—http://biblehub.com/childrens/Jesus_Conquers_Death.htm

- What are some differences you noticed in this version of the story? (Focus on the fact that Mary sees the resurrected Christ and runs to tell everyone what she saw.)

"Those who witnessed the resurrection appearances did not keep silent. They were transformed." These testimonies changed the world. "Followers continue to encounter the Risen Christ to this day. Sharing that testimony still makes a difference. Resurrection is not a one-time event, but is a daily event that occurs as people receive God's grace, love, and new life through Jesus" (*Sermon and Class Helps*, p. 64). As we feel God's guidance and respond to God's mission, we help continue the resurrection promise. Community of Christ believes that sacred story is the "unfolding drama of God's reconciling work in the world"

(*Of Water and Spirit*, p. 18). The story started a long time ago, but it is not complete. We all are characters in the book, and more characters and plot twists are being added every day.

- What does the sacred story mean to you?
- What is your part of the sacred story?

Refer to the class poster you hung in a previous lesson. At the top of the seventh column, write "Week 7: Our Story." Have the children create a class description underneath the words. Children can share and write what Our Story means to them. This will complete the poster. Alternatively, write the list on a marker board, chalkboard, or a piece of paper.

4 SEND

Explores how the lesson might be lived

(10% of total lesson time)

For the Resurrection story to continue, we must act as disciples and continue Jesus' teachings. "Following Jesus Christ into mission means living as he did—it means being generous and compassionate, sharing witness and ministry, and living in a community of shalom" (*Of Water and Spirit*, p. 18).

Have each student brainstorm something they can do to fulfill the mission of Jesus (*invite others to church, help someone in need, be a role model for a friend or sibling, stand up for someone who is being picked on*). Each can write and complete the following sentence under his or her empty tomb: "God calls me to _____."

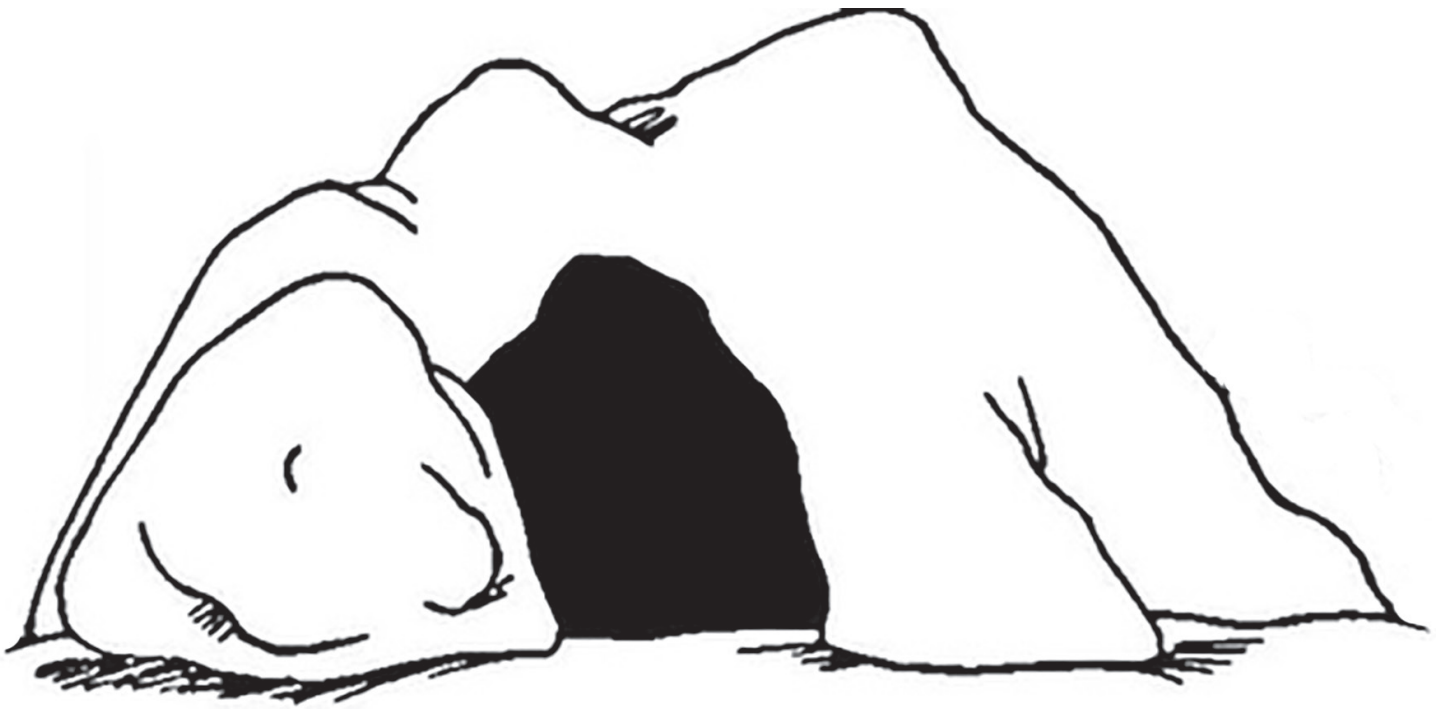
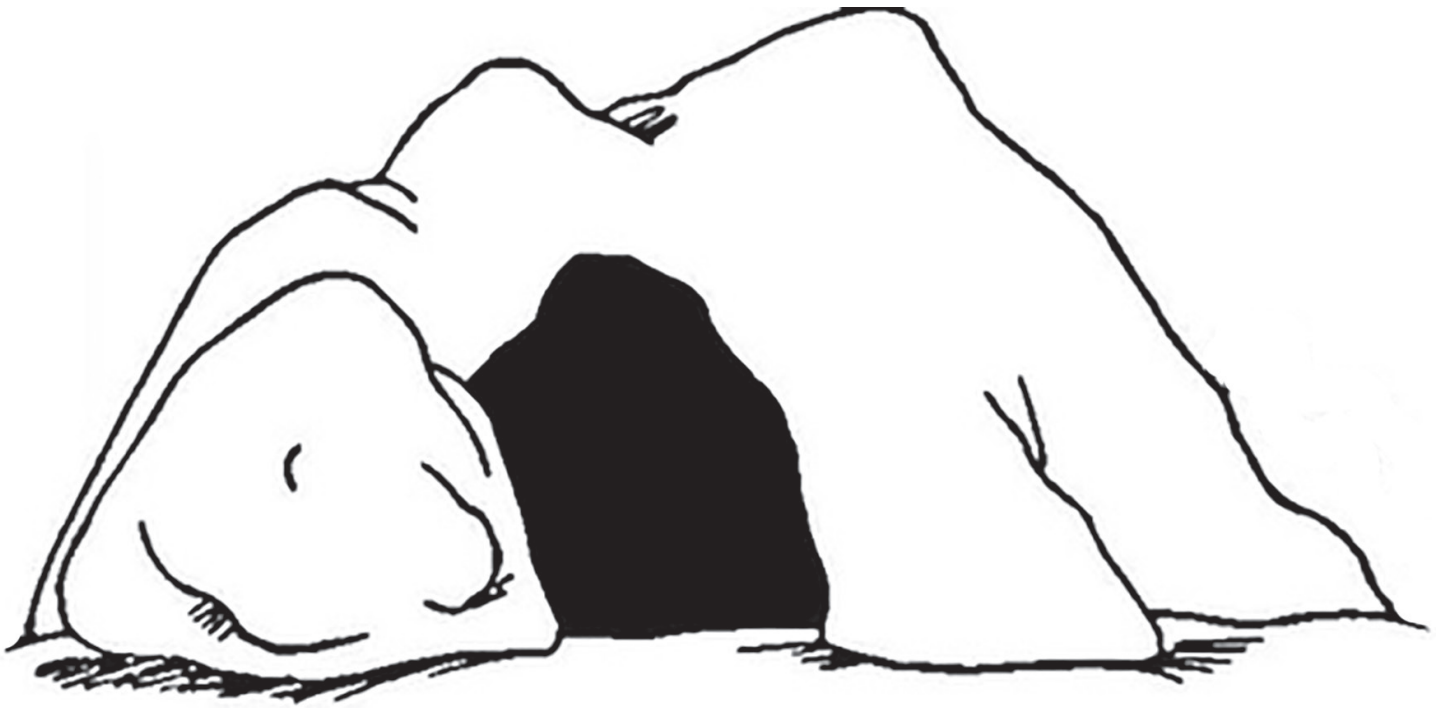
5 BLESS

Time of prayer, praise, blessing, and hope

(5% of total lesson time)

Gather together to read "That Easter Morn, at Break of Day" CCS 480. Have the children take turns reading the stanzas and sing the chorus together.

Let the children state what God is calling them to do. Start a circle prayer with each child asking God to be with them as they follow Jesus in mission.



SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

LESSON 19
8 April 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: John 20:19–31

Lesson Focus: Jesus appears to the disciples. Thomas doubts Jesus' resurrection until he sees proof.

Objectives

The learners will...

- understand that doubt is part of each person's faith journey.
- explore the Enduring Principle Pursue Peace.
- tell ways they can pursue peace in the world.

Supplies

- 8 ½ x 11 sheet of paper for each student

- Tape
- (Optional) crayons or markers
- Small ball, beanbag, or other object, possibly with a peace sign on it
- Music or a timer
- *Lectionary Story Bible, Year B*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2008, ISBN 9781551455648)
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for John 20:19–31 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 68–69, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Play a game called Doubt. Tell the children three things about yourself. Two of the things should be true and one should be false. For example, you might say, "I have three brothers. I have been to the ocean. My favorite color is blue." After each statement, the children should say, "That is true," if they think the statement is true. They should say, "I doubt it," if they think the statement is false.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Today's scripture passage is about a time when someone doubted whether something was true.

Read "Thomas Asks Questions" from the *Lectionary Story Bible: Year B*, pp. 102–103, or John 10:19–21 NRSV.

Discuss:

- How did Thomas act when he was told Jesus had risen from the dead?
- What did it take for him to believe?
- When have you doubted something someone told you?
- What did it take for you to believe?
- When have you had doubts about God?
- What do you think Jesus is saying about these doubts?

Reassure children that doubt is a normal part of faith. In our walk with Jesus, there will be times when we doubt he is with us, or times when our faith is shaken. Jesus says, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." Jesus assures us that we will be blessed, even in our doubts. God loves us and is with us, no matter what.

Thomas Tube

Thomas needed to see the holes in Jesus' hands in order to believe that it was really Jesus. This craft creates an optical illusion that makes it appear that there is a hole in your hand when you look through a rolled piece of paper.

Materials

- 8 ½ x 11 sheet of paper for each student
- Piece of tape for each student
- Crayons or markers (optional)

Directions

- Roll the piece of paper lengthwise into a narrow tube.
- Tape it to keep it from unrolling.
- Hold the tube with your left hand and look through it with your left eye.
- Hold your right hand with the palm flat, facing your face, in front of your right eye. Slowly move your right hand along the side of the tube until you see a hole in your right hand. Try it again with the tube on your right eye. For some people, one eye works better than the other for this trick.
- For more details: <https://www.exploratorium.edu/snacks/hole-in-your-hand>
- (Optional) children use crayons or markers to decorate the tube.



came to bring us peace. One of our Enduring Principles is the Pursuit of Peace. "Led by the Holy Spirit, we work with God and others to restore peace...to creation" (*Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition, p. 13). Jesus wants us to feel peace, even when we have doubts about our faith, ourselves, or other people. Jesus also wants us to share the peace of Jesus Christ with the world.

Pass the Peace

Sit in a circle. When the music starts, children begin passing an object such as a ball or beanbag. When the music stops, the child holding the object tells the group one way he or she could share the peace of Christ or pursue peace. The group can then offer compliments or affirmations for that child. Restart the music and continue the game without eliminating anyone.

4 SEND

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

Ask the children to close their eyes and picture the story as you reread John 20:26–29:

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

Discuss:

- What are you still wondering?
- What would you tell a friend about this scripture passage?
- What did you learn today about peace? Faith? Doubt? Something else?

5 BLESS

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

Sing "Put Peace into Each Other's Hands" CCS 309 or "I've Got Peace like a River."

3 RESPOND

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

When Jesus first appeared to the disciples before he appeared to Thomas, he said,

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (John 20:19–21).

In *Community of Christ*, one of our Basic Beliefs is that "Jesus, the Prince of Peace, came to preach the kingdom and to be our peace through the cross" (*Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition, p. 16). That means Jesus

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

LESSON 20
15 April 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Luke 24:36b–48

Lesson Focus: Jesus appears to the disciples and the promise of the Spirit.

Objectives

The learners will...

- understand that Jesus' disciples moved past fear to better understand Jesus.
- respond to Jesus' command to be witnesses of Jesus by sharing the good news of Christ with others.

Supplies

- Yarn or tape down the center of the room

- White paper
- A white crayon for each child
- Watercolor paints and paintbrushes
- Dominoes
- *Lectionary Story Bible, Year B*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2008, ISBN 9781551455648)

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Luke 24:36b–48 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, p. 70, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Draw a line down the center of the room, or mark the center of the room with a piece of yarn or tape. Invite children to stand on one side or the other based on their answers to the following questions:

- Are you more afraid of snakes or spiders? (*Stand in the center if you are not afraid of either.*)
- Are you more afraid of the dark or high places?
- Are you more afraid of getting lost or losing something?

People are afraid of all sorts of things. Tell someone next to you something you are afraid of.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

Today's scripture passage is about a time Jesus' disciples were very afraid. The disciples knew Jesus had been killed, and people had been telling stories about seeing Jesus alive again. The disciples were afraid; was Jesus a ghost or a spirit? It didn't make sense to them.

Read "That's Why These Things Happened" from the *Lectionary Story Bible: Year B*, pp. 105–106, or Luke 24:36b–48 (NRSV). Invite children to act out the story, playing the parts of Jesus and the disciples. Another option is to use small toys or figures to represent the characters in the story as you tell it.

Discuss:

- Why were the disciples so afraid of Jesus?
- How else do you think the disciples were feeling? (*hopeful, confused, amazed*)
- What did Jesus do to prove that he was really alive and not a ghost?
- What did Jesus do after the disciples knew he was alive? (*studied scripture with them*)
- What did Jesus tell the disciples to go and do? (*tell others about Jesus*)

Jesus Appears

Invite children to draw a picture of Jesus with a white crayon on white paper. When they finish, let them paint over the entire drawing with watercolor paints. The white drawing of Jesus will “appear” on the paper through the paint.

3 RESPOND

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

When Jesus sat down with the disciples, he talked to them about scriptures. What does the word “scripture” mean to you? In *Community of Christ*, scripture is “writing inspired by God’s Spirit” (*Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition, p. 15). Our church’s foundational scripture is the Bible. We also use the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants as scripture.

When Jesus talked to the disciples about the scriptures, he helped them understand the scriptures more deeply. When they were no longer afraid, they were able to learn more about Jesus and go tell others about Jesus.

Discuss:

- When have your fears or doubts kept you from understanding God? Maybe children have been too

afraid to ask a question in Sunday school or afraid to ask for help when they needed it.

- When have your fears or doubts kept you from helping others or sharing the peace of Jesus Christ? Maybe children have been too fearful to stand up to a bully or too afraid to befriend a new student.

4 SEND

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

In today’s scripture passage, we read that Jesus doesn’t want us to be afraid. We read that when we overcome our fears we can learn more about God and go out and help others. It’s amazing to think that Christianity started with Jesus and the disciples all those years ago. After Jesus said, “You are witnesses of these things,” they went out and told others about Jesus. Then those people told others, and so on until today. It is like a row of dominoes. One falls and touches the next, and the next, and the next. Let’s try it out!

Let children explore and play with dominoes. Discuss how each of us makes a difference to the people we encounter. If dominoes are not available, children can stack blocks or even line up rows of sticks or cards. Discuss how moving or changing one part affects the whole, just as their peaceful actions affect others around them.

5 BLESS

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

Invite children to complete the sentence: “I was afraid, but Jesus helps me feel _____.”

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

LESSON 21
4 February 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: John 10:11–18

Lesson Focus: Jesus, the Good Shepherd

Objectives

The learners will...

- hear the story of the Good Shepherd and describe how a good shepherd takes care of his sheep.
- learn to listen to God's voice just as sheep listen to their shepherd.

Supplies

- Cotton balls or white pom-poms

- Small, rectangular wood blocks (if not available, small rocks or clothes pins will work)
- Bendable drinking straws or chenille stems
- Googly eyes (if not available, permanent markers will work)
- *Lectionary Story Bible, Year B*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2008, ISBN 9781551455648)

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for John 10:11–18 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 71–72, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Play a listening game. Tell the children to do something, but not to do the action until you say, "Go." Examples:

- Jump two times. Go.
- Rub your tummy. Go.
- Turn around one time. Go.
- Clap three times. Go.
- Shake hands with a friend. Go.
- Make a silly face. Go.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

In the listening game we just played, you had to listen carefully to the leader so you would know what to do and when to do it. In our scripture passage today, we will learn about how disciples need to listen to Jesus to know what to do and when to do it.

Read John 10:11–18 or "Sheep and Shepherds" from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year B*, p. 109.

Discuss:

- How is Jesus like a shepherd?
- How are we like the sheep?

- Why is Jesus like a “good shepherd”? What does a good shepherd do for his or her sheep?
- Why is it important for sheep to listen to the shepherd?
- Why is it important for us to listen to Jesus?

The Good Shepherd

Hide several cotton balls or white pom-poms around the room when children are not looking. For this game, children pretend to be the Good Shepherd as they look for their lost sheep (the cotton balls). Remind children that just as a good shepherd cares about his sheep and loves his sheep, God cares about each of us and loves us.

3 RESPOND

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

Sheep and Shepherd

Have children create a shepherd by gluing googly eyes on a small rectangular block of wood. If wood blocks are not available, children can use clothes pins or even small rocks. If googly eyes are not available, children can draw a face on the block with permanent marker. Children can use a bottle cap or piece of cloth as a hat or head covering for the shepherd. They can use part of a bendable straw or a chenille stem for the shepherd’s staff. Children create sheep by gluing googly eyes on a few cotton balls. Children can use the shepherd and sheep to retell the story of the Good Shepherd.



4 SEND

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

Listen to Me

In this listening game, children practice listening to Jesus like the sheep listen to the Good Shepherd. Stand at one end of the room and have children stand at the other end. If you say something Jesus would say, they take a step closer to you. If you say something Jesus would not say, they should take a step away from you. When all children are near you, end the lesson with a time of blessing. Possible statements for the game:

- Love your neighbor.
- Love God.
- Go ahead and steal it; no one is looking.
- Help your friend.
- You need to be first.
- If you have extra, give some to someone who is in need.
- Treat others the way you want to be treated.
- Make responsible choices.
- Pursue peace.
- It’s OK to lie just a little bit.
- God loves you.

5 BLESS

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

Say a prayer of thanks for the Good Shepherd. Pray that children will be able to hear God’s voice leading them throughout the coming week.

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

LESSON 22
29 April 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: John 15:1–8

Lesson Focus: Jesus, the True Vine

Objectives

The learners will...

- discover what it means for Jesus to be the True Vine.
- describe how they can “bear fruit” in the world.

Supplies

- Grapes
- Spoons
- Bowls

- White paper for each child
- Empty toilet paper tubes or tubes made from sturdy paper
- Purple paint
- Green crayons or markers
- *Lectionary Story Bible, Year B*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2008, ISBN 9781551455648)

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for John 15:1–8 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 73–74, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

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

Challenge children to work together in pairs or small groups to do a relay race. They need to carry grapes on a spoon, one at a time, from a bowl at one end of the room to a bowl at the other end of the room. They must stay connected to their partners; each person needs to be touching the spoon as they carry the grapes.

Tell children that today’s scripture story is about grapes and staying connected.

2 ENGAGE

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

Read John 15:1–8 or “Big, Juicy Grapes” from the *Lectionary Story Bible: Year B*, pp. 113–114.

Discuss:

- What happens to a branch when it is cut off of the grapevine? (*It withers or dies.*)
- What happens when a branch stays on the vine? (*It produces fruit.*)

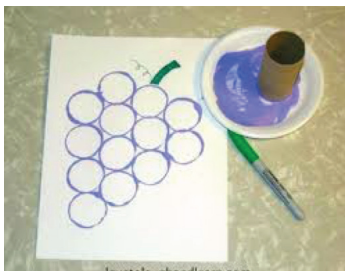
- God is like the grapevine: God wants us to be near God, or connected to God, just like the branches on the grapevine. God wants us to “bear fruit.”
- What does it mean for us to bear fruit in our lives? (*It could mean we are living God’s way—being kind to others and taking care of God’s Earth*).
- The good things we do in life are like the grapes on the vine. Allow each child to taste a grape. Discuss how the sweetness of the grape is like the good things we do in the world.

3 RESPOND

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

Bear Fruit

Create a painting of a bunch of grapes. Use a cardboard tube or rolled piece of sturdy paper for each child. Children dip the tube in purple paint and stamp circles on paper to make individual grapes. Then children can use a green crayon or marker to make a stem and vine on the bunch of grapes. As children work, continue to discuss the things in their lives that are the “fruit” of living a life with God. You might create one before class as an example.



4 SEND

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

One of the Enduring Principles of Community of Christ is Blessings of Community. Our church believes:

- the gospel of Jesus Christ is expressed best in community life.
- true community includes helping and including the poor and needy.
- true community upholds the worth of persons.
- sacred community provides nurture and growth opportunities for all people, especially those who cannot fully care for themselves.
- we value our connections and share a strong sense of trust in and belonging with one another—even if we never have met.
- we are called to create communities of Christ’s peace in our families and congregations and across villages, tribes, nations, and throughout creation.

—adapted from www.CofChrist.org

Jesus is the True Vine who connects us to each other and to other people around the world. Invite each child to name something they can do to be a blessing to others in their church family, local community, or to the world. Discuss how the grapes on a vine are all connected just as we are all connected to each other. Allow children to eat another grape.

5 BLESS

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

End with a prayer: “Thank you, God, for being the True Vine. Thank you for supporting us so we can bring good things to the world through you. Help us to stay connected to you always. Amen.”

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

LESSON 23
6 May 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: John 15:9–17

Lesson Focus: Love one another.

Objectives

The learners will...

- describe what it means to “abide” in God’s love.
- tell ways they can show their love for others.

Supplies

- Bowl of water and a towel
- Empty water bottle for each child
- Water
- Cooking oil or baby oil
- Beads, sequins, glitter, or other small items
- Glue
- Game boards, included with lesson
- Small pebbles or other objects to toss onto the game boards

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for John 15:9–17 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 75–76, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

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

As children enter, invite them to dip their hands in a bowl of water. Talk about how it feels to let the water wash over your hands. Does it feel cool and refreshing? How do we use water to cool off on a hot day? Do we wade in the water, go swimming, run through a sprinkler, take a drink of water, or even stand in the rain?

Have a towel available for children to dry their hands.

2 ENGAGE

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

In our scripture passage today, Jesus is talking to the disciples. He says, “As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love” (John 15:9). When Jesus says,

“Abide in my love,” he means we should let God’s love wash all over us just like water. Remember how cool and refreshing the water was when we put our hands in it? Imagine putting our whole bodies into the water! If we abide in God’s love, we feel calm and happy, just like letting water wash over us.

Let children dip their hands in the water bowl again, and invite them to think about God’s love being all around them.

- Do you think this means we will always be happy if we love God? (*No, but we will feel stronger and we will feel God’s love helping us even when we are sad or hurting*).

Read John 15:10–11 (NRSV).

- What does Jesus say we need to do to abide in God’s love? (*keep his commandments, do what God wants us to do*).

Next, Jesus tells us what commandment he wants us to follow.

Read John 15:12–13 (NRSV). Jesus tells us we must love one another just like God loves us.

3 RESPOND

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

Calm Bottles

For each child, fill an empty bottle about half way with cooking oil or baby oil and the rest of the way with water, leaving some room at the top. Allow children to put colorful beads, sequins, glitter, or other small objects into their bottles. These objects can represent people abiding in God's love and letting God's love wash over them. Secure lids on the bottles with glue. Children can use these bottles when they are feeling anxious or frustrated. For many children, watching the motion of the objects in the bottle can be calming. Remind children to think of God's love for them as they look at their bottles.

Note: If possible, use biodegradable or environment-friendly glitter and craft supplies.

4 SEND

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

Jesus tells us that to abide in God's love we need to love others just as God loves us. Here is a quick game to help us practice loving others.

Love One Another

Children take turns playing. On their turn, they toss a small pebble onto each game board. They have to answer the question the pebble lands on.

Example: The pebble lands on "Mom" and "Something you can DO to show love." The child says, "I could clean my room to show my mom I love her."

5 BLESS

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

End with prayer.

Dear God, Thank you for loving us.

(Invite children to think about someone they love).

Thank you for giving us people whom we already love.

(Invite children to think about someone they have a hard time loving).

Thank you for sending us people who are hard to love, because those people help us see that no one is perfect, not even us! We know that God loves ALL people. Thank you, God! Amen.

Mom	Dad	Grandma or Grandpa
A friend	Brother or sister	Someone who is unkind
A teacher	Someone new on the playground	A pet

Something you can DO to show love	Something you can SAY to show love	Something you can DO to show love
Something you can SAY to show love	Something you can DO to show love	Something you can SAY to show love
Something you can DO to show love	Something you can SAY to show love	Something you can DO to show love

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER/ASCENSION

LESSON 24
13 May 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: Luke 24:44–53

Lesson Focus: Ascension of Jesus

Objectives

The learners will...

- describe the Ascension of Jesus.
- tell a way they can be a blessing to others.

Supplies

- Ball
- Helium balloon, a picture of balloons, or a picture of a hot air balloon
- Blue paper or plastic cup for each child, with a small hole in the bottom
- Cotton balls
- Glue or tape
- Small picture of Jesus for each child, included with lesson
- Piece of string or yarn for each child (approximately 18 in long)
- Small pieces of paper or sticky notes
- Pens or pencils

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Luke 24:44–53 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 77–78, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

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

Hold a ball in the air. Ask children what will happen when you let go of the ball. They will predict that the ball will fall to the ground. Ask children if they can think of anything that rises in the air when you let go of it. Children might mention helium balloons or hot air balloons. If possible, show children a helium balloon, a picture of balloons, or a picture of a hot air balloon. Our scripture passage today is about what happened on the day Jesus rose up to heaven. It is called the Ascension of Jesus.

2 ENGAGE

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

In today’s story, the disciples had been through a challenging time. On Good Friday, Jesus died on the cross.

Then on Easter Sunday, Jesus rose again. The disciples were sad when Jesus died and very happy to see him again when he rose from the dead. Now at this point in the story, Jesus is getting ready to leave them again. He wants to make sure they understand why he is leaving.

Jesus explained to them that everything that happened was predicted in the scriptures that said Jesus would die and rise again on the third day. The scriptures also said people would go out and tell others about Jesus. Jesus helped the disciples understand these things.

After that, Jesus blessed the disciples. Originally, this passage was written in Greek. The original Greek word for *bless* means “to speak well of.” So Jesus speaks well of them and praises them. This means Jesus compliments the disciples and says kind things about them. Jesus asks God to help them have peace.

We also have God’s blessing. God sees the good in us and wants us to have peace. As disciples, we are called to share that blessing with others. There are many people in our lives who need blessings. God wants us to “speak well of” them—notice the good things in them—and ask God’s Spirit to give them peace.

As Jesus blessed the disciples, he rose into heaven. Can you imagine what it must have been like for the disciples to watch Jesus rise into heaven? They weren't sad, because Jesus had explained that they would have the Holy Spirit to be with them after he left. When he was gone, the disciples worshipped him with joy.

Discuss:

- Why do you think Jesus blessed the disciples before he returned to heaven?
- What do you think Jesus said to the disciples when he blessed them?
- Who are some people in your life who need blessings? Is there someone who is lonely or sad who needs a blessing?
- What would Jesus say to us today if he blessed us?
- Why were the disciples happy even after Jesus returned to heaven?

Ascension of Jesus

Give each child a cup with a hole in the bottom, cotton balls, a piece of string, and a picture of Jesus. Push the string through the hole in the cup and tie a knot on both ends. Turn the cup upside down. Attach the Jesus picture to the bottom of the string. Attach cotton balls to the cup to make it look like clouds. When children pull the string, Jesus will rise into the cup and appear to be rising into the sky like Jesus at the Ascension.

3 RESPOND

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

Before Jesus ascended to heaven, he blessed the disciples. He said kind things about them and wanted them to feel peace.

Blessing Others

Invite children to write "blessings" on small pieces of paper or sticky notes. Children could write "God loves you"

or "You are special" or "Peace be with you" or something else. Place the notes around the church building so others will feel blessed.

4 SEND

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

Jesus blessed the disciples before ascending to heaven. One of the sacraments in Community of Christ is called evangelist blessing.

The evangelist blessing is a special prayer of blessing. It provides words of thanksgiving, assurance, and counsel. When the time comes for the blessing, a minister of the church places his or her hands on the head of the person and offers a special prayer of blessing.

A printed copy of the prayer is given to the person after the sacrament. Individuals are encouraged to reread the prayer throughout their lives for guidance and assurance. The sacrament of evangelist blessing is available to all who are at least eight years old.

—www.CofChrist.org/sacraments

If possible, share your testimony of your evangelist blessing. Discuss with children: How is the sacrament of evangelist blessing like the blessing Jesus gave the disciples before the Ascension? (*It gives assurance; it helps the recipient throughout his or her life.*)

5 BLESS

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

We can be a blessing to others! Pass the ball around and have each child say one way he or she has been blessed by God. Pass the ball again and have each child name one way they can be a blessing to others. End with the prayer, "Thank you, God, for these blessings! Amen."



DAY OF PENTECOST

LESSON 25
20 May 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: John 15:26–27, 16:4b–15, Acts 2:1–21

Lesson Focus: Coming of the Holy Spirit/Work of the Holy Spirit

Objectives

The learners will...

- describe the Holy Spirit.
- describe ways the Holy Spirit helps us.

Supplies

- Piece of white or colored paper for each child
- Piece of white paper for each child
- Red, orange, and yellow washable paint (thinned with water if the paint is thick)
- Drinking straws
- Colorful streamers
- Sticks (craft sticks, dowels, or sticks found outside)
- *Lectionary Story Bible, Year B*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2008, ISBN 9781551455648)
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for John 15:26–27; 16:4b–15, Acts 2:1–21 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, pp. 81–82, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

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

Help each child accordion fold a piece of paper into a fan shape. Invite them to use the fans to create a breeze or wind. Ask children how God is like the wind. (*God is everywhere, and moves through all of creation.*) In our scripture passage today, Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit to be with the disciples. “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf” (John 15:26). The “Advocate” refers to the Holy Spirit.

When the Spirit appeared to the disciples, there was the sound of a strong wind. Many people describe the Holy Spirit as being like wind or air.

2 ENGAGE

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

Read “The Birthday of the Church” from the *Lectionary Story Bible, Year B*, pp. 124–125. Or read Acts 2:1–12. “Peter explained that from now on, God’s Spirit would be with everyone who believed in Jesus. We would not be able to see Jesus alive again the way the disciples had seen him. But Jesus would be alive in our hearts. Peter called it ‘the Holy Spirit’” (*Lectionary Story Bible*, p. 124).

Holy Spirit Painting

Children will use their breath (a metaphor for the Spirit) to make paintings. During the Pentecost story, the Holy Spirit arrived with the sound of rushing wind, and flames

appeared. Invite each child to squirt some red, orange, and yellow paint onto a piece of white paper. Children should blow gently through a straw to spread the paint around so it looks like flames. As children are working, discuss:



- Jesus promised the Holy Spirit would be an “advocate.” What does that mean?
- Jesus said the Holy Spirit is “the Spirit of truth.” How can the Holy Spirit help us know the truth in our lives?
- The Holy Spirit is described as a Helper or Comforter. When have you felt the Holy Spirit in your life?

3 RESPOND

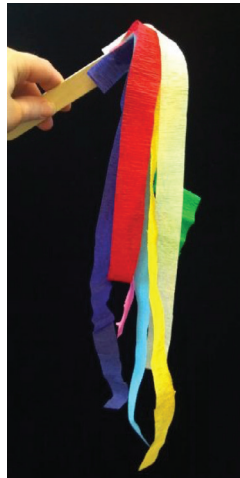
Takes the learners from hearing to doing
(35% of total lesson time)

The disciples had the Holy Spirit with them, helping them as they went out to tell others about God’s love. We are called by the Holy Spirit to do the same. We always have the Holy Spirit with us. We can pray to God for help, comfort, protection, or guidance, and we know we always have the Spirit giving us those things.

The Holy Spirit has been compared to the wind because it is all around us and moves through all of creation.

Spirit Streamers

Help each child attach colorful streamers or ribbons to a stick.



4 SEND

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

Invite children to imagine they are the Holy Spirit. Let them dance or move around the room with their “spirit streamers.” Invite them to say words that remind them of the Holy Spirit, such as truth, comforter, advocate, peace, help, gift, or joy.

Sing “Come, Holy Spirit, Come” CCS 154.

5 BLESS

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

Invite each child to finish the statement, “The Holy Spirit is like _____.” End with a prayer of thanks for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

LESSON 26
27 May 2018

Focus Scripture Passage: John 3:1–17

Lesson Focus: Nicodemus visits Jesus, Trinity Sunday

Objectives

The learners will...

- describe Nicodemus' visit to Jesus.
- name the parts of the Trinity (God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit).
- tell about the sacrament of confirmation in Community of Christ.

Supplies

- Pinwheel or kite (or a picture of a pinwheel or kite)
- Coffee filters or tissue paper

- Markers
- Spray bottle of water (if not available, use a bowl of water)
- Chenille stems
- Random items such as a cardboard tube, a napkin, a piece of cloth, an empty cup, or an empty box
- Paper
- *Lectionary Story Bible, Year B*, by Ralph Milton, illustrated by Margaret Kyle (Wood Lake Publishing, 2008, ISBN 9781551455648)

Note to teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for John 3:1–17 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year B: New Testament*, p. 83, available through Herald House.

1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares and motivates for lesson

(15% of total lesson time)

Show children a pinwheel, a kite, or a picture of either. Discuss what pinwheels or kites need in order to move. They need wind or air. Without wind or air, how much fun is a pinwheel or kite? Do people like to play with them on windless days? Pinwheels and kites need wind to fulfill their roles, to do what they are meant to do, and to be fun.

Read and discuss this quote: "Without the Spirit of God, we can do nothing. We are as ships without the wind, branches without sap, and like coals without fire, we are useless" (Charles Spurgeon, www.spurgeon.us/products/tug.htm).

What good is a sailboat without wind, a branch without sap, or a piece of coal without fire? We are like pinwheels or kites, and the Holy Spirit is like the wind.

Our lesson today is about the Holy Spirit. It begins with a story about Jesus telling a man named Nicodemus he needs to let the Holy Spirit change him. Then we will talk

about how the Holy Spirit is part of God. Finally, we will talk about the sacrament of confirmation, when we receive the promise of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of total lesson time)

In our scripture passage today, a man named Nicodemus visits Jesus. Read aloud "Visit of Nicodemus" in *Lectionary Story Bible, Year B*, pp. 129–130, or John 3:1–21. You might need to stop and paraphrase the story if reading directly from the Bible so children will understand what is happening.

Jesus told Nicodemus he needed to be born again. Jesus said he needed to become a new person and let God's Spirit be in him. Discuss what this means. It does not mean we are actually born again like babies. It means if we are willing to receive God's love, our lives will have new purpose and new love. We will be able to become the persons God wants us to be.

Ask the children if they think God wants caterpillars to remain caterpillars forever, or if God wants them to become butterflies. When Jesus tells Nicodemus he must be born again, it is like the caterpillar going into a chrysalis and becoming a butterfly. Nicodemus must let go of the ugly things in his life and be born into God's Spirit. He must become what God wants him to be.

Coffee Filter Butterflies

Invite children to color a coffee filter or piece of tissue paper with markers. This will even work with a white paper towel if necessary. Then let each child spray the coffee filter with a small amount of water. If a spray bottle is not available, sprinkle water from a bowl on the coffee filter. The colors will run and create beautiful designs. When the filters have dried, pinch them in the middle and wrap a chenille stem around the middle. The chenille stem can be shaped to be the butterfly's body and the coffee filter is the wings.

3 RESPOND

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

Jesus told Nicodemus he needed to be born of the Spirit. We believe in one God who is God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit in one. God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit are different ways we understand and experience God. We use the term Trinity to describe God as these three persons. Today is Trinity Sunday when we learn about the Trinity.

Invite children to think of a word or idea—a thought. Now invite them to hold their hands in front of their mouths, and speak the word aloud. Explain that the “thought” is like God, where the idea begins. The “spoken word” is Jesus Christ, who was described as the Word (John 1). The breath they feel on their hands is like the Holy Spirit, the breath that carries the spoken word out, the action that puts the idea into practice. In fact, the Hebrew word for breath is the same work for spirit: *ruach*.

Invite them to think of another word or idea—something God would share with us—such as “Shalom” or “I love you.” They may say their words aloud, all together as they feel the breath that carries their words. God speaks, God's word acts, and God's spirit moves over creation.

Affirm that God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit are all part of the same one God we believe in; they are different ways we understand God.

—*Of Water and Spirit: Facilitator Guide*, p. 14

Three in One

Pass around various objects, such as a cardboard tube, a napkin, a piece of cloth, an empty cup, or an empty box. Children can work alone or in groups to come up with three uses for one item. For example, they might say a cardboard tube can be used as a telescope, a rolling pin, or a place to store a piece of paper. Silly answers are acceptable!

4 SEND

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

One of the sacraments we share in Community of Christ is the sacrament of confirmation. Confirmation is sometimes called baptism of the Spirit. Confirmation includes a special prayer offered by one of two ministers who lay their hands on a person's head. The person being confirmed becomes a member of Community of Christ through this sacrament.

Spend some time discussing how the sacrament of confirmation is related to Jesus telling Nicodemus he must be born again.

“The sacrament of confirmation recognizes the work of the Holy Spirit in the disciple's life. The prayer offered witnesses to the Holy Spirit's ministry, weaving people's giftedness into beautiful patterns of community to enrich their discipleship and to strengthen the fabric of the church.”

—CofChrist.org/sacraments

5 BLESS

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

Give each child a piece of paper. Invite them to write something God would say to us. Ideas might come from today's lesson.

- What did Jesus say to Nicodemus?
- What would God tell us about the Trinity?
- What message of love or hope would we hear in a confirmation prayer?

Help children who have difficulty coming up with ideas.

Have children wad their papers into balls and throw them across the room. Then have each child pick up a random piece of paper and read the words on it.

End with a prayer of blessing.