



Community of Christ

# COMMUNITY OF CHRIST LESSONS

YOUTH

2 December 2018–24 November 2019

# 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.

**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 and Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*.

Lessons are available for these age groups:

**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 ADVENT (HOPE)

LESSON 1  
2 December 2018

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 21:25–36

**Lesson Focus:** God’s vision for creation—Jesus is coming! We expectantly await the hope that comes with Jesus and prepare for our role in God’s vision, God’s shalom.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- feel expectation like that of waiting for Jesus’ return.
- look for signs that Christmas is near, that Jesus is coming.
- find messages of hope in today’s scripture passage.

## Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*
- Playing cards (one deck for every two students)
- Paper
- Art supplies (markers, crayons, colored pencils, and/or paint)

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Luke 21:25–36 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, available through Herald House.

This lesson includes two games. Choose one or use both if there is enough class time..

## 1 GATHER

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

Today is the first Sunday of Advent. Advent, which means *coming*, is a time of celebration, expectation, and preparation as we await the birth of Jesus. As we move through the season of Advent, change is all around us. Many Christians celebrate Christmas with seasonal decorations, gift sharing, joy, and time with family and friends. Just as Jesus tells us to watch the fig tree for signs of summer, these changes act as signs leading up to Christmas.

- What signs do you see that suggest Christmas is near?
- How do you, your family, or your congregation prepare for Christmas?

Today our focus is on being alert. Have the group play Match Slap and discuss the questions that follow.

## Match Slap

Ask the youth to pair up. Give each pair a deck of cards. Have each group shuffle the cards and deal the deck evenly between them. Hold the cards face down. Each draws one card at the same time and places it face side up in the space between them. The player with the higher card will collect both cards and add them to the bottom of his or her deck. If the cards are the same number, the first to slap the top of the cards adds the cards to his or her hand. Play until one person has all the cards or until a predetermined amount of time has passed.

- What was it like to be alert to the cards being played?
- Did you feel any expectation while waiting for a double to appear?
- What were your feelings when a double appeared?
- Did you ever lose focus and not realize a double had appeared? How did that feel?

Offer an opening prayer, or invite a youth to pray.

# 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Have youth take turns reading verses from today's scripture passage which discusses our need to be alert and prepared for the coming of Christ.

<sup>25</sup>"There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. <sup>26</sup>People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>27</sup>Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. <sup>28</sup>Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

<sup>29</sup>Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees; <sup>30</sup>as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. <sup>31</sup>So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. <sup>32</sup>Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. <sup>33</sup>Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. <sup>34</sup>"Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day catch you unexpectedly, <sup>35</sup>like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup>Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

—Luke 21:25–36 NRSV

Jesus uses the parable of the fig tree to explain the signs that will announce the coming of the Messiah. Like waiting for doubles in Match Slap, we are expectant as we wait for Jesus.

- What signs of the coming of God's kingdom are found in this passage?
- Make a list of signs you see in the world today that display God's kingdom of peace.
- What can we do to prepare for God's kingdom?

Jesus tells us to pay attention to signs; we won't know summer is coming if we don't notice the trees are budding. Play Sign Game to help explain the need to watch for signs.

## Sign Game

This game works best if there are at least six players. Before the game starts, each person needs to make up a hand sign. Signs should be simple such as a thumbs-up, scratching the side of a nose, or wiggling a finger. Have the group demonstrate their signs so each person is aware of everyone else's sign. Form a circle. Choose one person to stand in the middle of the circle.

The game starts with the person in the middle closing both eyes. Members of the circle silently decide who has IT first. Once that is decided, the person in the middle opens both eyes and the game begins.

The person in the middle tries to decide who has IT while members of the circle try to pass IT without the person in the middle seeing. A person passes IT by using someone else's sign to pass. The receiver accepts IT by doing his or her own sign in return. That person then passes IT on by doing another's sign. The game continues until the person in the middle can correctly guess who has IT. Once IT's location has been guessed correctly, whoever had IT replaces the person in the middle and a new round begins.

- To the person in the middle: What was the importance of being aware of the signs going on around you?
- How important was it as a member of the circle to be aware of the passing of IT?
- Did you ever lose track of who had IT and have to watch the signs to figure it out?
- Jesus telling us to watch for the signs of his return and God's reign is a call to action. To make God's reign a reality, we need to play our part. God's vision for shalom is Christ's mission and our mission as disciples.
- What can we do to help bring God's reign instead of just waiting?

Alternate activity:  
Have the group make an Advent calendar.

## Advent Calendar

Have you ever made a countdown for something you're excited about? An Advent calendar can be used to count down the days until Christmas. Have the group create an Advent calendar. Youth can work together to create one calendar, or they can create their own. For this Advent calendar, challenge the youth to decide on an act of kindness they will try to fulfill each day. For example, one day they can pick up trash around their school or help a friend carry books to class. Try to incorporate the Advent week themes (hope, peace, love, and joy) into daily acts of kindness.

### 3 RESPOND

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

People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

—Luke 21:26

The beginning of today's passage is unsettling. It evokes thoughts of destruction and the end of time. Jesus' words may seem ominous and scary, but they are meant to be hope-filled. These words are a promise of liberation from oppression and captivity. For too long the Jewish people had been oppressed by the Roman Empire, and Jesus is promising them liberation.

Hope is powerful. Hope carries us when all else seems lost. These words from Jesus give all people hope for the future, hope for a life full of God's shalom. Have the group create signs of hope.

#### Signs of Hope

Give each youth a piece of paper (thicker paper holds up better) and art supplies (markers, crayons, colored pencils, and/or paint) and allow them to create poster-like signs of hope that illustrate how they experience hope in the world today.

- How do these signs compare with the hope the early Christians might have felt hearing Jesus promise them freedom and liberation?

### 4 SEND

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

As we begin the Christmas countdown, we must remember what Christmas is about. It's easy to think of holiday décor, gifts, and time spent with those we love, but we must remember the one who loves us most. Advent is the coming of Christ, and we celebrate with the world the birth of Jesus Christ.

Have the youth share their signs of hope with the group. If it is appropriate and the youth want to, ask the pastor or worship presider if the youth may share their signs with the congregation during worship.

### 5 BLESS

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

Sing the Advent hymn "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" CCS 394, or have the class pick another Advent hymn to sing or read together (CCS 391–407).

# SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (PEACE)

LESSON 2  
9 December 2018

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 3:1–6/3: 3–11 IV

**Lesson Focus:** The Peace of Jesus Christ—Advent is a time of preparing. How are we preparing for Christ? John the Baptizer teaches repentance and forgiveness.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- learn what it means to prepare the way of the Lord.
- discuss the importance of such preparation.
- explore repentance and forgiveness.

## Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*
- Computer and Internet access
- *The Karate Kid* (1984 or 2010 version)
- An object that can be hidden, such as a small toy
- Pens or pencils
- Maze, one for each learner (page 9)

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Luke 3:1–6 NRSV/3:3–11 IV in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Sing “Lord, Prepare Me” CCS 280

Last week we entered Advent with a lesson about being alert to the coming of Jesus Christ. Today’s lesson is about preparing for God’s vision of creation. The scripture passage tells us about John the Baptizer who was born specifically to prepare the way for Jesus and the kingdom of God. Read today’s passage and then discuss the questions that follow.

<sup>1</sup>In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, <sup>2</sup>during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup>He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of

sins, <sup>4</sup>as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. <sup>5</sup>Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; <sup>6</sup>and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”

—Luke 3:1–6 NRSV

- For what have you spent time and energy preparing?
- What does this passage reveal about preparing the way of the Lord?
- How do you understand the call to prepare the way of the Lord?

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Sometimes the tasks of everyday life take much preparation. If you want to do well on a test, you need to study. If you want to play an instrument or a sport well,

you need to practice. This is like John the Baptizer's mission; he is preparing the world for Jesus. By teaching repentance and forgiveness and offering baptism, he is preparing and teaching people about a life following Jesus.

### The Karate Kid

*The Karate Kid* (1984), as well as its remake *The Karate Kid* (2010), is the story of a boy who seeks martial arts training from an elderly man. The teacher starts the boy's training by requiring him to do a tedious task over and over again. For Daniel LaRusso (1984) it was "wax on, wax off;" for Dre Parker (2010) it was "jacket on, jacket off." After days of repeating a task that seemed unrelated to karate, the boy gets frustrated with the teacher and gives up. It is in this moment that the teacher reveals how the frustrating task has been preparing the boy for karate. To learn karate, he must prepare for it in every facet of his life.

From either version of the movie, watch the scene of the boy as he is taught to do the tedious task and the later scene of the teacher showing him how it prepared him for karate. Copies of this movie may be purchased online or may be available through a video streaming service.

After watching these scenes, discuss the following questions with the group.

- How did the teacher prepare the boy for karate?
- Why was the boy frustrated with his teacher?
- How is this similar to preparing for Jesus?

In preparation for learning karate, the teacher made karate integral to every part of the boy's life. By showing him how karate lived in every movement, the boy became prepared to learn karate. The boy was frustrated, but the teacher was helping him prepare the way without him knowing. This is similar to today's scripture passage. We know we want to experience life as disciples of Jesus Christ, but we need to prepare for it. We may not always know which path to take or what to do, but following John's proclamation (baptism, forgiveness, and repentance), our paths are made straight, our valleys filled, and our mountains made low. By recognizing that God is a part of every moment of our lives, the path can be understood more easily. To illustrate this, play the game Object Hide and Seek.

#### Note to teacher:

To view a movie as a group, your congregation needs a CVLI license. (Go to [cvli.com](http://cvli.com) for information.) If your congregation does not have the proper license and/or *The Karate Kid*, the game Object Hide and Seek (below) may be used in place of the movie clip and discussion.

### Object Hide and Seek

Before class begins, hide a small object somewhere in the classroom or the building. When it's time to play the game, tell them you've hidden something, but don't give any clues as to what or where the object is. Give them time to look for it; however, it is not expected that they will find the object yet. After several minutes of unsuccessful hunting, bring them together.

Send them out again to look for the object, but this time, give clues (size, shape, color, location). If they continue to struggle, give them more clues.

Once they find the object, talk to them about how better preparation helped them find the object. Helpful strategies were necessary to be successful.

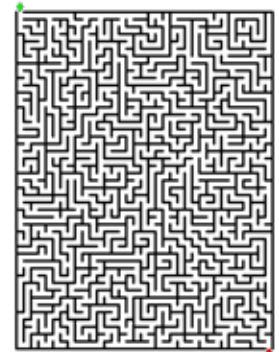
- Why weren't you able to find the object the first time?
- What helped you eventually find it?
- Were you frustrated the first time? Why? (*You were given a task that seemed pointless and asked to look for an object you knew nothing about.*)
- How were the clues about the object similar to our preparation for the advent of Jesus Christ? (*Our search is easier when we are prepared and have the necessary information.*)

## 3 RESPOND

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

As we discussed in last week's lesson, Advent is a time of preparation. Today's passage continues our preparation with the call to baptism. John invited all to repent and be baptized. In Greek, *repent* means a *change of heart or mind*. Repentance is more than simply regretting or feeling sorry for having done wrong. It calls for a change in your behavior—a promise that you won't do it again—indicating you've had a change of heart about what you did.

We make mistakes and do wrong sometimes, but that is part of life and part of learning. We see that we've done something wrong, admit it, reconcile with a person we may have hurt (including self), and promise not to do it again. Repentance is like completing a maze. When you've hit a dead end, you realize you've made a mistake (admit you've



done something wrong), backtrack to find the right path (apologize), and then continue on the right path (promise not to make the same mistake again).

Pass out copies of the maze (end of lesson) for learners to complete.

## **4 SEND**

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

Give each member of the group time to complete and share with the group the personal challenge statement for this week.

### **Personal Challenge**

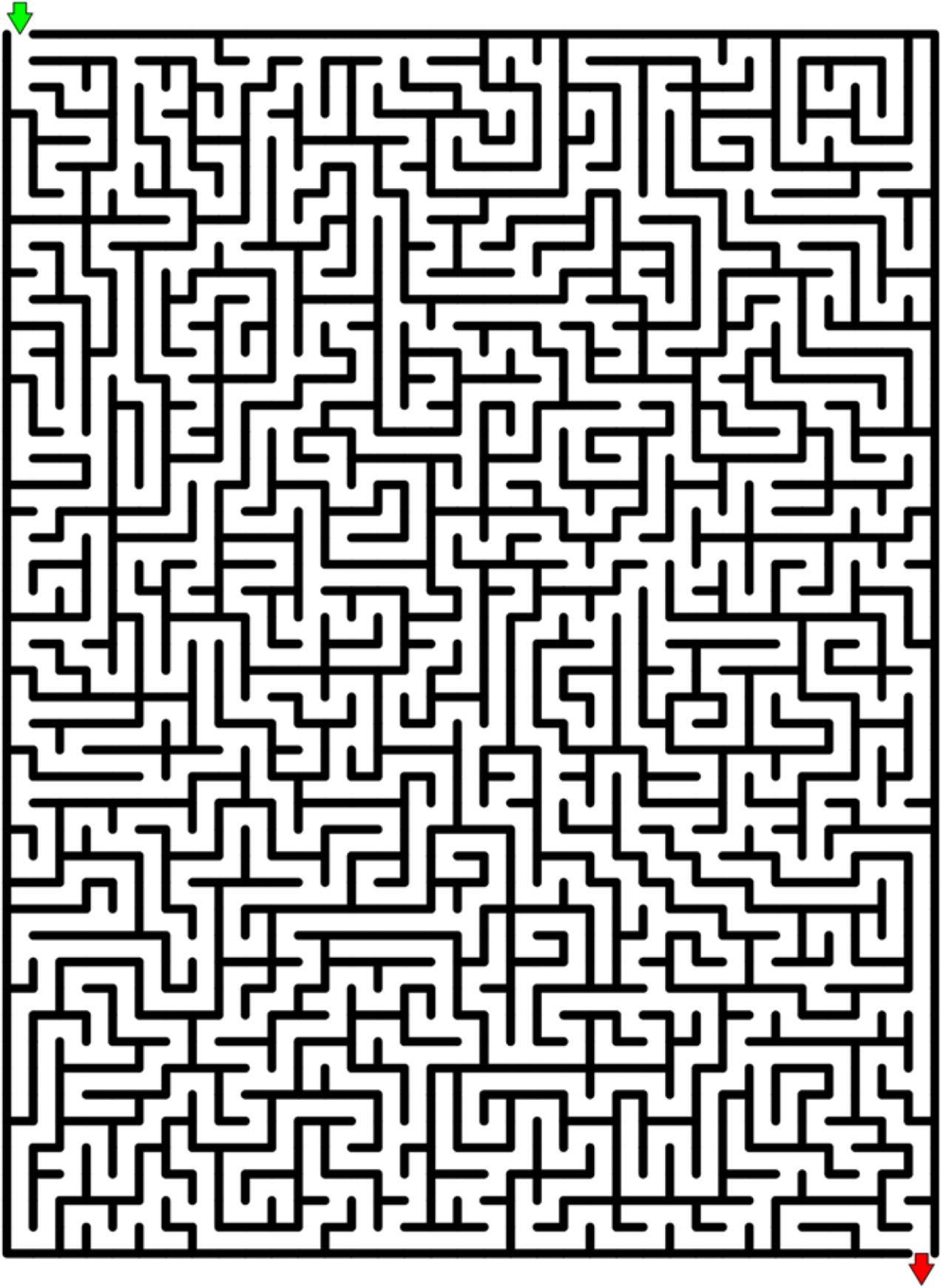
This week I will prepare the way of the Lord by...

## **5 BLESS**

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

In closing, sing "Lord, Prepare Me" CCS 280.





Maze used by permission  
[Krazydad.com/puzzles](http://Krazydad.com/puzzles)

# THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (LOVE)

LESSON 3  
16 December 2018

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 3:7–18/3:12–25 IV

**Lesson Focus:** Grace and Generosity—John’s message challenges us to be generous, peaceful, and just in preparation for Jesus’ coming.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- explore John’s message to prepare for Jesus’ coming.
- proclaim the good news.
- discuss ways to be generous with others.

## Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- Supplies for making props (paper, cardboard, markers, scissors)
- Brochures for local missional opportunities
- Computer or cell phones with Internet access

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Luke 3:7–18/3:12–25 IV in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Today’s passage is all about the good news. Jesus is coming! John assures the people that he is not the Messiah, but that the Messiah is coming. Read the passage to see how John tells the crowd to prepare for Jesus, and then discuss what John says.

<sup>7</sup>John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup>Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. <sup>9</sup>Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” <sup>10</sup>And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” <sup>11</sup>In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” <sup>12</sup>Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” <sup>13</sup>He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed

for you.” <sup>14</sup>Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”

<sup>15</sup>As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, <sup>16</sup>John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>17</sup>His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.” <sup>18</sup>So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

—Luke 3:7–18 NRSV

Today’s scripture passage begins with John warning the people of their bad deeds—living selfishly and not responding to God’s love. This leads the crowd to ask, “What then should we do?” John’s answer is one of generosity, peace, and justice. John tells them to give a coat to someone who is needy and to feed someone who is hungry. John finishes by proclaiming the good news that Jesus is coming.

- How might you have felt hearing this good news from John?
- When you watch or read the news, do you often hear stories of good news?
- What would you like to see in the news?
- Why is it important that we are generous with others?
- Think of a time when someone's generosity made a difference in your life. Share with the group how it made you feel

### Proclaiming the Good News

When we read, watch, or listen to news, we often hear stories that are sad and terrible: war, poverty, violence, and hurt.

- What would it be like if the news media shared stories about people being generous toward others or about the coming of Christ?

Have class members gather in groups of two or three. Tell each group to create a one- to two-minute newscast about John's message—people living with the expectation that Jesus is coming and the call to action in response to God's love.

- How would people respond?
- What would people be doing?

When the groups have completed their newscasts, have them perform them for the class. If time allows and supplies are available, have the youth create their own props (microphones, headsets, TV screens, or cameras).

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

During the Christmas season we often receive others' generosity. Our parents, friends, and other family members may give us gifts, show their love through hugs or kind words, and prepare meals for us. How can we be generous to others in return?

John's example of generosity in today's passage was helping people in need by giving coats and food to those who were cold and hungry. We are called to be generous in this way, but remember—life as a disciple is not *busy* work. We are generous so others may know God's shalom.

### Generosity

During Advent, there are many opportunities to help others. Some examples are collecting food and clothing for the poor, visiting the sick, and helping with community dinners. As a group, discuss possibilities in your area for expressing generosity. Bring brochures to class to help inspire ideas. If you have Internet access and a computer available, search for local missional opportunities.

Make a plan to engage in generosity over the next few weeks. Discuss specifics (where, when) and make sure everyone can take part (with parents' permission).

## 3 RESPOND

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

### What Do You Want to Be?

Ask the youth what they want to be when they grow up. Once everyone has shared, give some silly examples of who might be good mentors or teachers to help them. For example, if you have someone who wants to be a ballerina, suggest a firefighter conduct the training. If someone wants to be a farmer, suggest a circus clown for the training. Do this for a few youth; allow them to be incredulous and skeptical of your suggestions. (Hopefully they will think you are ridiculous!) Ask them why they wouldn't want the unrelated person to help train them. Students should come to the conclusion that they would want the best, most highly-trained teacher for what they want to do.

If you want to achieve a goal or dream, and you need practice or training to attain it, whom are you going to seek for help? You are going to seek the person who could best help you reach your goal. So if you want to be a ballerina, you need to find a ballerina to teach you. If you want to be a farmer, you need to find a farmer to train you.

This is the same for our lives as disciples. John is helping us prepare for Jesus, telling us to be generous and good; and to do that, we need to *train* with God. To know and share God's love through generosity is one of the best ways to prepare for Jesus.

## 4 SEND

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

Earlier, the group made a plan for missional generosity. The call to action this week is to follow through with that plan. Respond to God's generous grace by showing such grace to others.

## 5 BLESS

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

Have a member of the group close the lesson with a prayer that they share God's grace and generosity which is revealed through Jesus Christ.

# FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (JOY)

LESSON 4  
23 December 2018

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 1:39–55/1:39–54 IV

**Lesson Focus:** Blessings of Community—God’s shalom is fully realized when we experience blessings with others in community.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- read about Mary’s blessedness.
- express God’s goodness, faith, and mercy.
- share the blessings of community.

## Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- Art images that depicts today’s passage
- Paper
- Pens or pencils
- Recycled Christmas supplies (cards, wrapping paper, or other seasonal decorations)
- Card-making supplies (markers, scissors, tape, glue)
- BINGO cards, one for each person (page 15)

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Luke 1:39–55/1:39–54 IV in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Today’s passage, which includes Mary’s song (also known as the *Magnificat*), tells of a special moment shared by Jesus’ mother, Mary, and John’s mother, Elizabeth. Many artists have painted their interpretations of this passage. As one person reads the scripture, pass around examples of artists’ descriptions of the meeting between Mary and Elizabeth. For artwork, do an online search for “*Magnificat* images.”

<sup>39</sup>In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, <sup>40</sup>where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup>When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit <sup>42</sup>and exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. <sup>43</sup>And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord

comes to me? <sup>44</sup>For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup>And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.” <sup>46</sup>And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, <sup>47</sup>and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, <sup>48</sup>for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; <sup>49</sup>for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. <sup>50</sup>His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. <sup>51</sup>He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. <sup>52</sup>He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; <sup>53</sup>he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. <sup>54</sup>He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, <sup>55</sup>according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

—Luke 1:39–55 NRSV

Discuss the differences and similarities in the different images of the *Magnificat*.

- Identify something found in each painting.
- Identify something that's depicted differently.
- To which painting are you drawn? Why?

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Mary's song is a response to Elizabeth's blessing. In this song, Mary talks of God's goodness, faith, and mercy. We, along with Elizabeth, are able to find comfort in these words that help express an understanding of God.

### Our Songs

Music is often a powerful way of expressing one's feelings or thoughts. Music has existed in one form or another in many cultures, past and present. Invite the group to share or write songs which express God's goodness, faith, and mercy to them. In smaller groups of two or three, have them create their own lyrics to the tune of a popular or favorite Christmas carol. When they are finished, have groups share their songs with the class.

## 3 RESPOND

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

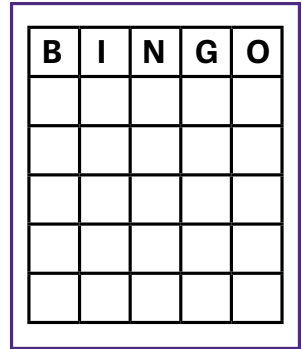
While the season of Advent is full of joy for the future, it is also a reminder of the blessings of community. In the scripture passage, Mary and Elizabeth experience the blessings of community when they get together. They are open with each other, as well as feel the presence of the Spirit, as they share their blessings and faithfulness. Through Mary and Elizabeth, we are reminded that God's shalom is fully realized when we experience it with others in community.

### Christmas Card Affirmations

Make Christmas cards for friends or persons in your congregation or class. Use recycled Christmas cards, wrapping paper, or other seasonal decorations to create cards. In each one, write an affirmation for the person to whom you are giving the card. Make plans to deliver the cards after class to members of the congregation or during the week at school or other events.

### Optional: Christmas BINGO

Create a Christmas BINGO card to log blessings of community this week. In each square, have class members write phrases, words, songs, or activities that bless the community during Advent. For example, a card may include squares that say "We went caroling," "I took part in a Christmas Eve service," "O Come, All Ye Faithful," or "I gave someone a Christmas card." Have the group mark the activities they witness or participate in during the week. If you want, have members bring their cards next week to see who marked five in a row (BINGO).



## 4 SEND

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

Mary and Elizabeth are overjoyed by the possibilities for the future with their children. They know of God's promises for their unborn sons. In the previous lesson, the group discussed possibilities for missional generosity. If the group took part in a community mission activity, use the questions below to guide discussion. If the group has not yet done it, finalize any details not yet resolved.

- What is it like to be generous with others?
- Would you like to do something like this again? Why, or why not?
- Was there anything you struggled with?
- What was your favorite part?

## 5 BLESS

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

Sing one of the songs created earlier to remind the class of the world-changing blessing of Jesus Christ experienced in community.

**B**

**I**

**N**

**G**

**O**

# FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

LESSON 5  
30 December 2018

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 2:41–52

**Lesson Focus:** Develop Disciples to Serve—Jesus models the importance of growing in a life of God.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- explore the focus scripture passage.
- identify relationships which influence their lives as disciples.
- discuss ways to grow as disciples.

## Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- Journals or paper and pens or pencils
- Large poster paper or rolled paper and markers (optional)

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Luke 2:41–52 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

### Talk About It

The goal of this game is to talk continuously about a single topic for one minute. One person talks without pausing or using filler words such as *um* or *uh*. Other members of the group act as judges to make sure the person talking follows the rules. Provide several topics from which to choose such as school, sports, or family. Take turns allowing all to participate.

To make the game more challenging, an additional rule can be applied. If the “talker” is caught hesitating or using a filler word, another person must begin talking about the same topic. The winner of the round is the person speaking when the minute is up.

- How hard was it to talk about a single topic for one minute?
- What topic could you talk about for three days?

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Today’s passage from Luke is the account of Jesus as a twelve-year-old boy in the temple during his family’s trip to Jerusalem for Passover. Jesus is beginning to understand his mission and relationship to God.

<sup>41</sup>Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. <sup>42</sup>And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. <sup>43</sup>When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. <sup>44</sup>Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day’s journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. <sup>45</sup>When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. <sup>46</sup>After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. <sup>47</sup>And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. <sup>48</sup>When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, “Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you

in great anxiety.”<sup>49</sup>He said to them, “Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?”<sup>50</sup>But they did not understand what he said to them.<sup>51</sup>Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.<sup>52</sup>And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.

—Luke 2:41–52 NRSV

After three days of searching, Mary and Joseph find Jesus in the temple where he’s been talking to, listening, and learning from the teachers.

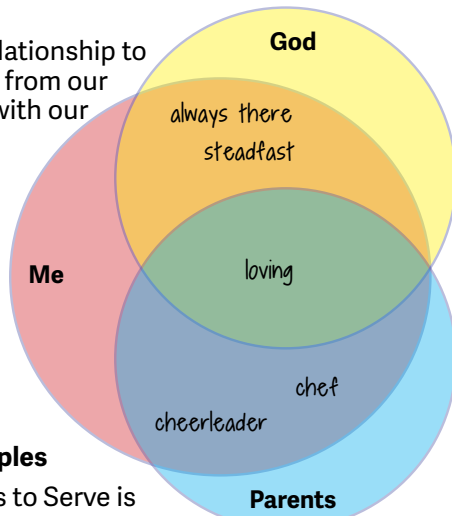
- Have you ever been so interested in something that you lost track of where you were supposed to be? Share your feelings about this experience with another or with the group.
- How do Mary and Joseph respond when they find Jesus?
- How does Jesus respond to Mary and Joseph?
- What does this passage teach us about Jesus? About learning and growing as disciples?

### 3 RESPOND

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

Venn diagrams are used to illustrate differences and similarities between two things. Using a Venn diagram (which can be drawn on a board or large piece of paper), discuss differences and similarities between our relationship to God and our relationship with our parents. Have the group write characteristics of each relationship in the larger part of each circle and characteristics that are shared where the circles overlap.

- How is our relationship to God different from our relationship with our parents?
- How are they similar?
- In what ways does one relationship influence the other?



#### Growing as Disciples

Develop Disciples to Serve is one of the five Mission Initiatives of Community of Christ. From an early age, Jesus modeled the importance of learning and growing in

a life of God. When Mary and Joseph find Jesus, he responded, “Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” This is the first account of Jesus speaking for himself, and he is recognizing the direction his life will take. Jesus’ life would be one devoted to God. In this passage Jesus is 12 years old, which may be younger than some of the youth in the group, and yet Jesus is aware of his significant relationship to God.

- List five people who have influenced your life as a disciple. Choose one person from your list and share with another, or with the group, how this relationship has influenced your life as a disciple.
- List (or draw) five activities or services you do to develop as a disciple. Choose what you do most often and what you would like to improve. Share these with another or with the group.
- What is your greatest challenge to growing as a disciple?
- How does Develop Disciples to Serve shape Christ’s mission and the mission of the church?

### 4 SEND

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

Jesus spent three days at the temple talking and learning about God. Spend a few moments reflecting on the following challenge. Write or draw your responses in a journal or on a separate piece of paper.

**Note to teacher:** You may choose to hang large poster paper on the wall and invite youth to make a mural with their responses to the personal challenge.

#### Personal Challenge

- This week I will develop as a disciple by...
- This week I will encourage another to grow as a disciple by...

### 5 BLESS

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

Close with a “popcorn prayer.” A popcorn prayer allows the whole group to share. Begin the prayer with a prompt, such as “I will be like Jesus by...” Give an object (a ball or another object that can be passed) to one group member who completes the phrase. That person passes the object to another person who responds; continue until everyone has participated.



# EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

LESSON 6  
6 January 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Matthew 2:1-12 / 3:1-12 IV

**Lesson Focus:** What Gifts Do You Bring?

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- discover and explore the characters in this traditional post-nativity narrative.
- consider possible reasons for the gift-giving of the magi.
- consider what gifts we bring in our discipleship.

## Supplies

- Bibles
- Marker board or large poster, markers
- Internet connection and computer (if available)
- Items that represent gold (a small piece of jewelry), frankincense (any kind of oil), and myrrh (a perfume or scented oil)

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Matthew 2:1–12 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament* (with focus on the Gospel according to Luke), pp. 31–32, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Have the students think about starting a long spiritual journey. Imagine God has called you to take a trip to visit the infant Jesus today in a faraway country. Discuss with the group what you would need for the journey:

- Identify a place in another country—one that’s not easy to get to (use Google Earth or other mapping program to identify a place).
- How would you get there? What kind of transportation would you need? How much money might it require?
- The scriptures suggest Jesus might have been around two when the magi visited him. (That’s quite different from how it’s usually depicted!!) What preparation would you need to make to visit Jesus as a two-year-old? What kind of gifts might you bring?

- What would be the expected outcome of this trip?
- How might this encounter change you?

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Read Matthew 2:1–12 as a group and remember key words and phrases from the passage.

This scripture passage shows how fear infects people when potential change threatens their power. Discuss as a group the players of this story—especially those for whom we have no real “back story.”

- King Herod— “Herod the Great” was a king put in place by the ruling Romans. He had to play a political game between those he ruled and those who ruled him. He had a habit of killing his own relatives!
  - What might Herod’s motivations be in this passage?

- The scripture passage referenced in v. 6 is from the prophet Micah 5:2. What might Herod have thought when he heard this scripture?
- Herod creates alliances with the traveling “wise men” from the east. Again, read his statements and discuss his motivation.
- The Wise Men—Very little is known about these people. Tradition has three wise men because of the number of gifts given, but we really don’t know how many there were. It is believed they were astronomers who linked something happening in the stars to the birth of a great leader among the Jews.
  - Discuss what the wise men’s motivations might have been.
  - What were their encounters with Herod like?
  - What might motivate these people to travel (months or maybe years) to present this child expensive gifts?
  - How did the relationship change between the wise men and Herod in this short verse?
- Jesus’ family—This story most likely takes place well after the birth narrative. The story takes place in a “house” and mentions Herod’s decree to kill all male children under the age of two so it could have been known that Jesus was under two years of age.
  - How might Jesus’ parents have responded to the visiting wise men and their entourage?
  - Immediately after this verse, the family is warned regarding Herod’s plan to kill the children under two, and they leave to become refugees in Egypt. How might this visit of the wise men help them for this flight?
- Myrrh—a perfume or scented oil

Have the group consider what each of these items could have meant:

- Gold—This means today what it meant then—money. We don’t know how much gold was given, but it would have been uncommon for a family of Jesus’ means to have any gold. A small amount would have been worth more than their annual income. A baby has little use for such a valuable gift.
  - Discuss what this might have meant to Jesus’ family.
  - Theorize what Jesus’ family might have used the gold for.
  - Could it have been used to help them escape to Egypt?
- Frankincense—This oil starts out as a white resin or gum. It is highly fragrant when burned as a pleasant offering to God (Exodus 30:34) in temple rituals ceremonially led by the priests. This gift was precious in both meaning and value.
  - Discuss what this offering might have meant to Jesus’ family.
  - Theorize what Jesus’ family might have used the frankincense for.
  - What connection might the frankincense have to Jesus’ perceived role?
- Myrrh—This oil had been imported to Egypt in large amounts for embalming rituals and distributed through the neighboring countries. It was commonly connected with death and burial.
  - Discuss what this offering might have meant to Jesus’ family.
  - Theorize what Jesus’ family might have used the myrrh for.
  - What connection might the myrrh have to Jesus’ perceived role?

### 3 RESPOND

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

The three gifts of the magi are not typical for a baby today. They seem a bit strange—in fact, none of them would be considered “baby appropriate” by today’s standards. Some scholars say the wise men represent the divine recognition of Jesus in his infancy.

Have items that represent these gifts on a table or pass around.

- Gold—a small piece of jewelry
- Frankincense—any kind of oil

### 4 SEND

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

Gifts mean a lot to us. Consider you are invited to a baby shower of a future king who is presently living in the low-income area of your area with the following understanding:

- You have nearly unlimited funds to purchase a gift.
- You know you're visiting a future king—one with whom you hope to have good relations with in the future.
- You are traveling to the baby shower over a great distance and time.

On a marker board have the group share ideas:

- What gift today would you purchase?
- What is your gift attempting to say to the family?
- Finally, try to settle on only three gifts that will express your hopes for the family.
- Share what other types of "gifts" we bring the Christ child.
- If the magi brought symbolic gifts, what symbolic gifts do we bring to our ministry as disciples of Jesus?

## 5 BLESS

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

End this time together in the joy the magi must have felt after presenting their gifts before the Christ child. Briefly discuss:

What might have been the wise men's conversations after presenting their gifts to Jesus' family?

How might their feelings have changed after the dream in which they were told not to report back to Herod, but flee the country? How would they have felt about Jesus' family's safety?

In many biblical stories, we're confronted with the need to change plans and find there are those who seek to manipulate us for evil. End the class with a prayer to help us to be used as vessels of good news, and not of evil.

# FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY— BAPTISM OF THE LORD

LESSON 7  
13 January 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 3:15–17, 21–22/ 3:22–24, 28–29 IV

**Lesson Focus:** Baptism—Connecting with Our Spiritual Lives—Spiritual renewal is an intentional process of realigning our lives with God

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- learn about Epiphany.
- read and discuss baptism of water and of spirit.
- explore places of spiritual renewal.

## Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*
- Slips of paper
- Pens or pencils
- TV or computer to project video

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Luke 3:15–17, 21–22 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

### Charades

When the group has gathered, play a round of Charades. Give each class member several blank slips of paper. Have students write one topic relating to discipleship on each slip to contribute to the draw pile. Suggestions: baptism, confirmation, Bible, prayer, community. Once the group has finished, fold the slips in half and place them in a container. Class members take turns drawing a slip of paper and acting out what is written on it. The rest of the group will try to guess what it is. Make sure each class member has an opportunity to act.

The dictionary defines *epiphany* as a moment in which one suddenly sees or understands something in a new or clear way. In Charades, you may have an epiphany the moment you understand what someone is trying to act out. Today is the first Sunday after Epiphany. In the Christian calendar, Epiphany takes place on January 6 each year. Epiphany celebrates the visit of the magi to the baby Jesus and recognition of God’s incarnation through Jesus Christ.

- When have you experienced an epiphany?
- What epiphany have you had about Jesus?

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

The Jewish people were waiting expectantly for the Messiah, their savior. Have the group read today’s scripture passage in call-and-repeat style—one youth will read a phrase and the rest of the group will repeat it.

<sup>15</sup>As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, <sup>16</sup>John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>17</sup>His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

<sup>21</sup>Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, <sup>22</sup>and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”  
—Luke 3:15–17, 21–22 NRSV

The passage talks of two baptisms: *of water* and *of spirit*. The crowd wonders if John is the Messiah, but he is quick to assure them that he is only baptizing them of water, and that Jesus, the Messiah, will come to baptize them of spirit. Baptism (of water) is a covenant we make with God that connects and blesses people in community with God as we express faith in Jesus Christ and commit ourselves to live the life of a disciple. Confirmation affirms the Holy Spirit's continued blessing for each disciple and confirms membership in Community of Christ.

Prophet-President Stephen M. Veazey once said, "It's good to get your baptizing clothes wet!" We are called to be baptized, accept a life as a disciple, and invite others to the waters of baptism.

- How has your life been changed because of baptism of water and of spirit?
- What questions do you have about baptism or confirmation?

## 3 RESPOND

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

### The Long Journey

Watch the video, "The Long Journey," [http://videos.videopress.com/BigvKPpC/lcm-4-the-long-journey\\_v2\\_final\\_hd.mp4](http://videos.videopress.com/BigvKPpC/lcm-4-the-long-journey_v2_final_hd.mp4) which can be streamed online or downloaded by right-clicking on the video and selecting "Save video as." Discuss the importance of mission in our lives as disciples. Through baptism and confirmation, we commit our lives to the mission of Jesus Christ. Baptism and confirmation are only the beginning.

Mission begins with the Source; our foundation must be the Source.

- What does that mean? How does it affect the choices we make and the way we live with others?

If video is not accessible, use "In the Wilderness" activity.

### In the Wilderness

In the Scriptures, *wilderness* is symbolic of a place of spiritual renewal. In today's passage, John is experiencing and sharing spiritual renewal with the

crowd by the river. Read other passages that use the wilderness as a place for spiritual renewal.

- Moses and the burning bush (Exodus 3: 1–12)
- Jesus prays in Gethsemane (Matthew 26: 36–46)
- The temptation of Jesus (Luke 4: 1–4)
- Jesus cleanses a leper (Luke 5: 12–16)

We all have our own ways to develop spiritually and renew our spirits. Jesus was intentional about taking time for prayer and spiritual renewal as an important part of his ministry.

- Where do you go for spiritual renewal?
- What practices help in your spiritual renewal?
- In what way is spirituality part of your daily activities? How are they separate?

## 4 SEND

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

### Spiritual Practice

Spiritual practices help us develop spirituality in a variety of ways. Some engage the body in physical movement; others are simply a repetition of words or focused breathing. If the group is familiar with spiritual practices, choose a group favorite and spend some time doing it together. If the group is unfamiliar with spiritual practices, experiment with different practices which can be found at [www.CofChrist.org/resources](http://www.CofChrist.org/resources) (search spiritual practices).

- Which spiritual practices do you do regularly?
- How do these spiritual practices help you connect with God?
- How can you recognize God in the ordinary aspects of your life?

Challenge the group to spend time each day with the spiritual practice that the group did together or one that helps them develop spiritually.

## 5 BLESS

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

Close by singing "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" CCS 499.

# SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

LESSON 8  
20 January 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** John 2:1–11

**Lesson Focus:** Peace of Jesus Christ—Declare who Jesus Christ is.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- discover ways of “changing water into wine.”
- explore their beliefs about Jesus.
- respond to the question, “Who is Jesus to me?”

## Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- Red cabbage water (see Gather section)
- At least one acid and one base (2 T/30 ml of each)
- Two cups
- One-gallon or One-liter container
- Paper
- Pens or pencils
- Computer or phone with Internet access

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for John 2:1–11 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

The story today is about Jesus turning water into wine. To introduce this passage, conduct this science experiment with the group. Take proper precautions with the supplies.

### Water into Wine (or color-changing cabbage juice)

Red cabbage contains the pigment anthocyanin which can be used as a pH indicator, meaning it turns different colors depending on the pH of a substance added to it. Before class time, chop a head of red cabbage and place it in a pot of water. Bring the water to a boil, and boil until the water is dark purple.

Bring the purple water, an acid (like vinegar), and a base (like ammonia) to class. With the class, pour some of the cabbage water into two cups. Then add the acid to one cup and the base to the other. The acidic solution will turn pink; the basic solution will turn blue or green. If time and supplies allow, try different acids (orange

juice or soda) or bases (baking soda) and allow class members to mix liquids to see the pink, blue, and green variations.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

In the first twelve chapters of John, seven signs are narrated to testify that Jesus is the Word made flesh. Today’s scripture passage, the wedding at Cana, includes the first of these signs, the miracle of turning jugs of water into wine. Read the passage together as a group.

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.<sup>2</sup> Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.<sup>3</sup> When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.”<sup>4</sup> And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.”<sup>5</sup> His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever

he tells you.”<sup>6</sup>Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons.<sup>7</sup>Jesus said to them, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim.<sup>8</sup>He said to them, “Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.” So they took it.<sup>9</sup>When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom<sup>10</sup>and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.”<sup>11</sup>Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

—John 2:1–11 NRSV

The scripture passage says that Jesus turned approximately 120 to 180 gal/450 to 680 liters of water into wine. Show students a one-gallon or one-liter container. Imagine Jesus turning more than 100 gallons or 400 liters of water into wine! The reactions of the acid and base in the cabbage juice are easy to explain; we know the science behind that. What if we didn’t have science to explain something like this? When Jesus performed this miracle, it was not a science experiment, and people found faith in Jesus.

- How would you respond to something you could not explain?
- This miracle was a sign pointing to who Jesus is. What is something you have experienced that helped you understand who Jesus is?

### 3 RESPOND

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

Have you ever been to a wedding? What do you remember about weddings you have attended? Did you have to provide your own food or drink? Probably not. In Jesus’ time, it was incredibly shameful to run out of wine during a wedding celebration. Jesus provided wine for the celebration—not just any wine, but the *best* wine! This story, which tells about something mysterious happening (water becoming wine), is actually not about that act. This story is not about proving a miracle. When

we focus on the water-into-wine, we risk missing the point that this passage is about Jesus’ identity. What matters is Jesus and who he is in our lives.

- Share about a time when you were so focused on something that you missed what really mattered.
- Who is Jesus to you? What roles has Jesus filled in your life? (Use these answers for the word cloud.)

#### Word Cloud

Jesus plays many roles in our lives: friend, teacher, leader, peace builder, and others. On paper, have class members write a list all the words they use to describe Jesus. Insert these words into a word cloud generator like [www.wordle.net](http://www.wordle.net) or [www.tagxedo.com](http://www.tagxedo.com). Repeated words are OK; the more often a word is used, the more prominently it will appear in the word cloud. After you’ve inserted all the words, create a word cloud that reflects who Jesus is to the group. If it is not possible to create a word cloud, have the youth compare their lists to see which words they did and did not have in common, or create your own word cloud on a poster.

**Note to teacher:**  
Keep these words to be used in a later lesson.

### 4 SEND

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

This was the first time Jesus was revealed as the Son of God, the Messiah for whom everyone had waited. We are called to share Jesus’ message of justice and peace by the way we live each day with others and with all of creation.

#### Call to Action

This week, I will share Jesus’ message of justice and peace by...

### 5 BLESS

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

Close the class with a prayer focusing on knowing and accepting the peace of Jesus Christ in our lives.

# THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

LESSON 9  
27 January 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 4:14–21/13–21 IV

**Lesson Focus:** Christ's Mission Our Mission—We declare and dedicate our lives as disciples.

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- read about Jesus' public ministry.
- declare their discipleship.
- practice the mission prayer.

## Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- Paper
- Pens or pencils
- Computer or other device to view an inaugural address (see Gather section)
- Printed copies of the mission prayer (one for each youth)

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Luke 4:14–21 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson

*(15% of total lesson time)*

If you are able, watch or read part of a presidential or prime minister inaugural address, a queen's or king's coronation speech, or the first speech of another leader coming into power. If you cannot watch a clip of a speech or read part of a transcript, ask the group if they are familiar with such speeches. If they are, they may be able to answer the questions without watching the clip.

- How is an inauguration speech different from other addresses a leader might give?
- What does a leader say or promise during an inauguration speech?

Often when leaders come into power, whether they are religious leaders, government leaders, or organization leaders, they give a public declaration of who they are and what they intend to do as a leader. Today's scripture passage is Jesus' declaration of his public ministry.

<sup>14</sup>Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. <sup>15</sup>He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. <sup>16</sup>When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue

on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, <sup>17</sup>and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: <sup>18</sup>"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, <sup>19</sup>to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." <sup>20</sup>And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. <sup>21</sup>Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

—Luke 4:14–21 NRSV

- What did Jesus declare he would do? (*release the captives, give sight to the blind, and free the oppressed*)
- What might Jesus say he would do if he declared this today?

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

*(35% of lesson time)*

Life as a disciple takes you on a journey that is unlike any other adventure or experience you could have. As



a disciple, you are a follower of Jesus Christ, but you can be a leader in your community, congregation, and with your friends. Take a few minutes to write your disciple's declaration. Similar to Jesus', this declaration is your opportunity to express who you intend to be as a disciple and what you want to do. In your speech, you should answer the question, "Who am I as a disciple of Jesus Christ?"

When the group has finished writing their speeches, give them the opportunity to share their speeches with the class or with the congregation.

Discuss what the youth included in their speeches.

- What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus?
- How are you going to live as a disciple of Jesus Christ?
- How can you share the mission of Christ with others?

### 3 RESPOND

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

When you set out to accomplish something, the first step is to say you will do it. Your disciple's declaration was your first step. The next step is to begin doing that which you said you would do. One way to help bring our focus to Jesus' mission is through daily practices such as prayer. Prayer is a great way to feel closer to God.

#### Mission Prayer

Missional practices help cultivate new understandings and ways of engaging in Christ's mission. Missional practices are intentional and repetitive patterns of individual and community actions. One example of a missional practice is the mission prayer. We pray to be led by the Spirit with courage to go where the Spirit leads. Provide each class member a copy of the mission prayer. As a group, read it a few times.

#### Mission Prayer

God, where will your Spirit lead today?  
Help me be fully awake and ready to respond.

Grant me courage to risk something new  
and become a blessing of your love and peace.  
Amen.

#### Body Prayer

The body prayer is a spiritual practice. Spiritual practices come in various forms: breathing, singing, keeping a journal, and many others. The body prayer is a prayer that takes on physical form through our body's movements. There are three steps. The first is "greeting God," and you do this by putting your hands together in front of your face as if you are praying. The second is "praising God." Raise your arms up above your head and out to the side to create a V shape. The third is "confessing to God." Bring your hands down and lay them over your heart. The fourth is "sharing God's love." Raise your arms outstretched to the side with palms facing upward. Practice the body prayer using the words of the mission prayer.

#### Mission Prayer

God, where will your Spirit lead today?  
(greeting God)

Help me be fully awake and ready to respond.  
(praising God)

Grant me courage to risk something new  
(confessing to God)  
and become a blessing of your love and peace.  
(sharing God's love with others)  
Amen.

### 4 SEND

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

When leaders make promises to those they lead, they are expected to follow through with them. The declaration you wrote today is your commitment to live as a disciple and share God's shalom. What can you do to keep the promise you made in your disciple's declaration?

### 5 BLESS

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

Close with the mission prayer.

# FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

LESSON 10  
3 February 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 4:21–30/4:21–31 IV

**Lesson Focus:** Christ's Mission, Our Mission—How can we add our pieces to the puzzle?

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- read about Jesus' message and how some people struggled to understand it.
- watch President Veazey's address
- find their places in Christ's mission.

## Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- Copies of puzzle (end of lesson; cut apart before class)

- Scissors
- Computer/projector/Internet access for viewing president's address (download prior to class from [www.CofChrist.org/resources](http://www.CofChrist.org/resources) search "president's address") OR
- Copy of April 2015 President's Address (May 2015 *Herald*, pp. 6–11)
- Plates or trays
- Sand

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Luke 4:21–30 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

### Drawing in the Sand

Have you ever walked on the sand and left a footprint only to watch a wave wash it away? Sand is ever changing, one shape one minute and a different shape the next. Just like sand, the prayers on our hearts change, too. Pour sand onto a plate or tray, deep enough that words can be drawn in the sand. Provide each student with a plate and sand, or share if supplies are limited. Give group members enough time to write words or draw pictures of the prayers on their hearts.

Life can be wonderful, full of happy moments and acceptance. Sometimes, though, we experience rejection from others. Read today's scripture passage about a time when the people of Nazareth, Jesus' hometown, rejected him and his message to the point of wanting to throw him off a cliff.

<sup>21</sup>Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

<sup>22</sup>All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" <sup>23</sup>He said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Doctor, cure yourself!' And you will say, 'Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.'" <sup>24</sup>And he said, "Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's hometown. <sup>25</sup>But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; <sup>26</sup>yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. <sup>27</sup>There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian."

<sup>28</sup>When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. <sup>29</sup>They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they

might hurl him off the cliff. <sup>30</sup>But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

—Luke 4:21–30 NRSV

The people of Nazareth were upset because they thought Jesus would recognize them as special, better than others, because they were from the same town as Jesus. The people of Nazareth were hoping for a message of exclusiveness, and instead Jesus offered a message of inclusiveness. Jesus is not the only person who has experienced rejection from others considered close. Maybe you have had moments when friends or family members have turned their backs on you; hopefully, they did not want to throw you off a cliff!

- Think of a time when friends turned their backs on you. What happened? How did that make you feel?
- Think of a time when you were included in a new group or activity. What happened? How did it make you feel?

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Jesus' mission is radical! In the Scriptures, we often read about people struggling to accept or understand his mission. Today's scripture passage is about a group of people who struggled so much they tried to throw Jesus off a cliff! Jesus brought his mission and message 2,000 years ago, but people still struggle to understand and accept his mission. Jesus challenges what we do and how we live. He challenges us to do and be better!

President Veazey showed how we can be better disciples:

### "That's not my style"

In President Veazey's April 2015 address, he tells the story of a late-night chat with a medical technician while he was in the hospital. Due to failing equipment, the technician expressed her frustration. At the end of her colorful speech, she asked President Veazey what his job was. When he told her he was a minister, she quickly tensed, and asked, "Did I cuss??...All of the ministers I know always try to make me feel guilty." *Starting at minute-marker 16:18, watch how President Veazey responded to the medical technician.*

President Veazey told the technician, "That's not my style." In doing so, he was letting the technician know that he was no better than she and was not going to judge her or try to make her feel guilty.

- Describe a time when you have gone against what was expected to show someone, "That's not my style".
- President Veazey tells us to give up self-righteous behavior because all persons are of worth. Share

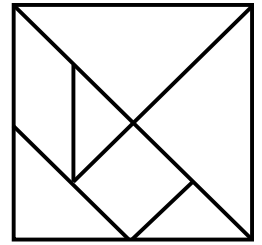
an experience when you valued the worth of others or when another valued you. How do you think that person felt? How did you feel?

## 3 RESPOND

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

### Puzzle

Give each class member a piece of the puzzle found at the end of the lesson and have the group work to put the puzzle together. If you have a large group, make more copies of the puzzle and split the group. If you have fewer students, give each class member several pieces. Use the puzzle to transition to the following questions.



Just as each of you had a piece to the puzzle, each of you is included in Christ's mission. We are all part of Christ's mission, and we are called to add our pieces to the puzzle to help fulfill Christ's mission. Community of Christ is dedicated to making Christ's mission our mission, a mission that includes all people.

- How do you see your role as a disciple in Community of Christ?
- How do you add your "puzzle piece" to Christ's mission?
- How do you help others add their "puzzle pieces" to Christ's mission?

## 4 SEND

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

Jesus shares a message of inclusion, a message that is now ours to share. Complete the call to action with how you will include someone this week who is on the outside.

### Call to action:

This week I will try to include others when I ...

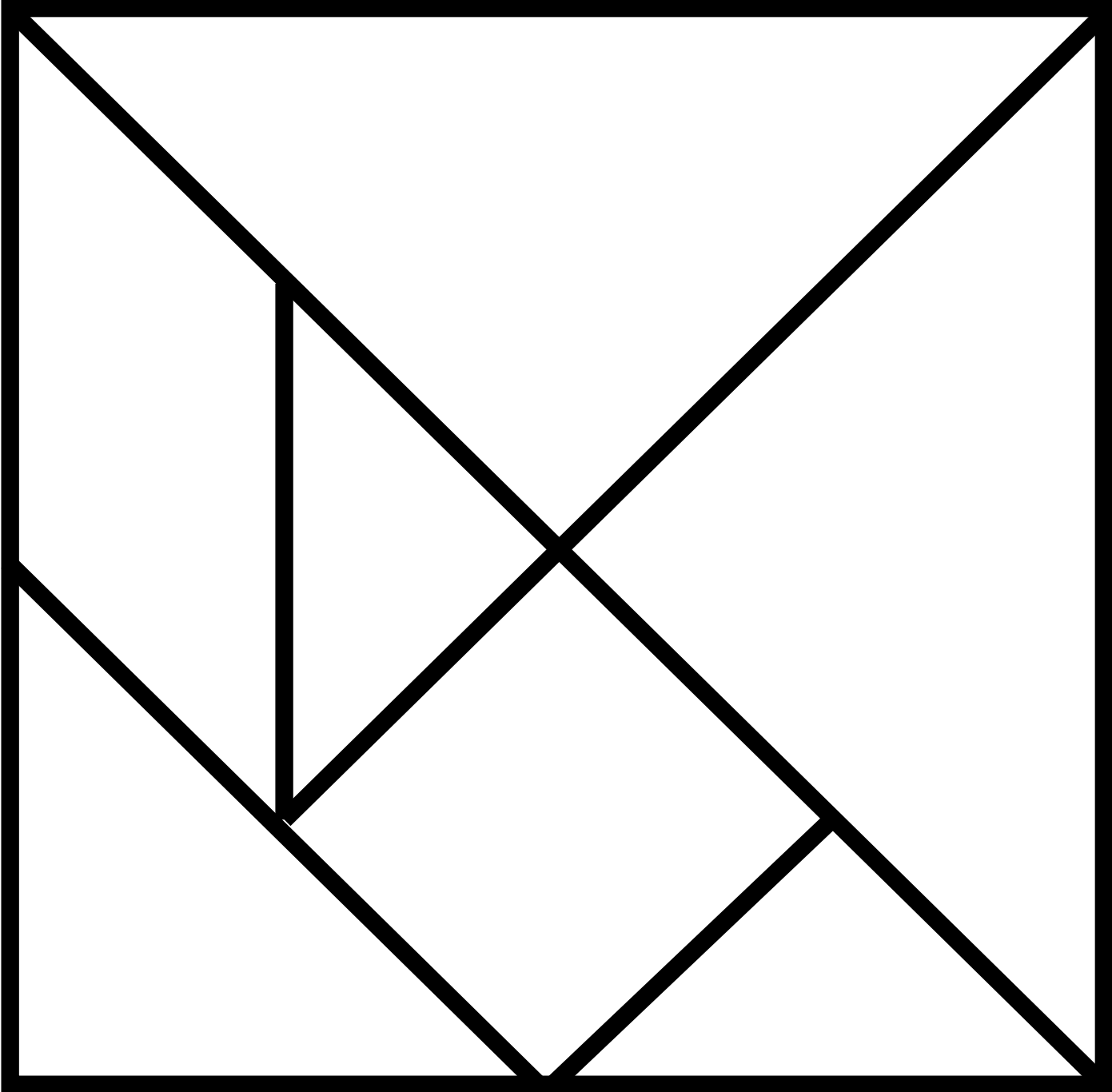
## 5 BLESS

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

### Change of Heart

The prayers on our hearts are ever changing. It is possible the prayers on the class members' hearts have changed during this lesson. Close by allowing time for the group members to write or draw their new prayers in the sand.

**Puzzle Pattern**



# FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

LESSON 11  
10 February 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 5:1-11

**Lesson Focus:** Become Fishers of People

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- consider how Jesus made connections to people “where they were.”
- re-explore their early encounters with God and how they were shaped by the experience.

- discern how God continues to connect to us through the familiar as we grow.

## Supplies

- Bible
- Paper, pens or pencils

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Luke 5:1–11 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament (with focus on the Gospel according to Luke)*, p. 40, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Begin today’s class inviting them to remember their first few expressions of God’s presence in their lives. Have them recall as much detail as possible.

- The location
- The time of year
- Whom they were with
- How old they were
- Sights, sounds, smells of the experience

Be sensitive to those who do not yet recognize their first encounters with God with assurances that all of us are on a journey of discovery. Spend moments of silence between each section in which they attempt to recall a first experience of connection to God’s presence or personal calling.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Before reading the scripture passage, ask the students to be aware of the sights, sounds, smells, and emotions surrounding this gospel story. Read from Luke 5:1–11 considering the context of what is happening.

Discuss:

- What did sensory experiences you feel from this story?
- Who are the characters in the story (Jesus, the crowds, Simon, other fishers, etc.)?
- What is each of these characters seeking in the story?
  - Why did Jesus need a boat?
  - Why might Jesus have picked Simon Peter’s boat in this story?

- Why were Simon, James, and John even a part of this story?

This story is about the first few people who left their occupations and companions to follow Jesus. The other gospels may suggest there was more than this one story that led these people to begin their discipleship, yet this part of the story was significant and one of their early encounters with Jesus.

Have the students share about the first time they met someone who would later become a long-time, good friend.

- What were your feelings when you first met this person?
- What was the setting?
- Did you know in this first meeting how close you'd become?
- How did it change you?

These "first stories" begin our journey with people and build relationships. In the same way, the disciples were experiencing their first steps in their relationship with Jesus.

Now have each person think of a favorite place they've been to multiple times.

- What was your feeling about this place the first time you went there?
- What is your favorite thing about this location?
- How has the location changed since you first visited?
- How have you changed? How does this affect you each time you visit?

In discussing a long-time friendship or an often-visited location, we recognize change and growth. Discuss how this is also true in our spiritual walk with God.

Like this story, the outcome was unexpected. Simon, James, and John had never seen so many fish! And they were seasoned fishers! Discuss what "unexpected outcomes" have occurred from your first or early friendship, favorite place, and experiences with God's Spirit.

### **3 RESPOND**

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

Jesus meets Simon Peter, James, and John in their place of work—the fishing boats. We don't know if Jesus

was that acquainted with fishing or not. If you look at a map of Nazareth where he grew up, you'll see the Sea of Galilee was about a half-day walk from Nazareth. Was Jesus, a son of a carpenter, that knowledgeable about fishing among these seasoned fishers?

- Have you ever been around someone who wasn't as knowledgeable as you on a subject try to instruct you? How did that make you feel? How did you feel about that person?
- Look at the scripture passage again and discuss how Simon reacted to Jesus' request to throw the nets on the other side of the ship. Can you "read between the lines" to uncover how Jesus and Simon were feeling and what their motivations might have been?
- Ships' riggings were set up to fish off one particular side of the boat. How much difference would it make to change to the other side as Jesus suggested? What was Jesus trying to do?
- Discuss Simon Peter's change of attitude after the great catch of fish. What changed him from a possible skeptic to believer?

After seeing the miracle of the great catch of fish, Simon Peter asks Jesus to leave him because he views himself as a sinner. In Jesus' time, many found themselves out of favor because the spiritual leaders created so many rules to divide the righteous from the sinners. Simon Peter, James, and John are not apprentices of any spiritual leaders—yet Jesus calls them to be his disciples.

- Discuss how Jesus' way of calling followers was different. What might he have been trying to show?
- Read what Jesus says to Simon Peter after he requests Jesus to leave his boat (v. 10). How does Jesus connect his mission with the occupation of the fishers in the boat? How might we use the same example with people in modern occupations today?
- In the last sentence, the new disciples left their boats behind to follow Jesus. What might we need to leave behind when considering following Jesus?

### **4 SEND**

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

Now read the story found in John 21:1–14. This story takes place after Jesus' resurrection. Discuss:

- The similarities to the story found in Luke
- The differences to the story found in Luke

- Why were the two experiences so similar? What might have been the reason Jesus was offering the same advice he had given his disciples in their early relationship?
- How did Peter respond differently? What might that say about his understanding regarding discipleship?
- Do you have any experiences that link your early understanding of discipleship and your present understanding? How has your discipleship matured over time?

# 5

## BLESS

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

On a piece of paper, write one or two words that express your earliest understanding of being in God's presence or your call to follow Jesus. On the other side of the page write one or two words that express your understanding today. Draw a bridge with symbols that represent how you've made the journey from one side to the other. Meditate on how God has called you throughout and how God is calling you still.

# SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY (PROPER 1)

LESSON 12  
17 February 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 6:17-26

**Lesson Focus:** Jesus Teaches about Blessings

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- discover Jesus' mission as expressed in the Sermon on the Plain.
- better understand what blessings mean.
- discern how this message connects to the Mission Initiative Abolish Poverty, End Suffering.

## Supplies

- Bible
- Copies of Blessing and Woes, end of lesson
- Pens

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Luke 6:17–26 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament (with focus on the Gospel according to Luke)*, pp. 41–42, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Consider a time you gathered with a large group of people. It might have been a concert, Spectacular, a World Conference, IYF, or other event with many people. Discuss:

- What was the purpose for so many to gather? What did the group have in common?
- What did it feel like to be with such a large group? What made you uncomfortable? What made it exciting?
- One of Jesus' first sermons is recorded in our scripture passage subtitled "The Sermon on the Plain." Why might the crowd have gathered? Are there some parallels to your answers to the first two questions?

Share in a brief prayer of gathering asking for our recognition of God's presence as well as community that is shared in common with those who were in attendance at the Sermon on the Plain.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Distribute the Blessings and Woes worksheet. First, have someone read the entire scripture passage while the class follows along. Explain that this passage takes place relatively early in Jesus' ministry soon after the calling of the twelve apostles. This large assembly was a unique gathering of people from many different communities and began with healings and sermons. Though the Sermon on the Mount is more familiar, the message is similar.

- Have the students read the scripture passage silently, circling words that stand out. Have them draw lines between linked or connected thoughts.
- Allow time for students to share what they discovered from this exercise.

Share with the class that these verses are considered to be an early recorded sermon of Jesus—thus expressing their importance to the church. Discuss:

- What might be the main message of Jesus in this passage?



- In short words or phrases, write these on a marker board or poster.
- Compile the words and phrases to summarize Jesus' message in the Sermon of the Plain.
- Woe to those who go on and on about the latest series on television, for they will have to sit through an incredibly long sermon.

Explain to the class there are two sections to this sermon: the blessings and the woes. Discuss:

- Are the blessings things to strive for, or are they for empathy and assistance for those in these conditions?
  - How would you interpret Jesus' blessing "Blessed are the poor"?
  - How would you interpret Jesus' blessing "Blessed are you who are hungry now"?
  - How would you interpret Jesus' blessing "Blessed are you who weep"?
  - How would you interpret Jesus' blessing "Blessed are you when people hate you, exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man"?
- Do the woes mean condemnation or consideration and calling for those found in these conditions?
  - How would you interpret Jesus' words "Woe to you who are rich"?
  - How would you interpret Jesus' words "Woe to you who are full now"?
  - How would you interpret Jesus' words "Woe to you who are laughing now"?
  - How would you interpret Jesus' words "Woe to you when all speak well of you"?

### 3 RESPOND

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

Have the students come up with a few of their own "Blessed" and "Woe" statements that Jesus might say in a sermon today. Examples (do both funny and serious):

- Blessed are those who make friends with a new person at school, for they will be always have lots of friends.

Though it's fun having some funny "blessed" and "woes," help the students focus on present issues of peace and justice in your community. This is not a revenge exercise, but what might be the outcome of bad behavior.

### 4 SEND

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

Jesus is sharing the Sermon on the Plain to lift up his vision of compassion and justice. Share as a class what your congregation is doing to engage in the Mission Initiative Abolish Poverty, End Suffering. This initiative calls us to be poised to be Christ's hands and feet, reaching out through compassionate ministries that serve the poor and hungry and stop conditions that diminish the worth of persons. Discuss how as a congregation you

- help those who hurt.
- feed the hungry.
- support compassionate ministries.
- respond in times of crisis.

Discuss how these ministries connect to Jesus' early message found in the Sermon on the Plain.

### 5 BLESS

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

Close with this prayer:

Help us bless the poor,

Help us bless the hungry,

Help us bless the weeping,

Help us bless those we hate, exclude, revile, and defame.

Help us turn woes into blessings in our community, homes, and our own hearts. Amen.

## **Blessings and Woes** (Luke 6:20–26)

Then he looked up at his disciples and said:

“Blessed are you who are poor,  
for yours is the kingdom of God.

“Blessed are you who are hungry now,  
for you will be filled.

“Blessed are you who weep now,  
for you will laugh.

“Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice on that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets.

“But woe to you who are rich,  
for you have received your consolation.

“Woe to you who are full now,  
for you will be hungry.

“Woe to you who are laughing now,  
for you will mourn and weep.

“Woe to you when all speak well of you,  
for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.”

# SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY (PROPER 2)

LESSON 13  
24 February 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 6:27–38

**Lesson Focus:** Love Your Enemies

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- better understand Jesus' teaching of reversal of violence and power.
- learn of God's abundant generosity.
- understand how revenge is counter to the ways of Jesus.

## Supplies

- Bible
- Community of Christ Sings (CCS)
- Marker board and markers or poster and pens
- Grain, rice, coffee, or something with which you can fill a medium-sized container
- A dish towel or paper towel

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Luke 6:27–38 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament (with focus on the Gospel according to Luke)*, p. 43, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Start your time together as a class with a breath prayer using the text in Luke. Make sure the students are comfortable, and have them listen to their breathing for a few moments.

Have the class engage in a breath prayer by first listening to their breathing. Instruct the students to slowly breathe in...and breathe out. Incorporate using parts of today's scripture passage in the breathing...

Breathe in saying, "Love your enemies..."  
Breathe out, "...and be children of God."

Breathe in saying, "Be merciful..."  
Breathe out, "...as God is merciful."

Breathe in saying, "Forgive"  
Breathe out, "...and be forgiven."

Try this a couple times with the group.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Today's text continues Luke's account of the Sermon on the Plain. Read together from Luke 6:27–38 and discuss phrases or words that stand out to you.

Though we're quick to remember Jesus' admonition to love our enemies, we're not so quick to remember the harsh examples given in this passage. There are a number of "things" being done to the listeners in Jesus' discourse. Have the class write on a marker board or paper the violation and the response given in this verse (examples below):

### Violation

- Those who hate you
- Those who curse you
- Those who abuse you

### Response

- Do good
- Bless
- Pray for... (continue though scripture)

Which of these responses do the students find especially difficult, and why?

Explain that these verses are not condoning abuse. It is difficult to allow additional slaps on the face or give away whatever is asked of us. Ask the group to again consider vv. 31–38. Ask the group these questions:

- Verse 31 is Christianity's Golden Rule (found in almost all world religions). What do you feel is at the heart of this rule?
- When have you ever experienced someone "cursing you"? How did you react?
- Verses 35–36 share how we should reflect the personality of God: "kind to the ungrateful...merciful." How is this expressed in our discipleship at school, work, or home?

## 3 RESPOND

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

Read again verses 37–38:

Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.

The phrase "a good measure" actually refers to a unit of measurement for grain in a basket commonly used in the markets in Jesus' time. Shoppers would bring this basket to the market and fill it to the top with the grain they had purchased. You can imagine that many arguments took place over how close to the top of the basket the grain had been measured. Here in this verse, Jesus explains the generous nature of God: "...good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over ...into your lap." In other words "more than you expect or deserve."

Explain this using grain, rice, coffee, or other item with which you can fill a medium-sized container. Place a dish towel or paper towel under the container to catch overflow. Practice before you do this to find that it works well. Tell the students they've just paid for a full container, and you're going to give them what they've paid for.

- First, just pour it in. In most cases, it will mound in the middle of the container. Only let that middle part fill to the top. Technically, you've filled it up. How do you feel about this amount?

- Shake the container until the mound flattens out. Most likely there's room for more, so add it. How do they now feel about the amount they are getting?
- Now press the measure down by hand into the container. Add more to it. How do they feel now?
- Now pour more until a significant amount pours over the container and onto the towel. Wrap up the towel and container and say this is what God gives. How do they feel now?
  - Ask the students how this reflects the nature of God.
  - Have you ever received more than you expended or deserved? How did it make you feel?
  - What has God given you in "...good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over ... into your lap?"

## 4 SEND

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

A popular theme in our modern culture is revenge. It is common in our myth and storytelling as well as our news stories. We seem to feel better when we see those wronged get their "just rewards." Share for a few moments how this theme is found in examples of popular culture.

- Share a book, movie, or TV show in which someone gets "paid back" for being bad.
- Consider some of the top stories in the news recently—do any have a "revenge" aspect to them?
- Each nation has a war story where revenge is a part of the narrative. What are some of your nation's stories that illustrate this?

Now, using today's scripture passage, how would these stories change if this passage was applied? Consider:

- But I say to you that listen, love your enemies.
- Do good to those who hate you.
- Bless those who curse you.
- Pray for those who abuse you.
- If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also.
- Anyone who takes away your coat, do not withhold even your shirt.

- If anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again.
- Do to others as you would have them do to you.

# 5 BLESS

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

Offer a “popcorn” prayer and let students add to the prayer by offering one word.

God, we thank you for your generous nature to us! We see it in....

We also want to be generous disciples, reflecting who you are. Help us show your nature in our lives by doing these things to show blessing in others’ lives...

# LAST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY— TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY

LESSON 14  
3 March 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 9:28–43a

**Lesson Focus:** Peace of Jesus Christ—Who is Christ to me?

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- read about Jesus' transfiguration.
- play a game to learn to really listen.
- answer the question, "Who is Jesus to me?"

## Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*
- Name tags
- Pens or pencils
- Paper coffee filters
- Spray bottle
- Clothespins
- Markers

- **Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Luke 9:28–43a in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Today's scripture passage telling of Jesus' transfiguration marks the end of the season of Epiphany. The story, which tells of the divine nature of Jesus Christ, asks Christians an important question, "Who is Jesus to me?" Read the scripture passage to learn about what happens to Jesus when he and a few of his disciples go to a mountain to pray.

<sup>28</sup>Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. <sup>29</sup>And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. <sup>30</sup>Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. <sup>31</sup>They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. <sup>32</sup>Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. <sup>33</sup>Just as they

were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah" —not knowing what he said. <sup>34</sup>While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. <sup>35</sup>Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" <sup>36</sup>When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

<sup>37</sup>On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. <sup>38</sup>Just then a man from the crowd shouted, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son; he is my only child. <sup>39</sup>Suddenly a spirit seizes him, and all at once he shrieks. It convulses him until he foams at the mouth; it mauls him and will scarcely leave him. <sup>40</sup>I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not." <sup>41</sup>Jesus answered, "You faithless and perverse generation, how much longer must I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." <sup>42</sup>While he was coming, the demon dashed him to the ground in convulsions. But

Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the boy, and gave him back to his father.

<sup>43</sup>And all were astounded at the greatness of God.

—Luke 9:28–43a NRSV

Humans are fallible by nature. They make mistakes. Peter's human frailty is revealed on the mountaintop with Jesus. Peter wanted to stay there—in the place of his incredible experience. Jesus leaves the mountaintop because he has a mission to fulfill.

- Christ's mission is more important than anything else, but we easily forget what that means. What is something that you have put before Christ's mission?
- How have you been like Peter and wanted to bask in a mountaintop experience instead of sharing Christ's mission with others?

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Because Peter was too concerned with the blessings of the manifestation of Jesus' divinity to really listen to Jesus, God reminds Peter and his companions, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!"

### Listen Closely

Have the class members close their eyes. Choose one person (without letting other class members know) to say the verse, "This is my son, my Chosen; listen to him!" The speaker's goal is to distort or disguise his or her voice making it difficult for the group to guess who is speaking. The rest of the group must listen closely and try to decide who spoke. An alternative is to play sound clips of different famous or recognizable people and have them guess who's voice it is.

It is important to listen closely and not get distracted by funny-sounding voices to distinguish who is talking. It is easy to understand how Peter was distracted, wanting to stay in the place where he witnessed the transfiguration of Jesus. God rebukes Peter telling him to "listen!"

- Like Peter, have you ever been so distracted by something that you missed something else?
- How do you remind yourself to pay attention to the important moments and experiences of life?

## 3 RESPOND

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

Jesus was transformed. The Jesus the disciples knew was transfigured into Jesus Christ, the divine. What does it mean to be transformed? We can say it, but how do we live it? In today's scripture passage, we see Jesus' very real, very tangible transformation. This transformation occurred while Jesus was praying. We can be transformed when we take on the mission of Jesus Christ and make it our own.

### Who Is Jesus to Me?

In Lesson 8, class members wrote words describing who Jesus is to them. Remind the class of the words they used to describe Jesus. Who is Jesus to them? When Jesus came into the world, he showed us what it meant to share his peace. Jesus set the perfect example by being a teacher and friend, but Jesus' mission did not stop there. Jesus showed us how we should live so we can be an example for others.

- How can we be a *[fill in with a word used to describe Jesus]* to another?
- How have others exemplified that quality in your life?

Have class members choose one of the words that they will strive to model for other persons this week. Have them write their words on name tags so others know they are a friend, teacher, peace builder, or whatever they choose.

## 4 SEND

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

### Be Transformed

Caterpillars go through a transformation called metamorphosis when they become butterflies. Metamorphosis requires much energy from the caterpillars, but in the end, they become beautiful butterflies. Provide each class member with a paper coffee filter, markers, and a clothespin. Have the youth draw shapes on their coffee filters making sure to leave some blank space. When they are done, using a spray bottle, spray each coffee filter with water. The color on the filter will bleed to fill in the white areas. Let the filters dry; then accordion-fold them from top to bottom in the middle and clip them with the clothespins. The

clothespin is the body of the butterfly and the coffee filter, the wings.

- What does it mean to be transformed by Christ's mission?
- Share a time that you have seen someone transformed by Christ's mission?
- How has your understanding of Jesus transformed and deepened as you have encountered him in your life?

# 5

## **BLESS**

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

Close with a prayer or sing "Lord, Prepare Me" CCS 280.



# FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

LESSON 15  
10 March 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 4:1–13/4:1–12 IV

**Lesson Focus:** Spiritual Formation—Sojourning in the Wilderness

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- create a Lenten calendar.
- discuss personal temptations.
- open themselves to the Holy Spirit.

## Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- Joyful Yes Lenten calendars
- Pens and pencils
- Square paper for folding
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Luke 4:1–13 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

The forty days of Lent before Easter Sunday represent the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness after his baptism. Lent is a season of preparation. Just like Jesus prepared in the wilderness for his earthly ministry, we must prepare ourselves to more deeply understand the events of Passion Week and Easter. Read today’s scripture passage about Jesus’ time in the wilderness and the temptations he faced.

<sup>4</sup>Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, <sup>2</sup>where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. <sup>3</sup>The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.” <sup>4</sup>Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘One does not live by bread alone.’” <sup>5</sup>Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. <sup>6</sup>And the devil said to him, “To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given

over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. <sup>7</sup>If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” <sup>8</sup>

Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’” <sup>9</sup>Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, <sup>10</sup>for it is written, ‘He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,’ <sup>11</sup>and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’” <sup>12</sup>Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” <sup>13</sup>When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

Luke 4:1–13 NRSV

In a previous lesson, we discussed the importance of wilderness. We each have our own wildernesses that help us open ourselves to the Holy Spirit. We find Jesus in the wilderness in today’s scripture.

- Have class members remind one another of their “wildernesses.”
- Share about a time recently that you were in your “wilderness” for spiritual renewal. Do you take time regularly for spiritual growth and renewal?

# 2 ENGAGE


Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

## Joyful Yes Lenten Calendar

Lent is the season of the Christian calendar that spans the 40 days (not counting Sundays) between Ash Wednesday and Easter. Lent can be a powerful time of spiritual renewal—a time to pause, explore, and be intentional in our communion with the Divine. In some traditions, people fast or give up something for the 40 days of Lent as a symbol of their recommitment to God. Although members of the class may be giving something up for Lent (you may take time to discuss this), Lent is not just about saying no to something, but rather saying yes—a joyful yes! Jesus wants us to experience joy in discipleship by responding with a joyful yes every day!

Hand out copies of the Joyful Yes Lenten calendar and colored pencils or pens. During Advent we have Advent calendars to count down the days until Christmas; today we will create a Lenten calendar counting down the days until Easter. We ask ourselves the question, "How can we joyfully celebrate Lent?" Use the Lenten calendar to come up with ideas, writing them in the spaces provided. Help the group brainstorm for their first week.

Examples: talk to a person instead of texting or using social media, increase personal tithing, give notes of kindness or words of encouragement to friends and family, engage in a community event. When they are finished, allow them time to share ways they can respond joyfully.



**Note to teachers:**

Keep the Lenten calendars to be used throughout Lent or remind the class to bring them each Sunday.

# 3 RESPOND

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

## Temptations

During his time in the wilderness, Jesus faced three temptations. He answered the temptations with wisdom gained from prayer and meditation. Having a strong spiritual connection helped Jesus overcome the temptations. Jesus' reliance on and growth from

his prayer and meditation show us the importance of spiritual formation. Spiritual formation is important for our life and ministry as disciples.

Think of a time you were tempted by something. Maybe you were tempted to spend time with friends instead of study for a test, or you were tempted with an extra few minutes of sleep and you missed the bus. If you are comfortable, share with the group something about a temptation you have faced.

Jesus used wisdom gained from prayer and meditation to overcome temptation. If we apply this to all areas of our lives, how might wisdom gained from prayer and meditation help us in other ways? (*make responsible choices, reconcile disagreements with friends, choose to spend more time in our personal "wilderness"*)

## Filled with the Holy Spirit

We, too, can be filled with the Holy Spirit like Jesus. Follow the steps below to create a paper balloon, or if time and materials do not allow, a regular balloon can be used. Without air, a paper balloon is just a folded piece of paper and cannot fulfill its potential. But when it is full of air, it is a balloon! We can better serve our purpose as disciples when we are filled with the Spirit in the same way a balloon is filled with air.



1. Start with a square piece of paper. Fold and unfold from corner to corner creating an X-shaped crease in the paper.



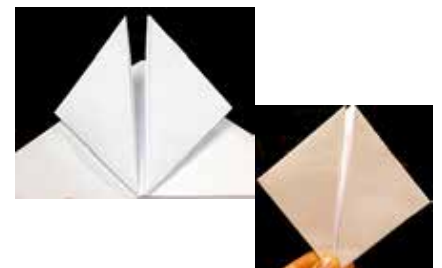
2. Fold the paper from the top edge to the bottom edge.



3. Invert fold the top right corner into the folded section so the top right corner is in the middle of the bottom edge. Repeat on the other side.



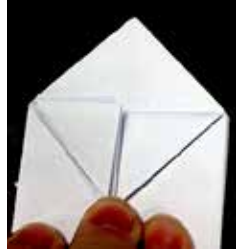
4. The paper should look like a triangle. Fold the bottom tips up to the top point creating a diamond. Repeat on the other side.





5. Fold the two side points of the diamond inward so they meet in the middle. Repeat on the other side.

6. At the top of the paper, there are four free flaps. Individually, fold the flaps down so their top points align with the folded-in side points.



7. Fold the four folded flaps outward so their flat edges line up with the edge of the paper. Unfold these folds.

8. Using the crease, tuck the four flaps into the spaces of the folded-in side flaps.
9. Turn the paper around so the bottom is now the top. There should be an opening.



10. Fold the entire opposite sides together so the folded portions are hidden.

11. Blow into the hole to inflate the balloon.



## 4 SEND

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

Lent is a time of making space in our lives to experience God more completely and joyfully respond in serving God. The class created a list of ways they can respond joyfully throughout the first week of Lent. Have them choose one of the ideas from their calendars and use it to complete the call to action.

### Call to Action

This week I will do more than just say yes; I will respond with a joyful yes by...

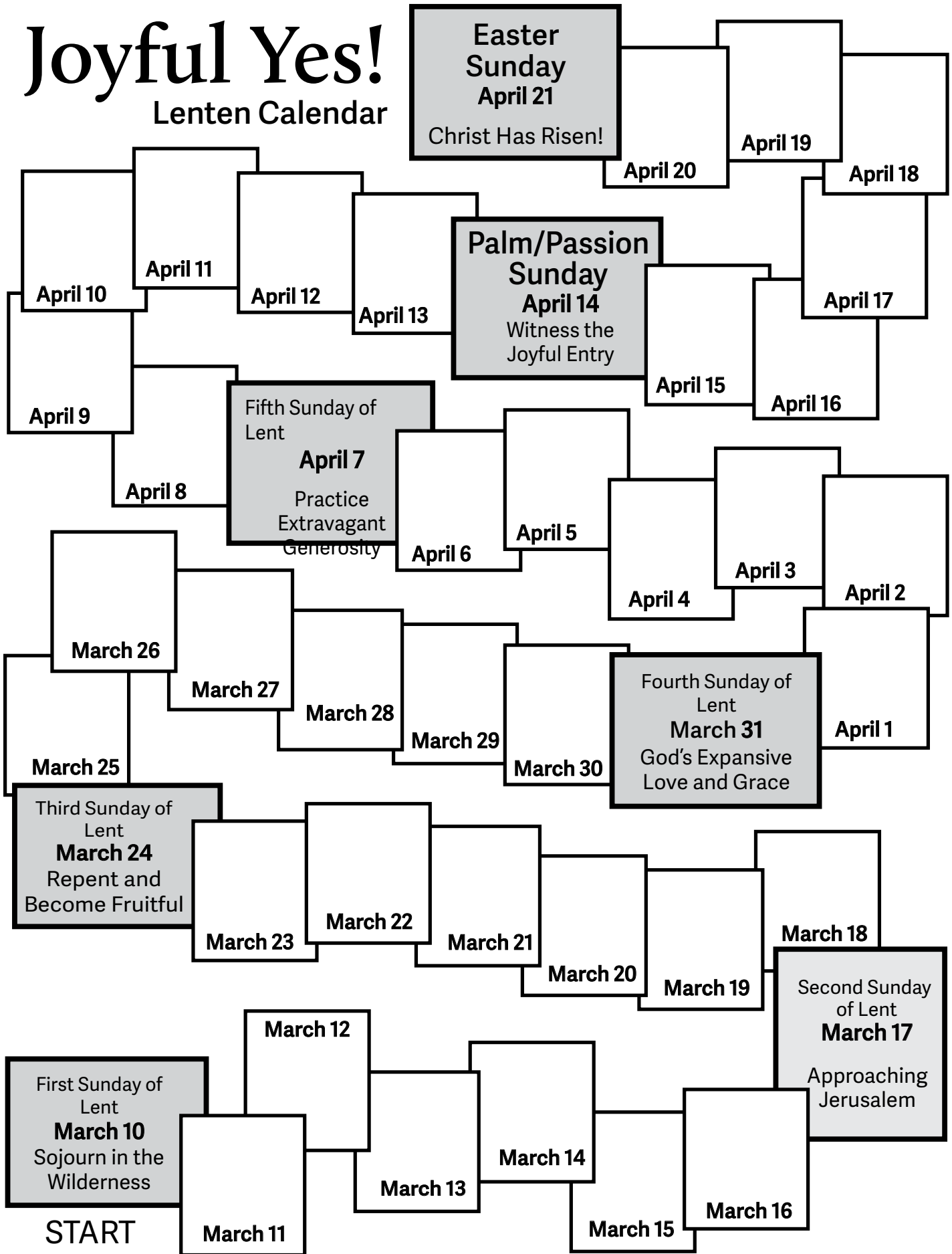
## 5 BLESS

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

Sing "Go with Us, Lord" CCS 612 or close with a prayer asking that each class member be filled with the Holy Spirit.

# Joyful Yes!

## Lenten Calendar



# SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

LESSON 16  
17 March 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 13:31–35/13:31–36 IV

**Lesson Focus:** Peace of Jesus Christ—How can we overcome challenges in life?

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- read about challenges Jesus faced.
- discuss overcoming peer pressure.
- commit to living like Jesus.

## Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- Joyful Yes Lenten calendars
- Objects for obstacle course
- Note-sized paper (enough for each class member to have one or two)
- Pens or pencils

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Luke 13:31–35 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

### Joyful Yes Lenten Calendar

If you collected the Lenten calendars, pass them out to the students, or ask them to get them out. Have spare copies for class members who don't have one or forgot to bring theirs. With the group, review the Lent discussion and what they wrote on their calendars from the previous lesson. The class started their Joyful Yes Lenten calendars by brainstorming ways they can respond joyfully as disciples during the Lenten season. Discuss with the group their first week of Lent. How did they respond joyfully? Then give the group time to think of new ways to respond joyfully and write those on week two of the calendars. When the group is finished, allow time to share how they plan to respond joyfully.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

### Obstacle Course

Using chairs, tables, books, or other space-filling objects, create an obstacle course that class members

will navigate while blindfolded. If there is enough space, set this up in the classroom; move to a larger area or outside if more space is needed. One at a time, blindfold class members and have them make their way through the obstacle course. Have someone escort each class member to prevent injury. After each class member has completed the obstacle course, discuss the following questions.

- Was it difficult going through the course knowing there were obstacles in your way that you could not see?
- What were you feeling as you made your way through the course? Was there fear, anxiety, or other emotions?
- Finally, what helped you get through the course? Did you rely on courage, using your hands and feet, or asking others for help?

Read today's scripture passage about a time when Jesus faced obstacles and peer pressure and how he chose to not let them stand in the way of fulfilling his mission.

<sup>31</sup>At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.” <sup>32</sup>He said to them, “Go and tell that fox for me, ‘Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work.’ <sup>33</sup>Yet today,

tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.' <sup>34</sup>Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! <sup>35</sup>See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

Luke 13:31–35 NRSV

## 3 RESPOND

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

Jesus did not turn from what he knew was coming. He knew King Herod wanted to kill him, and yet he continued to heal, restore, and set persons free. By ignoring the Pharisees' concern for his safety, Jesus was standing up to King Herod and the injustices of his rule. King Herod wanted Jesus to be afraid and intimidated, but instead, Jesus stood up to him and showed him true power.

Each of us experiences challenges like standing up to King Herod. Share about a time when you were confronted by the "Herods" in your life. How did you find strength to stand up to them?

We cannot control others' actions or how they treat people; we can only control our actions and how we treat people. Sometimes we face peer pressure to do something or act a certain way even if that is not what we should do or how we should act. Jesus shows us that even in the face of peer pressure and resistance we cannot lose our focus and turn away from our purpose.

### Peer Pressure

Ask the class to think of a peer pressure they are dealing with. Have them write their answers on pieces of paper. For anonymity, place all answers in a hat or

box. Draw one piece of paper at a time and discuss the peer pressure written on it.

- What is the peer pressure?
- How could you overcome this obstacle?
- If it is something you should not do, what is something you could do instead that demonstrates the mission of Jesus Christ?

**Note to teacher:** Use discretion with the topics. You know your class. If a topic would be uncomfortable for your group to discuss, it may be best to skip it.

## 4 SEND

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

Today's scripture passage is about a time when Jesus defied a king. We can learn from this and apply the principle to our lives as disciples. Each time we face a challenge or unwanted peer pressure, we have the opportunity to decide who we will be as disciples. Will we be like Jesus and live the Enduring Principles, or will we give in to peer pressure and allow the injustices in our world to continue? We choose how we respond to others and the challenges in life.

### Personal Challenge

Have the group read this statement together.

This week I will uphold the mission and message of Jesus Christ by choosing how I respond to others and the challenges I face.

## 5 BLESS

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

Close with a group prayer or a partner prayer. For a partner prayer, each class member should find a partner to pray with. Take a moment for partners to share something they would like a prayer for, and then have class members pray for each other.

# THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

LESSON 17  
24 March 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 13:1–9

**Lesson Focus:** Responsible Choices

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- explore Responsible Choices.
- see how their actions can cause a ripple effect.
- continue thinking of ways to respond joyfully during Lent.

## Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Sharing in Community of Christ: Exploring Identity, Mission, Message, and Beliefs*, 3rd Edition
- Container filled with water
- Small stones
- Joyful Yes Lenten calendars
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Luke 13:1–9 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Community of Christ has nine Enduring Principles that are core values or foundational concepts and help define who we are as a faith community. If the group is unfamiliar with the Enduring Principles, use either [www.CofChrist.org/enduring-principles](http://www.CofChrist.org/enduring-principles) or the book, *Sharing in Community of Christ: Exploring Identity, Mission, Message, and Beliefs*, 3rd Edition, to discuss the Enduring Principles and their important role in our identity. Focus particularly on the Enduring Principle Responsible Choices and discuss the questions about it.

- What does it mean to make responsible choices within the circumstances of our lives?
- How does making responsible choices affect our lives? The lives of others? Creation?
- How do we know choices are responsible?

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

### When Bad Things Happen to Good People

When something bad happens to someone, is it because he or she has sinned? Is a person who experiences hardships and trials in life more of a sinner than someone who faces none? Jesus asks these questions in today's scripture passage. Read today's passage to learn Jesus' answer.

### Responsible Choices

- God gives humans the ability to make choices about whom or what they will serve. Some people experience conditions that diminish their ability to make choices.
- Human choices contribute to good or evil in our lives and in the world.
- Many aspects of creation need redemption because of irresponsible and sinful human choices.
- We are called to make responsible choices within the circumstances of our lives that contribute to the purposes of God.

At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. <sup>2</sup>He asked them, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans?" <sup>3</sup>No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. <sup>4</sup>Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem?" <sup>5</sup>No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did."

<sup>6</sup>Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. <sup>7</sup>So he said to the gardener, 'See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?' <sup>8</sup>He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. <sup>9</sup>If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

Luke 13:1-9 NRSV

Jesus answers, "No;" we do not face hardships because we have sinned more than others. But we are still to repent and change our ways. He uses a parable to explain further that it is never too late to repent and start making responsible choices in our lives. The world is full of good and evil, and it is up to us to make the responsible choice that spreads the good instead of the evil in our lives.

Today's scripture passage calls attention to self-righteous behavior. We are self-righteous when we claim our way of thinking and doing is better than others'. Sometimes we judge the actions of others because we consider them to be wrong, even though they may not be wrong to others. Oneness and equality, which are values we strive to achieve in the world, do not mean sameness. It is possible to accept people with their differences and ways of doing things without giving up one's own way of being and doing.

- How do we accept that our judgment may be wrong?
- How can we amend our wrong judgments and self-righteous behavior?

## 3 RESPOND

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

### The Ripple Effect

Before class time, collect small stones or pebbles and fill a wide container with water. Select a container that will provide plenty of surface area for the water. When you start this demonstration, it's best to have calm water. Try not to bump the table or move the container around. Pass the stones out to the class and allow them one at a time to drop a stone in the water. Focus their attention on the ripples. Notice how they start where the stone was dropped and spread out across the rest of the water's surface. Our actions are like the stones in the water; they cause ripples. Everything we do has a ripple effect, and although we don't always see the ripples from our actions, they can still be harmful.

- Think of a time when you did something that had an unexpected result. What happened?
- How can we be more aware of our effect on the world and make sure our ripples are positive?

## 4 SEND

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

How we react to circumstances is a choice we make. We can apply today's Enduring Principle, Responsible Choices, to the Joyful Yes Lenten calendars. Every moment is a choice. We choose what we are going to do, with whom we will do it, and how. Take a few moments to fill in the third week of the Lenten calendar with ways to respond joyfully by making responsible choices this week. Allow the group to share how they responded joyfully during the past week.

## 5 BLESS

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

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we always strive to make our world a better place. Close the lesson by singing "Let There Be Peace on Earth" CCS 307 or offering a prayer.



# FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

LESSON 18  
31 March 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 15:1–3, 11b–32

**Lesson Focus:** Worth of All Persons

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- read the story of the Prodigal Son.
- explore God’s grace and generosity.
- discover the Worth of All Persons.

## Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- Joyful Yes Lenten calendars
- Pens or pencils
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Luke 15:1–3, 11b–32 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

The parable of the Prodigal Son is the third in a series of stories about something being lost and then found. In Luke 15:4–7 we read about a lost sheep and in verses 8–10 a lost coin. These stories share similar features of irresponsible actions that end well. The shepherd left his flock to find one sheep, but rejoiced when the sheep was found. The woman who lost her coin searched everywhere for it, and when she found it she rejoiced. In today’s scripture passage, the story of the Prodigal Son, a son is lost to his family, but returns and is met with rejoicing from his father. Read the focus scripture passage, or have students alternate reading verses.

<sup>11</sup> “There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup>The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’ So he divided his property between them. <sup>13</sup>A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. <sup>14</sup>When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. <sup>15</sup>So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. <sup>16</sup>He

would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. <sup>17</sup>But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! <sup>18</sup>I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; <sup>19</sup>I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.’” <sup>20</sup>So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. <sup>21</sup>Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ <sup>22</sup>But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. <sup>23</sup>And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; <sup>24</sup>for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate. <sup>25</sup>Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup>He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. <sup>27</sup>He replied, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.’ <sup>28</sup>Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father

came out and began to plead with him. <sup>29</sup>But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. <sup>30</sup>But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' <sup>31</sup>Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. <sup>32</sup>But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

Luke 15:11b–32 NRSV

### Draw the Circle Wide

Have the class sing the refrain of "Draw the Circle Wide" CCS 273 which talks about accepting others into our circle, even if they, like the son from the story, have done something wrong.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

### Act It Out

In today's scripture passage, there are three main characters. One is a father who was filled with compassion and rejoiced at the return of his son. Another is the returning son who had nothing because of his irresponsible choices; he chose to return home despite all he had done. The third is the son who remained at home and is now angry that the returning brother should receive so much when he, who stayed, received nothing. Have the class act out the story; let them choose the characters they would like to portray. Allow a few minutes for groups of three to work out how they want to portray the story. If there is a group of only two, the teacher can fill in. If there is a group of only one, the teacher can fill in being either the father or the returning son with the youth being the other. Let the groups perform their renditions of the story and then discuss these questions.

In a previous lesson we discussed the Enduring Principles. Which Enduring Principle does today's scripture passage uphold? (There are hints of several such as Grace and Generosity and Blessings of Community, but Worth of All Persons will be the focus of this lesson.)

- How was Worth of All Persons upheld in today's story?
- How can we be like the father and uphold the worth of others?

## 3 RESPOND

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

Do you feel as if you've made the right choices your entire life but never get anything because of it? Maybe you understand the brother who stayed home. Have you made irresponsible choices and feel like you have nowhere left to go? Maybe you connect with the returning son. Have you lost something that you would give anything to find? Maybe you feel like the father. At different times in our lives, we might connect with a different person in the parable. Discuss class members' connections with characters from the story. Here are questions and discussion ideas for each.

### Father

The father is sad that he has lost his son, someone who was so dear to him. When his son returned home, he offered forgiveness and grace and welcomed him warmly. Discuss ways we can forgive and be compassionate to all people regardless of their circumstances or what they've done.

- Have you lost something you wish you could find? (an object, friend, idea, or something else important)
- How does it feel to lose something of great value?
- Share about a time when you forgave or showed compassion to someone.

### Returning Son

The returning son chose to leave his home and family, and squandered his money in a faraway land. He made terrible choices and was lost. He had nowhere left to go, so he returned home. Discuss how everyone goes through times of being lost. We are unsure where to go or what to do. This may be because of decisions we've made or life circumstances, but we can always receive God's grace.

- Are there times when you feel lost or disconnected from what's going on at school, with friends, with family, or in other circumstances?
- Think of a time when you unexpectedly received grace or forgiveness from someone and share with the group.
- Is there a person in your life that you can extend grace and forgiveness to like the father did to his lost son? What can you do for this person?

### Brother

The brother made all the right choices. He stayed home and helped his family tend the farm. Despite his good efforts, he feels as though he has received

nothing and is angry that his brother should so easily be forgiven. Discuss that even though life is not always fair, we should still strive to be the best we can be, and welcome and rejoice with those who are found. It is also important to remember that making responsible choices helps us live in right relationships with God and others, and that brings us joy and well being.

- Has a sibling or someone you know ever done something wrong and not been punished? How did that make you feel?
- Do you ever feel that others who make poor decisions get more attention than you even though you make all the right choices?
- How is it fair that people who decide poorly are still offered grace?

We could be the lost son who is returning home with nothing. We could be the father who offers immediate forgiveness and rejoices when the son returns. Or we could be the older brother who is angry that the father so easily welcomes the lost son home after all he has done. Today's passage shows us that God's grace is for all people, regardless of the decisions we make and possibly regret later. God's grace and generosity doesn't require us to be perfect.

## 4 SEND

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

### Joyful Yes Lenten Calendar

Ask class members to get their Lenten calendars, or pass them out if you collected them at the end of last week's lesson.

Today is the fourth Sunday in Lent. It will soon be Palm Sunday. Today would be a good day to remind the class what Lent is and why we have made a Lenten calendar. Lent is a time of spiritual renewal—a time to pause, explore, and be intentional in our communion with God. To do that, the class is counting the days until Easter with a calendar they fill in with ways they can respond joyfully. Jesus wants us to experience joy in our lives as disciples by responding with a joyful yes every day!

Allow class members time to share how they responded joyfully during the past week. Then, fill in ways to respond with a joyful yes during the next week. Remind them about Worth of All Persons. How can they respond joyfully while upholding the Worth of All Persons?

## 5 BLESS

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

Close the lesson by singing the song you sang at the beginning of the lesson, "Draw the Circle Wide" CCS 273.

# FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

LESSON 19  
7 April 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** John 12:1–8

**Lesson Focus:** Disciple's Generous Response

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- discuss generosity, both giving and receiving.
- imitate different levels of generosity.
- explore their true capacity.

## Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- Small plastic bags (such as sandwich bags)
- Dried beans
- Printed instructions for Give and Receive
- Joyful Yes Lenten calendars
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for John 12:1–8 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

In today's passage Jesus is spending time with friends, enjoying company, rest, and food. Read today's passage in which Jesus receives the generosity of another.

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. <sup>2</sup>There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. <sup>3</sup>Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. <sup>4</sup>But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, <sup>5</sup>"Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" <sup>6</sup>(He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) <sup>7</sup>Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. <sup>8</sup>You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

John 12:1–8 NRSV

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

### What Would You Do?

Today's scripture passage demonstrates several ways to give and receive generosity. Mary, who had just received a great gift from Jesus, chooses to return the favor with a gift of great value. She chooses to use a bottle of perfume, which costs the equivalent of a year's salary, to wash Jesus' feet. Judas, who saw this as wasteful, suggested selling the perfume and using the money to help feed the poor. Jesus is quick to defend Mary, showing what it means to accept true generosity.

The class will debate the two positions: Mary's and Judas'. Form the class into two groups. Assign one group to Mary and the other to Judas. Allow them a few minutes to discuss as a group how they will defend their decision about the perfume. As the group debates, help them with ideas to further the discussion. Once the discussion starts to dwindle or enough time has passed, have the groups switch sides and defend the other person's actions.

### Mary

- Mary was responding to Jesus' generosity. Generosity received leads to generosity shared.

- The poor will always be with us; our time with Jesus is limited.

### Judas

- It was wasteful.
- The money could have been used to help the poor.

Remember, the writer of John recorded these events many years after they occurred. The writer would have known about Judas betraying Jesus. This could explain the extra information within the parentheses in the passage. Reread today's passage without the parts within the parentheses.

- How does removing the writer's judgment change your mind or position about Judas? Do you find yourself agreeing more with Judas?
- Sometimes we allow others' judgments to decide how we feel and what we do. Think of a time when you allowed someone else's thoughts or feelings affect the way you acted. (An example might be if one of your friends said they liked something, and you started to like it because they did.)

We are individuals with thoughts and beliefs. It is up to us to make choices and decide what is best for our own circumstances. When we are too easily swayed by someone else's thoughts and ideas, we lose our ability to think and act independently. Jesus chose Judas as one of his disciples. Judas was a person of worth and Jesus saw that. We know that Judas betrayed Jesus, but he was also hand-selected by Jesus to be one of his most trusted followers.

## 3 RESPOND

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

### Give and Receive

Form the class into three groups of equal numbers. Each group will receive a different set of instructions; do not tell the class what the instructions say. When instructions have been passed out, give each class member a bag of beans. (Each bag should have the same number of beans.) Have them play through a round of asking, giving, and receiving beans. When some class members are out of beans and others have many, move on to the discussion.

### Instructions

Group A: When someone asks you for beans, you will immediately give them beans. You may ask others for beans.

Group B: When someone asks you for beans, you may decide whether to give any to them or not. You may ask others for beans.

Group C: When someone asks you for beans, you must not give any to them. You may ask others for beans.

- What did your instructions say? What did that mean for you during the game?
- What, if any, are some reasons your instructions might not be good if you applied them to your real life?
- Is too much giving a possibility? Too little giving? (Discuss true capacity in the following section.)

### True Capacity

We are taught to be generous like Mary, a generosity that is extravagant and over-the-top, but when does generosity become reckless or too much? The Enduring Principle of Grace and Generosity says, "We generously share our witness, resources, ministries, and sacraments according to our true capacity."

- What is our true capacity? (True capacity is the fullest amount we can give of our witness, resources, and ministries, but that amount has a limit which can be reckless if we exceed it.)

We are charged with helping others by being generous, but it is important that we take care of ourselves, too. Ask the group if they know about the giving model 10/10/80. Ten percent of income is shared, such as through tithing, 10 percent is saved for school or retirement, and the other 80 percent is used responsibly for living expenses such as food, clothing, and housing. These numbers are adjustable, but this is a good place to start to learn your true capacity. Thoughtful planning empowers people to give to their true capacity. Have the group discuss how they handle their money.

- Do you follow the 10/10/80 model? If not, how do you handle your money?
- How can you match your giving with your true capacity?

## 4 SEND

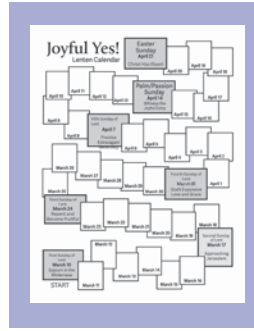
Explores how the lesson might be lived  
(10% of lesson time)

### Joyful Yes Lenten Calendar

Ask class members to get their Lenten calendars or pass them out if you collected them at the end of last week's lesson.

Allow class members time to share how they responded joyfully during the past week. Take time to fill in ways we can respond with a joyful yes during the next week. This week we focus on our generosity.

- How can we respond joyfully this week while giving to our true capacity?



# 5 BLESS

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

Close with "Take My Life and Let It Be" CCS 608 or pray that we may give to our true capacity in all areas of our lives.

# PALM SUNDAY

LESSON 20

14 April 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 19:28–40/19:27–39 IV

**Lesson Focus:** Palm or Passion Sunday: Witness the Joyful Entry

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- talk about events leading up to Easter.
- think about injustices in the areas where they live.
- end Lent with reflections of their journeys.

## Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- Copies of the blank timeline (at the end of the lesson)
- Pens and pencils
- Flat rocks that can be written on
- Markers to write on rocks
- Joyful Yes Lenten calendars

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Luke 19:28–40 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

### Note to teacher: Passion vs. Palm Sunday

The Sunday before Easter is called Palm Sunday or Passion Sunday. Ask the group if they know what the two names for this day mean and why they are significant. Palm Sunday focuses on the part of Jesus’ crucifixion story when the people scattered palm fronds in front of Jesus as he rode into Jerusalem. Passion refers to Jesus’ suffering and crucifixion.

### Make an Entrance

Today’s passage tells of Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem. To introduce today’s scripture passage, give group members the opportunity to “make an entrance.” One at a time or in pairs, members can enter the room in whatever way they’d like; they can enter loudly with much fanfare, or quietly with little show.

Read the focus scripture passage for today.

<sup>28</sup>After he had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. <sup>29</sup>When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the

disciples, <sup>30</sup>saying, “Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. <sup>31</sup>If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it.’” <sup>32</sup>So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. <sup>33</sup>As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?” <sup>34</sup>They said, “The Lord needs it.” <sup>35</sup>Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. <sup>36</sup>As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. <sup>37</sup>As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, <sup>38</sup>saying, “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!” <sup>39</sup>Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, order your disciples to stop.” <sup>40</sup>He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.”

Luke 19:28–40 NRSV

Jesus, “the king who comes in the name of the Lord,” made his entrance differently from what was expected of a king. In Jesus’ time, a king or someone of power

like Governor Pontius Pilate would have ridden into Jerusalem from the west on horseback with many soldiers and chariots. Jesus did the opposite—he rode in from the east and with nothing but the donkey he rode upon. By entering Jerusalem this way Jesus was opposing those in power, and it foreshadowed what was to come.

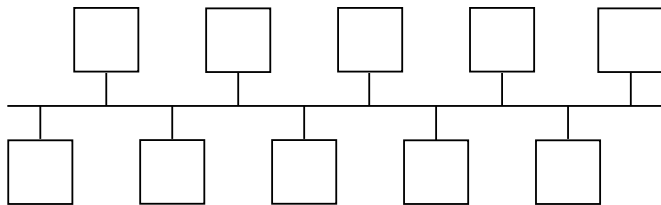
- What did it mean for Jesus to enter Jerusalem on a donkey instead of with many soldiers and fanfare?
- What might Jesus have meant by entering Jerusalem as a humble servant?
- How can we follow Jesus' example and turn away from the "kingdom of the world"?

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

### Events Leading to Easter

Pass out a copy of the blank timeline (see next page) to each class member. Ask youth what they already know about the events leading up to Easter (Judas' betrayal, Jesus' trial, Jesus' crucifixion, his burial, and so forth) and have them write those events on their timelines. Then have them get into pairs (or work individually) and pick one of the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. The groups should fill in their timeline with additional information they read in the scriptures.



Compare the Gospels and how the authors ordered the events of this week in the life of Jesus.

Matthew 21–28  
Mark 11–16  
Luke 19–24  
John 12–21

- How are the accounts different? The same?

## 3 RESPOND

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

### Stones That Cry Out

"Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, 'Teacher, order your disciples to stop.' He answered, 'I

tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out'" (vv. 39,40). This part of the passage references another Bible passage (Habakkuk 2:11) in which the stones from the walls would cry out at the wickedness. The disciples were yelling out, proclaiming the good deeds Jesus had done. Jesus answered that even if his disciples were to be silent, the stones of the city walls would cry out the sins of the world.

Before class collect rocks that are large and flat enough to write on. Allow everyone to choose a rock. On one side of the rock, invite the group members to write something the stones in their community might be saying. What circumstances in their community might cause the stones to cry out (such as poverty or violence)? On the other side of the rock, have the group do as the disciples did and praise God joyfully by writing phrases like, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" or "Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!" Have class members share what they wrote on their rocks. If rocks are not available, the group can create their rocks on a piece of paper.

Jesus and his disciples are no longer with us to do the proclaiming. It is our turn now to share the mission and message of Jesus Christ. We can recognize the inequities in our world, and we must ask ourselves how we can be the stones that cry out. We can turn our stones over and praise God joyfully to the world. It is up to us to continue what Jesus and his disciples started.

- God wants us to live joyfully praising God and to call out the injustices of the world. How can we cry out like the stones?

## 4 SEND

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

### Joyful Yes Lenten Calendar

Ask class members to get their Lenten calendars or pass them out if you collected them at the end of last week's lesson.

This week ends Lent as we prepare for Easter. Lent was a time of self-reflection, renewal, and preparation for our call to mission. Holy Week is a time for us to be open to how Christ works in our lives. We remember that Jesus made the supreme sacrifice. We remember what he did for us by responding to our call—sharing his mission and message in a joyful way.

- Discuss with the group how their spiritual lives changed during Lent.
- How did the Lenten calendar bring your focus to Christ's mission?

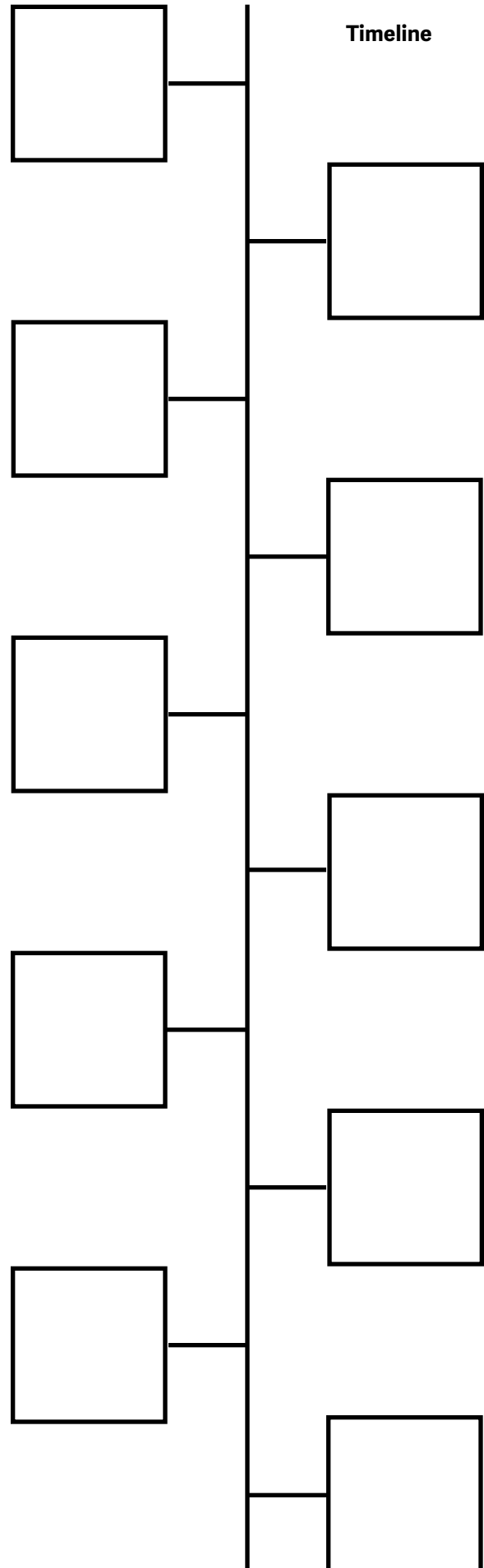


- Share how you personally prepared for Jesus' journey to the cross.

# 5 BLESS

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

We look to Easter with hope and a promise of celebrating Jesus' resurrection, but before we get there, we must make our journey through Holy Week. Remind the group that we have difficult journeys in life, but like Jesus' resurrection, we are hopeful with the knowledge that God's grace is unconditional and God is present in every life journey.



# EASTER SUNDAY— RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

LESSON 21  
21 April 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** John 20:1–18

**Lesson Focus:** How do we continue to write the sacred story?

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- read the Resurrection story.
- learn that Jesus was raised from the dead (resurrection).
- explore how they continue to write the sacred story.

## Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*
- Poster paper
- Markers
- Blooming plant, plant pots, seeds, and soil
- Optional: decorating supplies

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for John 20:1–18 and Luke 24:1–12 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

### Resurrection Story

Ask the group what they know about the Resurrection story. What happens? Who goes to the tomb? Who sees Jesus first? Write the answers on a whiteboard or poster paper. When the group has written everything they know, read today’s scripture passage from John telling of Jesus’ resurrection.

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. <sup>2</sup>So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” <sup>3</sup>Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. <sup>4</sup>The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. <sup>5</sup>He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. <sup>6</sup>Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings

lying there, <sup>7</sup>and the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. <sup>8</sup>Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; <sup>9</sup>for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. <sup>10</sup>Then the disciples returned to their homes.

<sup>11</sup>But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; <sup>12</sup>and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. <sup>13</sup>They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” <sup>14</sup>When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup>Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” <sup>16</sup>Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabbouni!” (which means Teacher). <sup>17</sup>Jesus said to her, “Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the

Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" <sup>18</sup>Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord;" and she told them that he had said these things to her.

John 20:1–18 NRSV

After Jesus was raised from the dead, people came to faith in Christ along different paths. The beloved disciple went in the tomb and knew immediately; Simon Peter did not understand and returned home. We travel our own paths in life, and have unique stories of how we came to faith.

- How has your faith strengthened you to share your story with others?
- We often come to faith through relationships and community. Tell the class of a time when your faith was strengthened by a relationship or your community.

## 2 ENGAGE

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

### The Living Christ

Give each class member a small plant pot big enough for soil and a flower seed. Also have a pot with a blooming plant. (If possible, use seeds of the same variety as the blooming plant.) Using an empty pot and the pot with the plant, discuss Christ's resurrection. We put seeds in the soil, they are buried in the pot and then they fulfill their potential as blooming plants as they burst from the soil and grow. On the third day, Jesus was raised from his tomb and lives eternally. We follow the Living Christ and celebrate that Christ is risen!

Give the group time to decorate the outside of their pots with Easter decorations such as an empty tomb, Jesus talking to Mary, or the angels. Then place soil in the pots and plant the seeds. The group can take their plants home to remind them of the joy and hope we celebrate on Easter. The blooming of the plant can be a reminder of Jesus' sacrifice, death on the cross, and resurrection. He is the Living Christ.

## 3 RESPOND

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

### Sacred Story

What is the sacred story? In Community of Christ, we define "sacred story" as the unfolding story of God's reconciling work in the world. We learn about God's relationship to people and all creation through the sacred story. For disciples of Jesus Christ, our part of the sacred story would not be complete without him and the story of his resurrection. The story of Community of Christ is part of a much larger sacred story that is rooted in Christian history, and we create our own stories as we live as disciples. We hold an important place in God's unfolding story. Invite the group to write a sentence or two describing their own stories. This could be an experience from camp, a church activity, or their baptism.

- How do you share the sacred story with others? (telling others, actions, the way you live)
- Think about ways we continue to write the sacred story. (Use this to transition to the Send section.)

## 4 SEND

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

As long as we continue to share the mission and message of Christ—God's reconciling work in the world—we continue to write the sacred story. The story is as alive today as it was when Jesus was on the Earth. Using a piece of poster paper, have the group write how they continue to write the story. Hang the poster on the wall.

## 5 BLESS

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

Close by singing "In the Bulb There Is a Flower" CCS 561 or offering a prayer.

# SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

LESSON 22  
28 April 2019

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

**Lesson Focus:** Peace of Jesus Christ – A Journey of Faith and Doubt

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- discuss belief and doubt in our faith journeys.
- seek answers to questions.
- practice the breath prayer.

## Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- Poster paper
- Paper
- Pens or pencils
- Small pieces of paper

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

## 1 GATHER

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

On a piece of poster paper or a whiteboard, have the group list some things they believe but don't see. Discuss what it means to believe something. Examples are God, wind, karma, and scripture stories. When the group has listed what they believe, read today's scripture passage about the disciple Thomas who had a hard time believing that Christ was risen.

<sup>19</sup>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.” <sup>20</sup>After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup>Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” <sup>22</sup>When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup>If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” <sup>24</sup>But

Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup>So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”

<sup>26</sup>A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” <sup>27</sup>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.” <sup>28</sup>Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” <sup>29</sup>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.” <sup>30</sup>Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. <sup>31</sup>But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

John 20:19–31 NRSV

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

In the focus scripture passage, Jesus declares that those who have not seen and yet believe are blessed. Have you or someone you know experienced the blessing of believing without seeing? Today's scripture is a message of faith and belief that can come despite misgiving and doubt. Thomas experienced doubt but found his faith and believed.

### BELIEVE Acrostic Poem

An acrostic poem spells out a word using the first letter of each line or verse of the poem. Give each member of the group a piece of paper and ask each one to create an acrostic poem using the word BELIEVE. Before class you might want to create a list of B, E, L, I, and V words as examples or have a dictionary available for the group to use. Have class members share their poems when they've finished.

Blessing  
Explore  
Life  
Ideas  
Expectation  
Validate  
Emmanuel

## 3 RESPOND

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

Faith is a journey of doubt and trust which transforms belief into kingdom-building action. Doubt and questioning are not shameful or bad moments in our spiritual lives. They are vital parts of our faith journey. They help us explore and deepen our relationship to God. Doubt and questions open us to answers that we may not have understood before. Thomas' doubt has helped people from all places and in all times discover what it means to be a people of God. If someone so close to Jesus could have doubts, then so might we.

- How can we seek peace despite not having all our questions answered? What is the peace you can offer?
- How do we discover what it means to be a people of God in our time and place?

### Doubt and Faith

Ask the group, "What are questions you have about Christianity, scripture, commitment, how we fit in, the hardships of life, finding God, or what the church is doing to make a difference in the world?" Have them write their questions on slips of paper and put them in a container. When all questions have been put in the container, draw one at a time and discuss as a group. Let the group know that even as the teacher or pastor, you do not have all the answers, but have faith in that which is not obvious. Having faith causes us to grow. Faith bridges the gap between what we know and what we want to believe but cannot prove. Faith carries us through doubt.

#### Note to the teacher:

For this part of the lesson, it may be helpful to invite leaders from your congregation such as your pastor to take part in the discussion. Also use discretion with questions. You know your group best.

## 4 SEND

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

### Breathe Prayer

Have the class engage in a breath prayer. "He breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" A breath prayer is a simple form of prayer that helps us center and receive the Holy Spirit. While focusing on your breathing, silently repeat, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

## 5 BLESS

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

Close the group with a prayer that uplifts the doubts and misgivings the class discussed.

# THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

LESSON 23  
5 May 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** John 21:1–19

**Lesson Focus:** Christ's Mission—Living as Disciples

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- discuss today's passage about Jesus and his disciples.
- share the blessings of community through table ministry.
- learn what it means to live as a disciple.

## Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*
- Poster paper
- Markers
- Snack materials

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for John 21:1–19 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Today's scripture passage comes after Jesus' resurrection. Some disciples have returned to their lives as fishermen. Read today's passage twice. The second time, have the class act out the scripture as puppets and puppeteers. For this, two people will need to be assigned to each character in the passage. One class member will be the puppet while the other is the puppeteer. The only way the puppets can move is if the puppeteers move them. For small groups, the class can act out the story.

After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. <sup>2</sup>Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. <sup>3</sup>Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. <sup>4</sup>Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>5</sup>Jesus said to them, "Children,

you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." <sup>6</sup>He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. <sup>7</sup>That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the lake. <sup>8</sup>But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off. <sup>9</sup>When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. <sup>10</sup>Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." <sup>11</sup>So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. <sup>12</sup>Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord. <sup>13</sup>Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. <sup>14</sup>This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. <sup>15</sup>When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my

lambs.”<sup>16</sup> A second time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Tend my sheep.”<sup>17</sup> He said to him the third time, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” And he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.”<sup>18</sup> Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.”<sup>19</sup> (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, “Follow me.”

John 21: 1–19 NRSV

- Why do you think the disciples returned to their lives as they were before Jesus? (Maybe they were scared to continue Jesus’ work without him.)
- How do you think Jesus felt about his disciples? How do you think the disciples felt?

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

### Do You Love Me?

The disciples were lost and scared after Jesus’ crucifixion and returned to their old lives. They did not recognize the man on the beach as Jesus. It was not until the man told them to cast their nets to the other side of the boat that the disciples recognized him. When the disciples came to shore, Jesus asked Peter, “Do you love me?” and then commanded him to “Feed my sheep.” The role of disciples is to continue the work in the absence of the master or teacher.

Discuss the following questions with the group and summarize their answers on poster paper.

- Why did Jesus ask Peter three times if he loved him? (Jesus was telling Peter that he was forgiven, and that Jesus trusted Peter to fulfill the mission to which he was now commissioned.)
- What do you think Jesus meant by “Feed my sheep”?
- What is asked of those who become Jesus’ disciples? (willing to serve, share the gospel, love and care for others, learn through study, and pursue peace and justice)

## 3 RESPOND

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

Jesus placed high value on communal sharing; this included meals. Jesus had an incredible table ministry involving meals and sharing. Think of stories from the Bible where Jesus provided table ministry: the Last Supper, eating with Zacchaeus, feeding the five thousand, the wedding at Cana, and today’s passage, for instance. Many times we see Jesus place importance on the community and sharing that happens at the table.

### Table Ministry

Have the class prepare a snack they can share together. One option is to make sandwiches, but you can adjust this for your group. Make sure the snack is something everyone can help prepare. If you choose to make sandwiches, various class members can prepare the bread, put on a spread or cheese, cut the sandwiches, put them on plates, pour drinks for the group, and help with whatever else needs to be done. Talk about how communities share together as you work.

- What are other examples of how we share in community? (campfires, potlucks, community outreach)
- In what ways have you benefited from the blessings of community?

## 4 SEND

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

Let go of fear or doubt that doesn’t allow you to move into mission. When we hold on to our fear or doubt, we find ourselves moving away from what Jesus has called us to do. The disciples gave in to their fear after Jesus’ death; we, like them, are called to mission but can only live as disciples when we do so fearlessly.

**Call to Action:** This week I will live fearlessly as a disciple even when...

## 5 BLESS

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

Jesus calls us to “feed his sheep.” Close today’s lesson with “Find Your Wholeness” CCS 643.

# FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

LESSON 24  
12 May 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** John 10:22–30

**Lesson Focus:** All Are Called—Follow Me

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- play a game focused on the importance of listening and following.
- explore their relationship to Jesus.
- challenge themselves to make change happen.

## Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- Voice recordings of several people in the congregation
- Poster paper or dry erase board
- Marker

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for John 10:22–30 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

To introduce today’s lesson, have the class play Simon Says. In this game, the followers have to pay attention to what the leader is saying and doing in order to win the game.

### Instructions for Simon Says:

Choose one class member to be “Simon” who will tell the rest of the group what to do. If Simon says, “Simon says...” followed by an instruction, the group must follow the instruction. So if Simon says, “Simon says hop on one foot,” the group must hop on one foot. But, if Simon says, “Hop on one foot” without saying, “Simon says...” the group should not hop on one foot, and anyone who does is removed from that round. The game continues until only one person is left, and that person becomes the new Simon.

Read today’s passage where Jesus explains what it means to follow him.

<sup>22</sup>At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, <sup>23</sup>and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. <sup>24</sup>So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, “How long will you keep us in

suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.” <sup>25</sup>Jesus answered, “I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name testify to me; <sup>26</sup>but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. <sup>27</sup>My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. <sup>28</sup>I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. <sup>29</sup>What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father’s hand. <sup>30</sup>The Father and I are one.”

John 10: 22–30 NRSV

Just like playing Simon Says, we need to listen to what we are being called to do. Christ calls us into mission to “feed his sheep.”

- In what ways are you hearing the call to feed Christ’s sheep?

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Using a phone or other recording device before class, record members of the class or congregation saying, “My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me.” Play these clips one at a time to see if class members



can identify the voice. If they know who it is, they can call out the name of the person. If recording is not possible, this game can be played by having members of the congregation stand out of view and speak so the class can hear them. Ask the group how they were able to identify people in the recordings. What did they rely on to identify the voices? Use a whiteboard or poster paper to make a list of their answers.

In Jesus' day, shepherds cared for their flocks night and day. Sometimes their sheep would be mixed with the sheep of other shepherds. The sheep knew the voice of their shepherd when he called and came to him, separating themselves from the other sheep. Jesus is our shepherd; he calls to us, and we are to follow.

- How are we like sheep? (Sheep can be stubborn, easily frightened, and in need of constant care so they don't get lost or injured.)
- How is Jesus like our shepherd? (He calls us, guides us on the right path, and helps us when we are in need.)

### **3 RESPOND**

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

In today's passage, the Jews gathered around Jesus and demanded answers of him—"Tell us plainly." Humans are impatient. We want life to be easy and tools for good living to be handed to us. We ask God for what we want and sit around waiting for God to simply give. Waiting for God to make something happen is not what we are called to do. We are called to make something happen, and God will bless what we do.

Have the class think of all that they've ever asked for in a prayer. Examples are doing well on a test, getting better when sick, or asking for a particular present for

Christmas. Write these on a dry erase board or poster paper. Discuss with the class asking God for things versus living in a way that makes change happen. Go back through the list and identify ways they could take the initiative in making change happen in their lives.

#### **Examples:**

- Preparing by studying would help you do well on a test.
- Resting and following your doctor's directions could help you feel better faster.
- Discuss the appropriateness of praying for "things."

### **4 SEND**

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

Jesus not only wants us to follow him, but to be proactive. We are called to live in ways that effect positive change rather than wait for change to happen to us. Have each member of the group take a turn saying this week's personal challenge.

**Personal Challenge:** I will listen to the call and live to make positive change happen.

### **5 BLESS**

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

Close with a circle prayer allowing each person an opportunity to say something they will strive to make happen this week. Have one person start the prayer and then squeeze the hand of the next person when he or she is done. The last person closes the prayer.

# FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

LESSON 25  
19 May 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** John 13:31–35

**Lesson Focus:** Worth of All Persons—Love One Another

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- love and be loved in return.
- learn about right relationships.
- disprove judgments and stereotypes.

## Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*
- Pens or pencils
- Poster paper

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for John 13:31–35 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Today’s passage tells of Jesus’ last moments with his disciples. They shared a meal, Jesus washed their feet, and Jesus gave them one final commandment. Read the passage to learn this new commandment.

<sup>31</sup>When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. <sup>32</sup>If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. <sup>33</sup>Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’ <sup>34</sup>I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. <sup>35</sup>By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

John 13: 31–35 NRSV

Love is an incredible gift. To love and be loved are two of humans’ greatest experiences. Take a moment to think of all the people you love and who love you. Think about that love. Share with the group how that love makes you

feel. Jesus tells us that all persons are worthy of being loved. We are meant to love so others may know what it feels like to be loved.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

### Right Relationships

Right relationships occur when there is harmony between two parties and compassion is present. We strive for all our relationships to be right relationships. We have been taught, “The restoring of persons to healthy or righteous relationships with God, others, themselves, and the earth is at the heart of the purpose of your journey as a people of faith” (Doctrine and Covenants 163:2b). These relationships embody Christ’s love. Have the group think of right relationships in their lives and then share with the group what those relationships are like.

Form the group into smaller groups, and give each a scenario below. Give them a few moments to read over the scenario, and then have them act it out for the group. An alternative is to read the scenarios as a group. After each group acts out its scenario, use the questions below to guide discussion.

## Scenarios

1. Two friends are making fun of someone in their class they don't like. That person hears them and is hurt by what they said.
2. A parent continually shows support and love for his or her child. The child feels loved and shows love and appreciation in return.
3. A man on the street drops his bag and all the contents spill out. Another person helps him clean up his belongings.
4. Two siblings want to play a game. One offers to take turns but the other refuses to share and keeps the game for himself.

## Questions:

- Is this an example of a right relationship? Why or why not?
- If it's not a right relationship, what needs to change?
- Why is it important that all our relationships are full of compassion? When is this most challenging?

# 3 RESPOND

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

Jesus embodied God's love throughout his ministry, and his instruction to love one another is his final commandment to his disciples. By making this his final commandment, Jesus placed huge importance on loving one another. God's love is the supreme love, and though we try to embody it, sometimes we fall short. We struggle with prejudices and judgments based on stereotypes, and these keep us from being able to love others fully. Name several ways we group people and make broad statements about them. Write them on a whiteboard or poster paper.

All \_\_\_\_\_ are \_\_\_\_\_.

- Examples:
- All girls are bad at sports.
  - All boys are smelly.
  - All teachers are boring.
  - All politicians are greedy.

You may laugh about the exercise, but stress how ridiculous it is to limit our view of people to a narrow range of "facts," and how these views can keep us from loving fully. Have the group think of exceptions to each of their examples proving our judgments can be wrong. Then discuss the questions below.

- Share about a time when a judgment you've held has stopped you from having a right relationship with someone.
- How will Christ's love help us move away from judgment toward right relationships with God and others?

# 4 SEND

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

**Take-away Question** (Take-away questions can be discussed with the group, but are meant to be considered throughout the week.)

Community of Christ upholds the Worth of All Persons. If we are Christ-like, how can we build relationships with those who feel distanced from God and others?

# 5 BLESS

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

Read the words to "Help Us Accept Each Other" CCS 333 or "For Everyone Born" CCS 285 as the closing prayer.

# SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

LESSON 26  
26 May 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** John 14:23–29

**Lesson Focus:** Peace of Jesus Christ—Holy Spirit, Dwell with Us

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- understand God’s peace.
- learn ways to experience peace amid life’s storms.
- explore ways they can share God’s peace with others.

## Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*
- Pens or pencils
- Paper
- Pieces of paper in various shapes, sizes, and colors

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for John 14:23–29 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Community of Christ’s mission is to proclaim Jesus Christ and promote communities of joy, hope, love, and peace. This mission was Jesus’ mission first. The season of Easter is moving God’s work from Jesus to the church. In today’s passage, Jesus calls us to continue his work.

<sup>23</sup>Jesus answered him, “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. <sup>24</sup>Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me.

<sup>25</sup>“I have said these things to you while I am still with you. <sup>26</sup>But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. <sup>27</sup>Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

<sup>28</sup>You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I am coming to you.’ If you loved me, you would

rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. <sup>29</sup>And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe.

—John 14: 23–29 NRSV

This passage promises us the presence of the Holy Spirit which helps comfort and guide us in Jesus’ absence.

- Share a time when you have experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

### Eye of the Storm

Pursuit of Peace calls us into a way of living, but the promise of God’s peace does not mean we live without pain, conflict, loss, or distress. Rather, it assures us that Christ’s peace comforts us even when our lives are distressed. A visual representation of this would be the eye of a tropical storm. The area in the middle of these storms is calm with clear skies even though the storm rages around the eye. On the Internet, search “eye of the storm” for images.

Give each member of the group a piece of paper. Tell them to draw a circle in the middle of the paper. The circle represents the “eye” of their lives and everything outside the circle is what threatens their peace. Inside the circle, have them write words or draw pictures of things that bring peace to their lives such as the Holy Spirit, family, nature, and so on. Outside the circle, have them write their struggles—things that make peace in their lives difficult, such as homework, fights with loved ones, or illness. When the group is done, allow them to share what they’ve written or drawn.

### **3 RESPOND**

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

Jesus Christ, the embodiment of God’s shalom, invites all people to come and receive divine peace in the midst of the difficult questions and struggles of life. Follow Christ in the way that leads to God’s peace and discover the blessings of all to the dimensions of salvation.

—Doctrine and Covenants 163: 2a

#### **Pursuit of Peace**

Start a discussion with the group about peace. Use their eye of the storm papers to lead the discussion.

- What does peace mean?
- How can we bring peace to others?
- When in your life have you known peace? At what times haven’t you known peace?

- How do you find peace in your storm?

Provide the group with pieces of paper of all different sizes, shapes, and colors. Have each youth take a handful and write the word “peace” on each piece of paper. This “peace” will be shared with others. (See Peace Challenge below.) If time allows, have the group think of situations when they can share peace with others and then act them out.

### **4 SEND**

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

#### **Peace Challenge**

Challenge the youth to share their peace with others! As they meet people during the week, encourage them to share “peace” with them. Although a piece of paper with the word “peace” written on it doesn’t capture the full essence of peace, it can be a reminder of what Jesus called us to do.

### **5 BLESS**

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

Jesus promised the Holy Spirit. Sing “Spirit of the Living God” CCS 567 to remind the group that during times when the storm rages around us, the Holy Spirit is present and can help us find comfort and peace.

# SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER—ASCENSION OF THE LORD

LESSON 27  
2 June 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 24:44–53/24:43–52 IV

**Lesson Focus:** What Discipleship Means through the Lens of the Sacred Story

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- learn to be witnesses.
- explore the importance of the past and their roles in the future.
- proclaim Jesus Christ.

## Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- Doctrine and Covenants
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*
- Wrapped items
- Poster paper or dry erase board
- Markers

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

## 1 GATHER

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

The disciples were gathered in Jerusalem after the events of Holy Week and Easter. Jesus had already appeared to the disciples several times, like when he cooked them breakfast on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Read today’s passage to see what happens during this encounter with the disciples.

<sup>44</sup>Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” <sup>45</sup>Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, <sup>46</sup>and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, <sup>47</sup>and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup>You are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup>And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.” <sup>50</sup>Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he

blessed them. <sup>51</sup>While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. <sup>52</sup>And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; <sup>53</sup>and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

—Luke 24: 44–53 NRSV

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

### Be a Witness

Before class time, wrap a few items with wrapping paper or newspaper. Give each member of the group one of the wrapped items. If there are more class members than items, make small groups of two or three. Allow members a few minutes to feel their packages, and then ask them to share their witness of the items. What would they say to help others understand the wonder of the items?

Now, have them open their packages to see what is revealed. Have them try again to give witness to the wonder of their items now they can see them.

- What made it easier the second time to tell about your item?

- What were some differences between your first witness and your second witness?

When the item was revealed to you, it was easier to witness the wonder of the item. Jesus “opened” the minds of the disciples so they would understand the scriptures and be able to witness better. Jesus fulfilled the scriptures by opening the disciples’ minds to them.

### 3 RESPOND

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

#### Past. Present. Future.

In verse 44 Jesus refers the disciples to the Law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms. Jesus stresses this link with the past. It is important to recognize that tradition and history have much to contribute. Ask the group to think of traditions they have learned or stories they have been told by their grandparents or older members of their congregation.

- Share about the traditions or stories you have learned from a member of an older generation. (Write these on poster paper or a dry erase board.)
- Are these traditions and stories important to your family or congregation? In what ways?
- Are you likely to continue these traditions and stories? If so, how could you do that? If not, why?

Children and youth learn about the past from others, and together multiple generations make up the present. In the future, children and youth will have the responsibility to pass on the traditions and stories. This is just like our role as disciples. We read the stories and learn the traditions of Jesus and his disciples, but

we are the disciples now who have been tasked with sharing Christ’s mission. Today’s passage passes God’s gift in Jesus to us as disciples. The gifts that God has given us are great to receive, but they are not ours to keep—they are ours to share. They are divine gifts to be used for God’s purposes.

### 4 SEND

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

#### Proclaim Jesus Christ

The church’s mission statement is “We proclaim Jesus Christ and promote communities of joy, hope, love, and peace.”

On a piece of paper, have each person write or draw their responses to the following statements.

- This week I will promote joy in my community by...
- This week I will promote hope in my community by...
- This week I will promote love in my community by ...
- This week I will promote peace in my community by ...

### 5 BLESS

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

Read Doctrine and Covenants 161:3c—“Be courageous and visionary, believing in the power of just a few vibrant witnesses to transform the world.”

Close with reading or singing “Community of Joy” CCS 631.

# DAY OF PENTECOST: ENDOWMENT SUNDAY

LESSON 28  
9 June 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Acts 2:1–21

**Lesson Focus:** Holy Spirit, Pentecost—God’s Spirit Poured Out

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- discuss Pentecost.
- explore the Holy Spirit’s empowering of the disciples.
- visualize where the Spirit leads.

## Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*
- Dry erase board or poster paper
- Markers
- Paper
- Drinking straws
- Poster paint
- Water
- Pens or pencils

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Acts 2:1–21 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

### Pentecost

Ask the class to write on a dry erase board or poster paper everything they know about Pentecost. Pentecost, which meant “fiftieth,” is celebrated 50 days after Passover. Pentecost was one of the most important festivals for the Jews and commemorated Moses receiving the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. People from all over would come to Jerusalem for the festival and offer two barley loaves in gratitude for the harvest. Today’s passage takes place in a busy marketplace full of activity and many different languages. Read the passage to find out what happens.

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup>And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup>Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue

rested on each of them. <sup>4</sup>All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. <sup>5</sup>Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. <sup>6</sup>And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. <sup>7</sup>Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?” <sup>8</sup>And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? <sup>9</sup>Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup>Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, <sup>11</sup>Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” <sup>12</sup>All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” <sup>13</sup>But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.” <sup>14</sup>But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to



you, and listen to what I say. <sup>15</sup>Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. <sup>16</sup>No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: <sup>17</sup>In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. <sup>18</sup>Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. <sup>19</sup>And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. <sup>20</sup>The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. <sup>21</sup>Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

—Acts 2: 1–21 NRSV

- How did people react to this event?
- What was the effect of having everyone hear the same message in his or her own language?
- How did the apostles feel while all this was happening?

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

The disciples had looked to Jesus as God's Son, but also as a man like them. They had seen Jesus heal the sick and debate with religious leaders. They depended on Jesus' constant companionship and physical presence. Even after the miracles of the Resurrection and Ascension, the disciples were anxious when they no longer could see Jesus and talk to him personally. But the experience at Pentecost changed the disciples. They became not just men who had known Jesus for a brief time, but men who had Christ with them all the time.

- Why was the Holy Spirit's appearance necessary in the life of the early church?
- What did Jesus teach about the Holy Spirit that will help you in your life?

The events at Pentecost empowered the church to do Christ's mission. The Spirit that descended on Jesus now descended on the disciples giving power to the church. Just as Jesus began his ministry filled with the

Holy Spirit, the disciples were beginning their ministry filled with the Spirit.

## 3 RESPOND

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

### Led by the Spirit

This activity will help the class to imagine how the Holy Spirit can lead them. Each class member will need a piece of blank paper, a drinking straw, and some paint thinned with water. Using the straw, drop a few drops of paint on the blank paper. The drops should be placed near the bottom center of the page, but not touching each other. Then, using the straw, class members can blow the paint drops so they spread around the paper. Drops may mix to create a beautiful scattering and blending of color.

Imagine yourselves as the drops of paint and the Holy Spirit the wind that moved you around the page. Just as the Holy Spirit was present in the marketplace and empowered the disciples to move out in mission, you too are called to engage in mission. As drops, we are full of potential to share Christ's mission. With the help from the straw and your breath, the drop could spread and connect with other drops creating a new beautiful picture.

## 4 SEND

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

Invite the group to remember the Spirit has empowered them to engage in Christ's mission. Sing "Come, Holy Spirit, Come" CCS 154. The Spirit is still leading us today.

## 5 BLESS

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

Since today's passage came from Acts, have the group close with an ACTS prayer. Provide paper and pencils so each class member can write his or her own. An ACTS prayer contains one sentence each on Adoration (praise), Confession (acknowledgment of wrongdoing), Thanksgiving (gratitude), and Supplication (asking). Ask class members to share one or more of their sentences in a circle prayer.

# FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: TRINITY SUNDAY

LESSON 29  
16 June 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** John 16:12–15

**Lesson Focus:** Guided by the Spirit

## Objectives

*The learners will...*

- better understand the Trinity.
- discuss their understandings of God.
- explore the continued presence of the Holy Spirit.

## Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Community of Christ Sings (CCS)*
- Knife and cutting board

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for John 16:12–15 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

### Three in One

As the group gathers, challenge them to come up with words that have more than two meanings. To make it more challenging, form the group into two teams and see which team can come up with more words in a given amount of time. Some examples are provided.

### Kid

- A baby goat
- A child
- To tease someone

### Seal

- A fur-coated mammal
- To close something tightly
- A stamp that makes something official

### Match

- Wooden fire starter
- To go together
- A game or competition (such as a tennis match)

Today the group will discuss the Trinity and Community of Christ’s belief in one living God who is a community of three persons.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Remind the class of the events that took place during Pentecost. Because they have already read and discussed the Holy Spirit coming to the disciples and followers, this passage will be like a flashback. Jesus said this to the disciples before he ascended into heaven. Use the scripture passage to introduce the Trinity.

<sup>12</sup>“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. <sup>13</sup>When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. <sup>14</sup>He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. <sup>15</sup>All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

—John 16: 12–15 NRSV

This passage is a promise of the presence and work of the Holy Spirit and a comfort both to the disciples and to us today. Jesus tells us that he will continue to communicate; the Holy Spirit will come and speak what is heard from Jesus. Jesus reminds us that everything that belongs to the Father belongs to Jesus, and the Spirit will declare that which belongs to Jesus. This passage expresses the closeness of the Trinity. Discuss the following questions to help the class understand the Trinity and what it means for our understanding of God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.

- Who are the “three persons” of the Trinity?
- What is your understanding of the Trinity?
- What questions do you have about the Trinity? (This question should be used to help guide the lesson and following discussion.)

## 3 RESPOND

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

### Trinity

The Trinity wasn’t something that people understood during the time of Jesus; it has developed as people tried to understand the interrelation between God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. The word Trinity is never mentioned in the Bible; however, God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are used interchangeably. But how can these three be one and one be all three?

Read the Community of Christ basic belief statement on God:

We believe in one living God who meets us in the testimony of Israel, is revealed in Jesus Christ, and moves through all creation as the Holy Spirit. We affirm the Trinity— God who is a community of three persons. All things that exist owe their being to God: mystery beyond understanding and love beyond imagination. This God alone is worthy of our worship

—*Sharing in Community of Christ: Exploring Identity, Mission, Message, and Beliefs*, 3rd Edition

A common metaphor of the Triune God is *thought-word-breath*. Think of a word or idea—a thought. Now hold your hands in front of your mouth and speak the word aloud. 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* you feel on your hands is like the Holy Spirit, the breath that carries the spoken word out, the action that puts in the idea into practice.

God speaks, God’s Word acts, and God’s Spirit moves over creation.

- In what ways does describing God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit as a community in loving relationship expand your understanding?

Give each youth a Bible and have them identify ways God is depicted.

- Whom does the passage identify? (God, Jesus, Holy Spirit)
- What metaphor is used when describing them?
- Which qualities are present in the depiction?

Examples of passages are: John 14:25–26, Isaiah 66:13, Genesis 1:1, Matthew 3:16, and John 10:11.

## 4 SEND

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

### Take-away Question

Challenge the class to think about this during the week:

The continued presence of the Holy Spirit was promised to us. Throughout the week, pay attention to the moments when you feel the Holy Spirit’s presence. Take note of moments you were surprised to be aware of the Spirit.

## 5 BLESS

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

Close with “We Are One in the Spirit” CCS 359. Pay special attention to the fourth verse which emphasizes the Trinity.

# ORDINARY TIME

## (PROPER 7)

LESSON 30  
23 June 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 8:26–39

**Lesson Focus:** Worth of All Persons—Jesus restores broken lives.

### Objectives

*The learners will...*

- explore today's story of Jesus healing a man controlled by demons.
- discuss conditions that exclude others from society.
- work together as a class to create a masterpiece.

### Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Community of Christ Sings*
- Large writing surface
- Masterpiece object lesson supplies
  - > Puzzle
  - > Decorating supplies
  - > Glue

**Note to teacher:** Note to Teacher: In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Luke 8:26-39 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, available through Herald House.

# 1 GATHER

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

Today's scripture passage tells the story of Jesus healing a man controlled by demons. Today's lesson will discuss conditions that exclude people from society and how as followers of Jesus, disciples must recognize the Worth of All Persons. Read today's passage by having the group take turns reading one or two verses at a time.

<sup>26</sup>Then they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. <sup>27</sup>As he stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs. <sup>28</sup>When he saw Jesus, he fell down before him and shouted at the top of his voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me"—<sup>29</sup>for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times it had seized him; he was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the wilds.) <sup>30</sup>Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" He said, "Legion"; for many demons

had entered him. <sup>31</sup>They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss. <sup>32</sup>Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding; and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. <sup>33</sup>Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned. <sup>34</sup>When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country. <sup>35</sup>Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. <sup>36</sup>Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed. <sup>37</sup>Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them; for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. <sup>38</sup>The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, <sup>39</sup>"Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

—Luke 8:26–39 NRSV

Ask:

- Why do you think Jesus let the demons enter the swine?
- What might the passage mean by “demons”?
- What is an underlying lesson from Jesus healing this man?

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

### Excluded from Society

The townspeople were afraid of the man with demons; they didn't know how to treat him or be with him. He was different from other people and this caused the town to diminish his worth and exclude him from their community.

- On a large writing surface, have the group list the conditions that kept him separated from his community. (*naked, homeless, ritually unclean, out of control, loss of personal identity*)

There are instances today in our communities and congregations where we fail to recognize the worth of persons and exclude them because of their condition. These can be thought of as modern demons.

Give the youth a few minutes to think about this question and then have them share with the group. Write the answers on a large writing surface.

- What circumstances in today's world might be comparable to the man's possession by the demons? (*addiction, mental illness, poverty*)
- What can we do to help our communities and congregations recognize the worth of these people and practice inclusiveness instead of exclusivity?

Jesus' healing of this man brings hope for the afflicted; Jesus restores broken lives. In this passage, Jesus shows us that all human life is of worth and that each life is worth saving even at great costs. Besides, when we have experienced this grace and love, we are meant to share our story and witness to others (like the man from the story).

- Share about a time when you felt the transforming power of God in your life, family, or community.

## 3 RESPOND

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

As disciples of Christ, we are all called to conform our lives to his by living in loving community with others,

seeing Jesus in the faces of the least of God's children, and serving those whom the world has forgotten (“We Proclaim Jesus Christ,” *Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition, p. 23).

Worth of All Persons upholds the value of all life while rejoicing in the uniqueness of each one. Jesus is the supreme role model in upholding the Worth of All Persons. He broke social conduct to talk with those whom society viewed as less than acceptable. He broke bread with thieves, conversed with sinners, and touched lepers. We must model Jesus' love and grace toward others in our lives as disciples.

### Masterpiece

Using either the back of an already printed puzzle or a blank puzzle, provide each group member with a puzzle piece. If there are extra puzzle pieces, group members can have more than one. Provide decorating supplies such as ribbons, pipe cleaners, markers, glitter, glue, and other small items. Group members should decorate their puzzle pieces however they want. When everyone has finished, put the puzzle pieces together. Each individual piece is unique and beautiful on its own, but when they are combined, a masterpiece is revealed.

**Note to teacher:** A puzzle can be made from cardboard or cardstock if a premade puzzle is not available. Start with a square piece of either and cut enough puzzle pieces for your group.

Just as each puzzle piece is beautiful on its own, each of us is of worth and can thrive as part of a larger masterpiece when we come together as community.

## 4 SEND

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

Say: Today we talked a lot about the Worth of All Persons and conditions that might cause a community to diminish the worth of a person.

Go around the circle and have group members name ways they can be inclusive and invite someone to Christ.

## 5 BLESS

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

Read or sing “Lay Your Hands” CCS 545 to close with a final reflection on the healing Jesus can bring to broken lives.

# ORDINARY TIME

## (PROPER 8)

LESSON 31  
30 June 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 9:51–62

**Lesson Focus:** Follow Jesus and proclaim God's kingdom.

### Objectives

*The learners will...*

- explore the demands of being a disciple.
- experience the need for a lack of hesitation required of Jesus' disciples.
- discuss how the mission matters most.

### Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Community of Christ Sings*
- Paper
- Pens or pencils

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Luke 9:51–62 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, p. 93, available through Herald House.

# 1 GATHER

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

Today's scripture passage can be split in two sections. The first section (Luke 9:51–56) focuses on the healing and peace that is God's kingdom. The disciples James and John want to be angry at the Samaritans, and Jesus rebukes them, showing them the right path toward God's kingdom. The second section (Luke 9:57–62) describes what it means to live a life as a disciple. Jesus tells his followers there cannot be hesitation as a disciple, and there is nothing more important than proclaiming God's kingdom. Read today's passage to learn what Jesus teaches us and asks of us as disciples.

<sup>51</sup>When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. <sup>52</sup>And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him; <sup>53</sup>but they did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. <sup>54</sup>When his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" <sup>55</sup>But he turned and rebuked them. <sup>56</sup>Then they went on to another village. <sup>57</sup>As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." <sup>58</sup>And

Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." <sup>59</sup>To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." <sup>60</sup>But Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." <sup>61</sup>Another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home." <sup>62</sup>Jesus said to him, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

—Luke 9:51–62 NRSV

Ask:

- When has someone made you so angry that you wanted to yell or retaliate?
- How are we called to respond to these circumstances?

Jesus tells of a kingdom where peace reigns and love is common—a kingdom where all are equal and injustice is something of the past. Jesus tells us that this kingdom—God's kingdom—is attainable but we must be willing to proclaim and live it. This means we can't hurt others even when they make us angry, and we can't sit idly by and allow injustice. He goes further to let us know that if we want the kingdom of God, we must be willing to put everything else aside and follow Jesus. Today's lesson will explore the true demands of being a disciple.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

### Keep the Beat

Keep the Beat is a fast-paced game that requires group members to act without hesitation. Each round of Keep the Beat has a new topic. The goal of the game is to come up with a word that goes with the topic and has not already been said during the round. Besides thinking of a new word, the group must keep the beat and say their words on the second count of the beat.

Have the group sit in a circle and practice the 1-2 beat. It can go as fast or slow as the group needs. It may be best to start the group slowly and speed up as they learn the game.

Group members will pat their laps on beat one and clap their hands on beat two. When it is their turn, they will say their words on beat two with the clap. This beat should be repeated 1-2-1-2 until a round ends.

Before the game, have several topics ready to go. Topics need to be general (Bible, clothes, animals, music) so the group has many choices for words. When the group is ready to start, you or one of the group members will select the topic and start the beat.

The game will rotate clockwise so that after the first person has said his or her word, the next person on the left will say the next word and so on.

A sample round, using animals as the topic, might go like this: (pat) "bird" (clap while saying "bird"), (pat) "dog" (clap while saying "dog"), (pat) "horse" (clap while saying "horse"), and continue around the circle with each person saying a different animal. The game continues around the circle until someone repeats an animal or hesitates and misses a beat. When the rhythm is broken, start a new round with a different topic. The goal of the game is to see how long the group can go without an error.

What makes Keep the Beat difficult is that when playing, you can't hesitate or you will miss the beat. This is similar to what Jesus is asking of us. Jesus tells us that this is how our devotion to God should be—without a second thought because nothing is more important than proclaiming God's kingdom.

*The mission of Jesus Christ is what matters most for the journey ahead.*

—Doctrine and Covenants 164:9f

## 3 RESPOND

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

### Life as a Disciple Is Demanding

Give each group member a piece of paper and pen or pencil. Tell them they are going on a long journey and they get to go home and pack. Have them list everything they would pack for their trip. Would they want a special item, food, or clothes? Let each group member share a few of their essential items. Once the group has shared, tell them to throw away or recycle their pieces of paper. They don't get to take any of that.

Like those in today's scripture passage, if Jesus came and said we needed to go with him right now, we wouldn't have time to go home and grab anything. All we could do is go with Jesus.

Discuss:

- If Jesus really did ask you to go with him and to leave everything behind, how would you react?
- Share about a time when you experienced how demanding discipleship is.
- In what ways is life as a disciple joyful? In what ways is it challenging?
- How can you support one another in responding to Jesus' call without hesitation?

## 4 SEND

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

Read or sing together "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" CCS 499. When we decide to follow Jesus, we cannot turn back. If we seek a world that knows God's love and grace, then we must follow in Jesus' footsteps to proclaim God's kingdom.

## 5 BLESS

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

Each of us must decide to follow Jesus and proclaim God's kingdom. Close with a prayer that the group members will remember in their daily lives what it means to be a disciple.

# ORDINARY TIME

## (PROPER 9)

LESSON 32  
7 July 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 10:1–11, 16–20

**Lesson Focus:** Christ's mission is our mission—discern and act!

### Objectives

*The learners will...*

- take time together to center themselves with a spiritual practice.
- discuss how their congregation is engaging in Christ's mission.
- share joy with others by sharing their testimonies.

### Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- Computer or other viewing method
- Downloaded or streamed copy of "Mission Is Relational"
- Paper
- Pens or pencils
- Optional: copies of the Mission Prayer

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for 10:1–11, 16–20 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, p. 94, available through Herald House.

# 1 GATHER

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

### Dwelling in the Word

Find a comfortable position and begin breathing deeply. Inhale through the nose and exhale through the mouth. Slow and steady. Focus on centering yourself in God's peace. Read Luke 10:1–11, 16–20 aloud. As the passage is read, let the words wash over you and fill your mind. Spend a few moments in silent reflection. As the passage is read a second time, respond to the following questions in groups of two or three.

- Which words or phrases caught your attention? Why?
- What does this passage say about the mission of Jesus Christ?

After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. <sup>2</sup>He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. <sup>3</sup>Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. <sup>4</sup>Carry no purse,

no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. <sup>5</sup>Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!' <sup>6</sup>And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. <sup>7</sup>Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. <sup>8</sup>Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; <sup>9</sup>cure the sick who are there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' <sup>10</sup>But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, <sup>11</sup>'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.' <sup>16</sup>'Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me, and whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me.' <sup>17</sup>The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!" <sup>18</sup>He said to them, "I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. <sup>19</sup>See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you. <sup>20</sup>Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

—Luke 10:1–11, 16–20 NRSV



In previous lessons you've had the opportunity to explore different spiritual practices. In today's scripture passage, Jesus tells us that not only is mission important, but discerning where to go and what to do are important steps. We must pray and discern and *then* act.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

### Mission Is Relational

Jesus shares the value of community and that mission requires us to share God's love and Jesus' message with others. We are called to reach beyond our homes and our congregations to invite others to Christ. Watch the video "Mission is Relational" (<https://videopress.com/v/ZWxKrQOR>) and then discuss the questions below drawing comparisons between the video and today's scripture passage. The video can be streamed or downloaded onto your computer by clicking "share" in the top right corner and choosing your download preference. If the video is not an option, the following questions can be discussed using the scripture passage.

### Plans

Jesus had a plan. His plan was to share his mission and proclaim the kingdom of God, but he knew he would need more people. He wanted to reach as many towns as he could, so he needed to send out many missionaries. Jesus' plan to share and proclaim continues today in our congregations—our congregations are communities of disciples and priesthood.

- How do you see your congregation engaging in Jesus' mission?

### Boundaries

Jesus directs the seventy to go into the homes of people they meet and eat with them—to help break down cultural boundaries and uphold hospitality. An instruction for all disciples is to break down any boundary that exists between us and other people. Mission is relational which means it happens through conversations and community and offers healing. Relational mission is not possible when we are divided.

- Which boundaries, traditions, or limits does your community or congregation have that keep them separated from others? How can we break down that which separates us?

### Life as a Disciple Is Demanding

In the previous lesson we discussed that it can be difficult to be a disciple. Even though proclaiming the kingdom of God is the most important part of being a disciple, Jesus warns us we will face opposition. There

will be those who reject the message and refuse to accept the mission.

- What can make it difficult to engage in mission outside your congregation or community?

### There Is Joy

When the seventy returned, they returned with joy. They personally experienced the joy found in living the life of a disciple and sharing the mission and message of Christ.

- How have you experienced joy when engaging in Christ's mission?

## 3 RESPOND

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

### Sharing the Joy

Jesus sent out seventy people to spread the message of Jesus and the kingdom of God. These seventy people were asked to share their testimonies to the towns they visited, to break down boundaries that kept them apart, and to share in community. They returned full of joy at what they had experienced. Have the group think about their answers to the question, "How have you experienced joy when engaging in Christ's mission?" Give each group member some paper and a pen or pencil.

Jesus calls us just like he called the seventy to share what we have experienced and what we know about God. Write down the testimony you would share with someone if asked about the joy of engaging in Christ's mission. Your personal testimony is your way of sharing Jesus' mission and God's love and grace.

## 4 SEND

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

Have one or two group members share their testimony with the group. If time allows, let others share.

## 5 BLESS

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

Close with the Mission Prayer:

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

# ORDINARY TIME

## (PROPER 10)

LESSON 33  
14 July 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 10:25–37

**Lesson Focus:** Love Your Neighbor

### Objectives

*The learners will...*

- reimagine the Good Samaritan with a modern setting.
- learn to love their neighbors.
- discuss how to use the story of the Good Samaritan in their lives.

### Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Community of Christ Sings*
- Paper
- Pens, pencils, or markers
- Large writing surface

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for 10:25–37 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, pp. 95–6, available through Herald House.

# 1 GATHER

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

Today’s scripture passage is one of the most familiar stories to Christians, the Good Samaritan. Read today’s passage together.

<sup>25</sup>Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” <sup>26</sup>He said to him, “What is written in the law? What do you read there?” <sup>27</sup>He answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” <sup>28</sup>And he said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.” <sup>29</sup>But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” <sup>30</sup>Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. <sup>31</sup>Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup>So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup>But a Samaritan

while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. <sup>34</sup>He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. <sup>35</sup>The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, “Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.” <sup>36</sup>Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” <sup>37</sup>He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

—Luke 10:25–37 NRSV

### Modern Samaritan

The story shows cultural and religious boundaries between the Jewish people and the Samaritans, but imagine this story in a modern setting. What culture or community would represent the victim, the robbers, the priest, and the Samaritan? Have the group act the story in a modern retelling. Give the group enough time to prepare.

**Note to teacher:** Plan ahead and ask the presider or worship planner if there is time in the service for the youth to perform their modern parable.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Just as there are different cultures and customs today, in Jesus' time there were different cultures and customs. The Jewish people did not like to associate with the Samaritans. The Samaritans shared a similar history, but kept different religious practices, which is why no one would expect a Samaritan person to help a Jewish person or the other way around. Today's story shows that when a Jewish person was in need, it was only the Samaritan who stopped to help him.

The Samaritan showed true compassion by stopping and helping the man in need. The Samaritan knew what it meant to love your neighbor even when cultural traditions or other conditions made it difficult.

### Love Your Neighbor

Give each group member a piece of paper and a pen or pencil. Tell them to list conditions that might make them less likely to help a person in need. Examples might include seeing the other person as angry, atheist, mean, homeless, lonely, stressed, elderly, troubled, or ill.

- What about these conditions make you respond the way you do?
- How can you find ways to relate with compassion?

**Note to Teacher:** The group will complete a sentence using the word list they've created. It is best if the words are adjectives (a word which describes a noun, such as the examples listed).

When the group has finished making their lists, write the following on a large writing surface. Then have the group each fill in a few of their words in the blank space so the phrase reads something like "Your *homeless* neighbor."

### LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

Your \_\_\_\_\_ neighbor

Your \_\_\_\_\_ neighbor

Your \_\_\_\_\_ neighbor

Your \_\_\_\_\_ neighbor

Your \_\_\_\_\_ neighbor

It can be difficult to look beyond differences, but Jesus calls us to love all people. Jesus calls us to love every single neighbor regardless of whether they are ill, smelly, or mean. Sometimes we must ask ourselves, "Who is my neighbor?" to respond to the needs of others.

## 3 RESPOND

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

### Who Is My Neighbor?

The story of the Good Samaritan has a lesson that goes beyond being nice and helpful. The Good Samaritan challenged cultural and religious boundaries without second thought. The Samaritan showed how the power of God can transform people.

- What divides people in your community or congregation?
- Have you ever witnessed the love and mercy such as that of the Good Samaritan?
- In what ways is your congregation responding to its neighbors who are isolated and in need? Or, how can your congregation respond?

## 4 SEND

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

### Personal Challenge

In the final verse of today's passage, Jesus says, "Go and do likewise." Make this a personal challenge for the group.

Ask:

- How can I be like the Good Samaritan?
- Who is my neighbor?

## 5 BLESS

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

Close with a prayer of blessing to set the group's "hearts ablaze" or sing "Companion of the Poor" CCS 296.

# ORDINARY TIME

## (PROPER 11)

LESSON 34  
21 July 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 10:38–42

**Lesson Focus:** As disciples of Christ, we must know, be, and do.

### Objectives

*The learners will...*

- explore what it means to live as a disciple.
- practice making choices including how we choose to respond to Jesus' call.
- discuss discipleship through Know—Be—Do.

### Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- Meditative music
- Paper, pens or pencils
- Optional: Computer or other viewing device

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Luke 10:38–42 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, pp. 97–8, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Sisters Mary and Martha welcome Jesus into their home in today's scripture passage. We see their discipleship in action in different ways. Read today's passage and discuss how the sisters acted differently in their lives as disciples.

<sup>38</sup>Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. <sup>39</sup>She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. <sup>40</sup>But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." <sup>41</sup>But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; <sup>42</sup>there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

—Luke 10:38–42 NRSV

### It Takes Practice

If available, watch the video "It Takes Practice" which can

be streamed or downloaded from <http://www.CofChrist.org/resources?tags=English-home-Resource#/1298/it-takes-practice>.

Discipleship is a lifelong journey that requires practice. We are encouraged to be attentive and intentional in our lives as disciples. Today's lesson will further explore what it means to live as a disciple.

**Note to teacher:** More information on the eight practices of discipleship mentioned in the video can be found at <http://www.CofChrist.org/common/cms/resources/Documents/Disciple-Practices-Chart.pdf>.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

### Would You Rather

Would You Rather is a game of choices. The class is presented two choices, and they must decide which they would rather do. They do not all have to agree on one choice. Some example questions are below. Allow the group time to come up with some of their own would-you-rather questions. These questions are meant to be challenging with no right answers.

- Would you rather have the ability to fly or to read minds?
- Would you rather give the invocation or the benediction?
- Would you rather be twice as tall or half your height?
- Would you rather buy something for yourself or help another in need?
- Would you rather know how to speak every language or how to play every musical instrument?

Some decisions are harder than others. It's tough to decide if you would rather do one more than another. When Jesus came to the sisters' house, the women had choices to make and they chose differently. Through today's scripture passage, we learn from Jesus that both choices can be correct. Jesus commends Mary's attentiveness to him and Martha's hospitality, but rebukes Martha for being distracted in what she's doing. Jesus is not upset with Martha for her hospitality, but that she is distracted by what she is doing. It is not enough that we are *doing* but that we are also *being*.

### 3 RESPOND

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

#### Know—Be—Do

"We need the Marthas. We need the Marys" (*Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*). We can learn from both sisters. Like Martha and Mary we are challenged to know, be, and do that which brings us nearer to the kingdom of God. The sisters, as followers of Christ, dedicated themselves to learning more about Jesus and God's kingdom; this is *knowing*. Mary was attentive and with Jesus; she was *being*. Martha offered hospitality;

she was *doing*. We are challenged to engage in all three areas to live fully as disciples.

- Are you more like Mary or Martha?
- Which area or areas (know, be, or do) do you struggle with the most?
- In what ways can you practice discipleship in these three areas?
- Brainstorm with the group ways to use Know—Be—Do in their lives.

### 4 SEND

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

Small moments, moments that seem mundane or part of normal everyday life (such as cleaning, walking a pet, or getting ready for the day), are opportunities to give Jesus our attention. While Martha was clearing the table, serving her guests, and offering hospitality, she lost this opportunity because she was so caught up in what she was doing. Like Martha, we need to remember it's not just about *doing*, but about *being*. Ask the group to share a situation in which they can *be* this week.

### 5 BLESS

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

Close with a time of prayerful reflection, *being* with God. Provide paper and pens or pencils for group members who would like to write down their thoughts. Meditative music can be played softly in the background.

# ORDINARY TIME

## (PROPER 12)

LESSON 35  
28 July 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 11:1–13

**Lesson Focus:** Being centered in God’s love through prayer is essential.

### Objectives

*The learners will...*

- discuss how they pray.
- read Jesus’ tips for prayer and compare two versions of the Lord’s Prayer.
- write a prayer using what they learned from the passage.

### Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Community of Christ Sings*
- Large writing surface and marker
- Paper
- Pens or pencils

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Luke 11:1–13 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, p. 99, available through Herald House.

# 1 GATHER

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

Start a discussion with the group about prayer.

- In what ways do you pray?
- How would you describe your prayer life?

Read Luke 11:1–13.

He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.”<sup>2</sup>He said to them, “When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.<sup>3</sup> Give us each day our daily bread.<sup>4</sup> And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us to the time of trial.”<sup>5</sup> And he said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread;<sup>6</sup> for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.’<sup>7</sup> And he answers from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you

anything.’<sup>8</sup> I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.<sup>9</sup> “So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you.<sup>10</sup> For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.<sup>11</sup> “Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish?<sup>12</sup> Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion?<sup>13</sup> If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

—Luke 11:1–13 NRSV

We should not feel obliged, nervous, or scared to pray. Praying should come as naturally as a conversation with a best friend. God wants us to pray. God wants us to be in relationship to God and others, and centering ourselves in God’s love through prayer is essential for that relationship. It’s okay to feel unsure of how to pray or what to say. We see in today’s passage that even the disciples asked Jesus for help. Jesus told his disciples, and us, that prayer is important, and he even helps us with how to pray.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

### Lord's Prayer

Today's passage includes a version of the Lord's Prayer, Luke 11:2–4. Another version of this prayer can be found in Matthew 6:9–15. Read both versions as a group and discuss them. Write the group's answers on a large writing surface.

- What are key differences and likenesses?
- In what ways are these important?
- Can you identify the basic theme of both prayers? (*recognizing God's holiness, the wish for God's reign on Earth, our dependency on God, our vulnerability to God's grace*)

## 3 RESPOND

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

Praying helps us be in the mind of Christ and let the mind of Christ be in us. Prayer is a gift to everyone; through it we are in the presence of God's grace, being a part of God's grace. God blesses us in our lives, and through prayer we can express what is on our hearts. However, prayer is not used to give God our "wish list" of things we want. Prayer is a time to be mindful of self, others, and relationship to the world around us and to the Divine.

- In what ways do we interpret prayer being answered?
- How do we connect through prayer?
- How does prayer help us grow spiritually?
- What is a problem with using prayer to give God our "wish list"?

### What Else Does Prayer Do?

In prayer we pray for God's reign on Earth, and we pray that in our lives as disciples we would be more aware of the needs of the hungry, suffering, and abused among us. Our prayers are a call to increase what we do in our ministry. We are called to mission, and through prayer we seek God's love and grace with us as we answer the call.

Give each group member a piece of paper and pen or pencil. Have them write a prayer using what they've learned today, or write the Lord's Prayer in their own words. Invite them to share their prayer with others, or part of a worship service. We talk to God through prayer and through prayer we commit to being disciples through our actions.

## 4 SEND

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

### Spiritual Practice

Spiritual practices help us explore different styles of prayer and meditation to center ourselves in God's love. They can help us be more aware of and meet the needs of those facing injustice in our world. Using a spiritual practice the group is familiar with, or finding one from [www.CofChrist.org/spiritual-formation](http://www.CofChrist.org/spiritual-formation), engage in a time of attentiveness and intentionality together.

## 5 BLESS

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

In closing, sing "Seek Ye First" CCS 599, paying special attention to the second verse which echoes part of today's passage.

# ORDINARY TIME

## (PROPER 13)

LESSON 36  
4 August 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 12:13–21

**Lesson Focus:** Making responsible choices with what we have places value on our relationships with others instead of on what we have.

### Objectives

*The learners will...*

- compare wants and needs.
- see the injustices that others experience.
- discuss what they can give.

### Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Community of Christ Sings*
- *Where Children Sleep* by James Mollison (ISBN 9781905712168)
- Paper
- Pens or pencils

**Note to teacher:** This lesson is the first half of a two-part lesson. In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Luke 12:13–21 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, p. 100, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson

*(15% of total lesson time)*

Today’s scripture passage tells the parable of the rich man and addresses the question, “How do we make choices about our material wealth?” Jesus uses the rich man as an example of what not to do. Read the passage together to see what the rich man did.

<sup>13</sup>Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.” <sup>14</sup>But he said to him, “Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?” <sup>15</sup>And he said to them, “Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.” <sup>16</sup>Then he told them a parable: “The land of a rich man produced abundantly. <sup>17</sup>And he thought to himself, ‘What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?’ <sup>18</sup>Then he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will

store all my grain and my goods. <sup>19</sup>And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’ <sup>20</sup>But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ <sup>21</sup>So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God.

—Luke 12:13–21 NRSV

Jesus condemns the rich man’s decisions, but it is not material wealth itself that is condemned. In this passage, the focus is on the choices that we make with our material wealth. We can look at examples from Jesus’ life and ministry to better understand how to make responsible choices with what we have.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

*(35% of lesson time)*

### Needs and Wants

Give each group member a piece of paper and pen or pencil. Have them draw a T-chart like the example given



with one side labeled "Wants" and one side labeled "Needs." Fill in each column with things in their lives they consider wants and needs.

Wants	needs
new phone	food
candy	clothes
name-brand clothing	love

Compare the lists of needs and wants. On a large writing surface, have the group name differences between the two sides. What are the differences between our needs and our wants? What happens when we let our wants dictate our choices?

### Where Children Sleep

Take a look at *Where Children Sleep*, a book of photographs depicting children from around the world in their homes. Take time to look at the pictures and compare how other people live, being mindful of the wants and needs presented in each bedroom. If the book is not available, some pictures are available online at the photographer's website. <http://jamesmollison.com/books/where-children-sleep/>

We strive for justice in our world, justice where all have what they need. When *our* needs are met, we forget there are others in the world who are in need.

- Compare the photos of where children sleep. How does justice look in those bedrooms?
- Do all people in the world have what they need?
- How do your needs compare with the needs of some of the children in the photos?

**Note to teacher:** This activity is not to condemn those to have material wealth and compare standards of living (rich versus poor), but to look at the needs of others and the injustices that people in our world face. A good question to ask is, "What are basic needs, and are they being met?"

## 3 RESPOND

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

Luke is not trying to make people feel guilty for having material wealth. Luke tells us that having things is not bad, but the choice to aspire to wealth and hold onto it distracts us from what God wants for our lives. When what we want and value are material items, we have no room to value people and relationships. We have a responsibility to relationships with others, relationships that are not impeded by want for material items. Jesus wants us to value our relationships with one another, ourselves, and to God above everything.

### What Can I Give?

Give each group member another piece of paper. On this piece of paper have them write what they can give to help meet others' needs. This might be a material item, or it might be a characteristic to help a relationship grow.

Examples: friendship, tithing, a listening ear, love, time, clothing, and so on. When the group is finished, have them share their lists.

**Note to teacher:** Keep the group's lists to be used in next week's lesson.

## 4 SEND

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

Each person has so much to offer the world. We may not be rich like the man in the story, but we can be rich in spirit or love or friendship! Jesus challenges us to make good choices. Have each youth consider the personal challenge as a goal for the week.

### Personal challenge:

How will I focus on my relationships with others instead of my material wants?

## 5 BLESS

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

Close with "Seek Ye First" CCS 599 or a prayer.

# ORDINARY TIME

## (PROPER 14)

LESSON 37  
11 August 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 12:32–40

**Lesson Focus:** Making responsible choices with what we have places value on our relationships with others instead of on what we have.

### Objectives

*The learners will...*

- discuss imitating God's generosity and tithing as a spiritual practice.
- discuss how our true capacity helps support local and worldwide ministries through Mission Tithes.
- create giving envelopes to give to others.
- challenge themselves to give what they can.

**Note to teacher:** This lesson is the second half of a two-part lesson. In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Luke 12:32–40 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, pp. 101–2, available through Herald House.

### Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- Copies of Doctrine and Covenants 165
- Copies of the definition of tithing available at [www.CofChrist.org/mission-tithes](http://www.CofChrist.org/mission-tithes)
- Tithing tract PowerPoint available at [www.HeraldHouse.org/collections/disciples-generous-response/products/tithing-brochure-presentation-powerpoint](http://www.HeraldHouse.org/collections/disciples-generous-response/products/tithing-brochure-presentation-powerpoint)
- Paper
- Pens or pencils
- Markers

## 1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson

*(15% of total lesson time)*

Today's scripture passage builds on the previous lesson's scripture passage. It reminds us that when we invest in God's love, we have all we need. Take turns reading today's passage.

<sup>32</sup>"Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. <sup>33</sup>Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. <sup>34</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. <sup>35</sup>"Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; <sup>36</sup>be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they

may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. <sup>37</sup>Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. <sup>38</sup>If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves. <sup>39</sup>"But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. <sup>40</sup>You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour."

—Luke 12:32–40 NRSV

**Ask:** If something you valued were stolen or lost, how would you feel?

It's easy to become attached to material items and be upset when something we value is lost to us. But Jesus reminds us that it is not important that we have things, but that we make wise choices with what we have.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Two lessons ago we discussed the need for prayer in our lives. In the previous lesson we discussed the value we give material items versus the value we give relationships. Today we're looking at how those come together. How do we prayerfully consider what to do with what we have? Opportunities for generosity and service sometimes come quietly and unexpectedly, like a thief in the night.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 165:2 and the definition of tithing approved by the 2016 World Conference through a common consent process

Ask:

- What do you imagine when you think of imitating God's generosity (See Doctrine and Covenants 165:2a)?
- Who knows what Mission Tithes are (See Mission Tithes at [www.CofChrist.org/mission-tithes](http://www.CofChrist.org/mission-tithes))?
- How can giving Mission Tithes be a spiritual practice (See Doctrine and Covenants 165:2d)?

To further explore mission and tithing see article at [www.CofChrist.org/common/cms/resources/Documents/Mission-Thiting-Cramm-Herals-09-16.pdf](http://www.CofChrist.org/common/cms/resources/Documents/Mission-Thiting-Cramm-Herals-09-16.pdf)

## 3 RESPOND

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

Pass around Mission Tithes envelopes so the group can see what they look like. Ask the group if they or their families have ever used Mission Tithes envelopes or eTithing.

- Giving is a sacrifice that can be joyous. What can you give joyfully to help others?
- What makes giving difficult? Easy?

- Is it easier for you to share time, talents, treasures, or testimony?
- In what ways can you increase what you share or, in other words, free your full capacity to share in support of Christ's mission?

### Giving Envelopes

What we do with what we have matters; it's an important part of our lives as disciples. Even if you don't have money to give, it's still important to be aware of what we do with what we have. Give group members blank, empty mailing envelopes. These envelopes will be like their Mission Tithes envelopes but for whatever else they have to offer. Give group members their lists of what they can give that they created in the previous lesson. Have the group decorate their envelopes as if they were going to tithe from that list. An example might be an envelope for all the love they can give.

## 4 SEND

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

Being aware of what we can share is only one part of giving; the next step is to actually give it! This week the personal challenge is for the group to give their giving envelope to someone with what they said they could give. So if they wrote they could give love, and they created a love envelope, they not only give the envelope to someone, but they find a way to give love, too!

## 5 BLESS

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

Close with a prayer that gives thanks for what we have and asks for help in valuing our relationships with others.

"When what we value aligns with the concerns and mission of Christ, it can never wear out, be stolen, or destroyed" (*Sermon and Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, p.101).

# ORDINARY TIME

## (PROPER 15)

LESSON 38  
18 August 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 12:49–56

**Lesson Focus:** Christ's Mission Is Our Mission

### Objectives

*The learners will...*

- explore Jesus' challenge in today's scripture passage.
- discuss opposition they may face when standing up for what they believe.
- create posters for each Mission Initiative.

### Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition
- "Change Your Life, Change the World" (video—see link below)
- Computer or other device for playing video
- Poster paper
- Markers
- Copies of the Mission Prayer

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Luke 12:49–56 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, p. 103, available through Herald House.

# 1 GATHER

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

**Ask:** Could you stand up for something you believed in even if it meant opposition from the people you love most, like your family and friends?

That is Jesus' challenge to us in today's scripture passage. Read today's passage which encourages us to make Christ's mission our highest standard.

<sup>49</sup>"I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! <sup>50</sup>I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! <sup>51</sup>Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! <sup>52</sup>From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; <sup>53</sup>they will be divided: father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

<sup>54</sup>He also said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, 'It is going to rain'; and so it happens. <sup>55</sup>And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat'; and it happens. <sup>56</sup>You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?"

—Luke 12: 49–56 NRSV

Although possible, it's unlikely that you will face opposition from the ones you love if you stand up for what you believe. But that doesn't change Jesus' question about the decisions we make and what we choose to stand up for.

# 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Jesus' life and ministry challenge us to look closely at what we do and the decisions we make. Today's passage puts that challenge to us again. Are we willing to stand

up for what we believe even if that means people we love may distance themselves from us? Christ wants wholeness in our lives and oneness for the world, but the pursuit of peace and justice in the world often leads to division.

- Share a time you (or someone else) held a belief that caused distance between you and others.
- Did this create any difficulties?
- Did it make you question your beliefs?
- How did you persevere?

Life as a disciple can be challenging. In some places in the world, being a disciple of Jesus Christ can be dangerous. Not everyone will agree with you and you may face opposition, but Jesus wants us to push on. If we truly want peace for all and an end to injustices, we must be willing to face this opposition.

### Anthem

Watch "Change Your Life, Change Your World," Community of Christ's anthem for Christ's mission. The video can be streamed or downloaded from this link. <http://www.CofChrist.org/resources?tags=English-Home-Resource#/1238/change-your-life,-change-the-world>

## 3 RESPOND

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

Jesus' mission was bold! He challenged traditions and people's decisions and shared God's love with everyone! That's a lot for just one guy, and that's why Jesus has called us to carry on his mission as disciples. Community of Christ has five Mission Initiatives that respond to that call.

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

"Our call is to reclaim that same vision and passion for the whole mission of Jesus Christ today through five life-changing, church-changing, and world-changing Mission Initiatives" (*Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition, p. 9).

Ask the class what they know about the Mission Initiatives. Refer to *Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition for more information.

### Mission Initiative Posters

Form five small groups, pairs, or individuals, assigning each a Mission Initiative. Provide poster paper and markers. Groups should create posters depicting their assigned initiatives focusing on the bold mission of Christ. How can we be bold like Jesus through each Mission Initiative? How did Jesus live the Mission Initiative? How can we live the Mission Initiative?

## 4 SEND

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

Share each poster with the larger group. If possible, have them share with the congregation also.

## 5 BLESS

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

Close with the Mission Prayer.

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

# ORDINARY TIME

## (PROPER 16)

LESSON 39  
25 August 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 13:10–17

**Lesson Focus:** Peace of Jesus Christ—Compassionate Ministry

### Objectives

*The learners will...*

- explore the reach of Jesus' compassion.
- discuss how they can respond like Jesus as modern disciples.
- discover more about the sacraments.

### Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition
- Newspapers
- Pens and pencils
- Paper
- Larger writing surface
- Markers

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Luke 13:10–17 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, p. 105, available through Herald House.

# 1 GATHER

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

Today's scripture passage shows Jesus' compassion toward others. Read the passage as a group, each person reading one or two verses.

<sup>10</sup>Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. <sup>11</sup>And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. <sup>12</sup>When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, "Woman, you are set free from your ailment." <sup>13</sup>When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. <sup>14</sup>But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the Sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the Sabbath day." <sup>15</sup>But the

Lord answered him and said, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? <sup>16</sup>And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the Sabbath day?" <sup>17</sup>When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things that he was doing.

—Luke 13:10–17 NRSV

Jesus is the perfect example of compassion and how compassion can make a difference in people's lives; we can look at the woman in today's scripture passage as an example of what Jesus' compassion can do. Have the group read the following passages to see how Jesus displayed compassion. If the group knows of other passages, those can be used, too. Discuss.

Luke 7:11–15

Luke 9:12–17

Luke 10:29–37

Luke 19:1–10

- What traditions did Jesus forgo to show compassion?

- In what ways did Jesus' compassion help others?
- How is this compassion still needed in today's world?

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

As we read in today's passage and many others, Jesus often went against cultural norms and traditions which put him at odds with civic and religious leaders. What traditions or leaders would Jesus be up against today?

### Continuing the Story

Provide the group with copies of local, national, and, if possible, international newspapers. Ask the group to look through the newspapers and identify current issues they think Jesus would be passionate about. How would Jesus react to these events? Have each group member share about a current event and how Jesus would respond compassionately and challenge the issue. After each group member has shared, discuss what it means to be a modern disciple.

- As a disciple, how should we respond to current issues?
- How do these current issues affect us personally?
- What can be done? (Ideas can be brainstormed on a large writing surface.)

## 3 RESPOND

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

In today's passage, Jesus' compassion is shown through the sacrament of laying on of hands for the sick. Sacraments are tangible ways to receive God's blessings, and they represent God's wish to bless all creation. Jesus teaches us that everyone should be able to receive God's blessings and that healing

comes in different ways. We are called to be agents of healing through our compassion by inviting people to experience the peace of Jesus Christ.

### Note to teacher:

- This is a great opportunity to have a priesthood member or congregational leader talk with the group about sacraments. Invite someone from the congregation to join the class today.
- For older youth, this would be a good opportunity to explore the sacrament of evangelist blessing. A documentary is available to view or download online.

<https://www.CofChrist.org/resources?tags=seeking%20evangelist%20blessing#/1137/journey-of-a-blessing>

If someone was invited to join the class, have him or her discuss the different sacraments and what they mean in the life of a disciple. Open the group to questions if they have any. More information on the sacraments can be found online <http://www.CofChrist.org/sacraments> or in *Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition.

## 4 SEND

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

As a closing activity, ask the group, "What current event calls you to be compassionate?" Let them share their answers.

## 5 BLESS

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

Ask for a volunteer to close the class with a prayer that we seek compassion in our lives.

# ORDINARY TIME

## (PROPER 17)

LESSON 40  
1 September 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 14:1, 7–14

**Lesson Focus:** All are invited to a place at the table.

### Objectives

*The learners will...*

- connect today's passage to choices they make.
- discuss which tables they're called to invite others to.
- explore the gift of letting others give.

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Luke 14:1, 7–14 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, p. 106, available through Herald House.

### Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- Doctrine and Covenants
- *Community of Christ Sings*
- Small item or snack for each group member
- Way to attach items to bottom of chairs
- Copies of the story by Stephen Hatch found in the Respond section of today's lesson
- Paper
- Pens or pencils

## 1 GATHER

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

For the first object lesson, make sure there are enough chairs in the room for each group member. On half of the chairs, place something the group members can keep, such as a snack or small object. Also attach (with tape or other non-permanent means) an item to the underside of the chair. It is important that half of the chairs have something the group would want and the rest of the chairs have nothing. When the group starts to arrive, welcome them into the room and allow them to choose their chairs. When everyone has arrived, read today's scripture passage and then discuss the questions that follow.

On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the Sabbath, they were watching him closely.

<sup>7</sup>When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a para-

ble. <sup>8</sup>"When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; <sup>9</sup>and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, 'Give this person your place,' and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. <sup>10</sup>But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. <sup>11</sup>For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted." <sup>12</sup>He said also to the one who had invited him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. <sup>13</sup>But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. <sup>14</sup>And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

—Luke 14:1, 7–14 NRSV



Ask the group if they noticed anything different when they entered the room. They may have noticed that half of the group sat in a seat that had something on it.

- What was the item on the chair?
- Why did you choose your chair?
- What connection can be drawn between the parable and choosing a chair for class?

After the discussion, invite those who received an item to give their chairs to those who did not. Then tell them there is something to share (attached to the bottom of the chairs) so everyone has something. Jesus wants us to share what we have equally at the table. When we extend invitations to those in need and put others before us, we are living Jesus' teaching.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

In today's passage, as Jesus is sharing a meal with the Pharisees, he makes two points. He tells the host to invite those who are in need, not just those who can return the invitation. He tells the guests to show humility. Jesus sees guests seating themselves at places of honor when they arrive, trying to put themselves above everyone else instead of recognizing each person's place at the table. Jesus encourages us to be *quietly amazing*. What does it mean to be quietly amazing? It means to live humbly, to do what we can for others without seeking honor. It means providing everyone an equal place at the table and knowing that your place at the table is not always at the head.

- When have you been blessed by someone who was *quietly amazing*?
- How can we be quietly amazing?
- How can we let others shine?

### What Is a Table?

In the parable, Jesus shares in a meal at a table, but when Jesus talks about inviting person to a table, do you think he's talking only about a physical dinner table? To what other "tables" can we invite people?

## 3 RESPOND

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

Make copies of the the *Daily Bread* story by missionary Stephen V. Hatch below. Form the group into pairs,

have them read the passage together, and discuss the questions that follow.

I am a foodie. I love to cook, but I also love to try new foods and have new dining experiences. I am fully convinced that one of the main reasons for this is my early experience of sharing meals with church members.

Some of my earliest memories are sharing with my family (my father was serving as a church appointee in Mexico) and going to homes of local members for meals. These homes were usually simple, and their food supply was meager. But the meal was always delicious and served with love and joyfulness. It was obvious to me that our hosts shared at a cost.

At first it made me uncomfortable, knowing that I was eating food at one meal that would likely serve them for a couple of days. But the hosts offered a sense of rich welcome and generosity. We felt their joy in having us in their home. I understood early what it was like to have a welcome place at their table.

In working for the church in the international field, I found myself welcomed to table after table with joy and generosity. Each country and culture is different, and every experience is unique. Sometimes it was a common meal such as potatoes and beans. Sometimes it was a little more interesting like guinea pig or udder. Sometimes it was a local dish like *feijoada* or *baleadas*, and sometimes it was similar to what I would prepare myself at home, like spaghetti or eggs. But my place at the table was always offered as one of welcome and love.

I love cooking for my family and inviting others for a meal. I love to share my food with others. I only hope that when I prepare meals for my guests I also am expressing the same welcome and hospitality I have felt countless times. I hope they know they always have a place at my table.

- Talk about a fun experience you've had sharing a meal.
- Think about a time when someone served you with love and joyfulness.
- Have you ever experienced uncomfortable generosity like Stephen?
- Whom have you invited to have a place at your table?

One of the greatest gifts we can give is to allow another to give to us. When we receive the gifts of others, we allow them to develop their gifts as disciples.

# 4 SEND

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

Read this passage from the Doctrine and Covenants.

Open your hearts and feel the yearnings of your brothers and sisters who are lonely, despised, fearful, neglected, unloved. Reach out in understanding, clasp their hands, and invite all to share in the blessings of community created in the name of the One who suffered on behalf of all.

—Doctrine and Covenants 161:3a

Ask: Who in your life is represented by this passage?

It might be a friend, a neighbor, a local shop owner, or a stranger that needs your invitation. These invitations are not metaphorical; they are real. Those whose hearts are yearning are real, with real needs, and we must open our hearts to them.

Provide each group member with a piece of paper and a writing instrument. Have them answer today's personal challenge and hang their papers on the wall of the classroom or display somewhere else in the church building.

**Challenge Statement:**

*This week I will invite others to the table by...*

# 5 BLESS

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

Close with the hymn "For Everyone Born" CCS 285 which focuses on everyone's place at the table.

# ORDINARY TIME

## (PROPER 18)

LESSON 41  
8 September 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 14:25–33

**Lesson Focus:** Discipleship is radical.

### Objectives

*The learners will...*

- think about what they must sacrifice to be a disciple.
- look at the difference between the radical nature of discipleship and radical extremism.
- discuss love like Jesus' love.

### Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- Newspapers

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Luke 14:25–33 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, p. 108, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Ask: What would you do if you had to choose between your family and your love of God? As disciples we may face tough decisions on the journey with Jesus. Read today's passage as a group to see what Jesus has to say.

<sup>25</sup>Now large crowds were traveling with him; and he turned and said to them, <sup>26</sup>"Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. <sup>27</sup>Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. <sup>28</sup>For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? <sup>29</sup>Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, <sup>30</sup>saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.' <sup>31</sup>Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup>If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. <sup>33</sup>So therefore, none of

you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.

—Luke 14:25–33 NRSV

What would you do if you had to choose between your family and God? Although we might not have to make that choice, Jesus is asking us to consider the difficult choices we may have to make in order to be a disciple.

- What are some difficult choices you have made as a disciple of Jesus Christ?
- What is something you have sacrificed to be a disciple of Christ?

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

The language of today's passage can feel harsh and extreme. Is Jesus telling us that we must hate our parents and suffer to follow him and live as a disciple? Jesus proposes a radical lifestyle change that includes making tough choices. Sometimes we try to sugarcoat discipleship. It's not a bleak horrible lifestyle, but it's not all fun and enjoyment. That goes against the sometimes idealistic image we have in our minds of what life as a disciple is like. What Jesus is saying in this passage is that we must decide. There may be times when those

decisions are tough (such as choosing life as a disciple over family). We must carry our burdens, sacrifice what we love, and plan for life as a disciple.

### Radical Nature of Discipleship

Jesus challenges us to look at our lives and our world. He wants us to challenge traditions and cultural norms that conflict with his message of justice and peace, even if that means standing up to people whom we love. But when is it too much? "Radical" means new or different from what is traditional. Unfortunately, this term has been attached to some who have adopted a philosophy and lifestyle that promotes violence and death.

Jesus is not looking for radical extremism. The radical nature of discipleship is that it's countercultural. We work for the cause of the kingdom of God, the kingdom upheld by Community of Christ's Enduring Principles and Mission Initiatives. As disciples we are "prepared to die but not to kill, to suffer crucifixion but not to execute others. We are committed to do no harm, even if we are locked in prison" (*Sermon and Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*).

- What sort of radical discipleship has caused you to make the difficult choices of being a disciple?
- How can we practice radical discipleship? (refer to the Enduring Principles for ideas)

### Radical Stories

Bring local, national, and international newspapers to class. Have the group find stories that they feel do not align with the radical nature of discipleship. When they've found a story, working in small groups or pairs, have them suggest how those involved in the story could have responded differently to reflect the radical lives as disciples we are called to live.

## 3 RESPOND

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

Ask: How do you love someone who is different from you? Who believes differently than you?

Jesus' love is radical in that every single person is

loved freely. There are no qualifications that determine if a person is worthy. All are worthy. Jesus' love and compassion for others do not come with a set of limits. This means every person including class bullies and persons in jail. You do not have to accept what a person does or what they believe in, but everyone is worthy of acceptance and love.

- Are there people that you struggle to love?
- What makes certain people hard to love and accept?

Jesus tells us that discipleship comes first. If that is so, whom must we love? To whom have we denied grace, forgiveness, and love?

## ENDURING PRINCIPLES

*Grace and Generosity*

*Sacredness of Creation*

*Continuing Revelation*

*Worth of All Persons*

*All Are Called*

*Responsible Choices*

*Pursuit of Peace (Shalom)*

*Unity in Diversity*

*Blessings of Community*

### Whom Can You Love?

Have class members think of a person they struggle to love or accept. That can be a real person in their life or a general description of a person (bully, gossip, and so on).

- How can you find it in your heart to love and accept such people?
- What steps can you take to reconcile differences and recognize the worth of this person?

## 4 SEND

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

### Personal Challenge

This week's personal challenge is to combine the radical nature of Jesus' love with the person or persons they struggle to love or accept. Their challenge is to uphold in prayer the person or people they named and find ways to show them their love.

## 5 BLESS

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

We struggle to love and accept everyone, but we continue to model our lives after Jesus. Invite each group member to close with a personal prayer for the person they thought of when asked who they struggle to love. Soft meditative music can be played in the background.

# ORDINARY TIME

## (PROPER 19)

LESSON 42  
15 September 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 15:1–10

**Lesson Focus:** Who are the “lost sheep” who need to be found?

### Objectives

*The learners will...*

- read parables about lost items and write their own versions.
- explore their roles in finding those who have been lost.
- look beyond themselves to welcome those whom society condemns.

### Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Community of Christ Sings*
- Doctrine and Covenants

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Luke 15:1–10 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, pp. 109–110, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

### Reverse Hide and Seek/Seek and Find (Optional)

If time allows, this game is a great way to start a discussion. It is best played in a large area.

In this game, only one person hides. Pick one group member to hide first and give an agreed-on amount of time to hide. When that time is up, the other group members spread out and look for the hidden person. The first group member to find the one hiding announces it and the group cheers at finding their lost group member. A new round starts with the person who found the hidden person being the one to hide.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Welcome group members to class and sing “Draw the Circle Wide” CCS 273, which has a theme of inclusion and worth of persons like today’s scripture passage.

<sup>1</sup>Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. <sup>2</sup>And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

<sup>3</sup>So he told them this parable: <sup>4</sup>“Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? <sup>5</sup>When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. <sup>6</sup>And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ <sup>7</sup>Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

<sup>8</sup>“Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? <sup>9</sup>When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’ <sup>10</sup>Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

—Luke 15:1–10 NRSV

In a previous lesson, we read a story about a lost son, the Prodigal Son. The Prodigal Son is the third parable in this set of three from Luke about something that's been lost but then found. The Prodigal Son taught us that God's grace is for all people. Jesus' lesson about grace for all began with the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin which he told to the Pharisees and the scribes. Pharisees and scribes were religious leaders that lived as would be expected of followers and interpreters of the law, but there was still something for them to learn. They became upset with Jesus when he decided to dine with sinners because that went against custom, but as we discussed in the previous lesson, Jesus was radical and countercultural. To help the Pharisees and scribes understand why he ate with sinners, he told them the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin.

The parables break ideas into two parts that speak to the same theme, Worth of All Persons. First, it's important that we search for that which has been lost. The sheep and the coin represent those who have become separated from the community. Jesus tells us that it is worth taking the time to find them. The second part is the celebration that follows finding them. We rejoice when others are brought into the circle; God's vision of shalom is realized when all are included.

- Whose job is it to find those who have been lost?
- Why does Jesus say it's important to seek those who have been lost?
- Like the social understanding the Pharisees and scribes adhered to, what are some of the barriers that keep us from dining with those who have been marginalized by society?
- In which ways can we celebrate finding a "lost sheep"?

## 3 RESPOND

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

Jesus taught using stories called parables. A parable isn't a factual story, but can be used as a teaching method. Jesus used the common examples of a lost sheep and a lost coin to point to a deeper understanding.

### Modern Parable

What might a modern parable of something being lost

and found include today? Rewrite the parable in modern language reflecting something that would happen to you. Examples: Parable of the lost friend or parable of the angry brother.

Have the group share their parables of lost things with the group.

## 4 SEND

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

We repeatedly discuss the Enduring Principle Worth of All Persons because it's important to understand how integral that Enduring Principle is to our lives as disciples. When we say we want the kingdom of God, we are striving for a community that is inclusive and loving of all people. We cannot make the kingdom of God real without each person being valued.

Read the passage below from Doctrine and Covenants 162:7d.

The call to respond is urgent. Look to the needs of your own congregations, but look also beyond your walls to the far-flung places where the church must go. Each disciple needs a spiritual home.

### Take-away Question

Group members may answer the questions in class or take the questions with them to think about personally throughout the week.

- How can I look beyond my needs and the needs of my congregation to find those who have been lost?
- Who in my life is looking for a spiritual home, and how can I help them find it?

## 5 BLESS

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

Close the lesson by singing again "Draw the Circle Wide" CCS 273 or close with a prayer.

# ORDINARY TIME

## (PROPER 20)

LESSON 43  
22 September 2019

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

**Lesson Focus:** Disciples are called to serve God faithfully.

### Objectives

*The learners will...*

- discuss a difficult scripture passage and work through its meaning.
- create a scale of things that matter in their lives.
- relate today's passage to their lives to learn how to serve God more faithfully.

### Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- Index cards
- Pens or pencils
  - Large writing surface

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Luke 16:1–13 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, p. 111, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson

*(15% of total lesson time)*

**Ask:** In what ways can we faithfully serve God?

Remember, the book of Luke takes special notice of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem and what it means to be a disciple. Luke emphasizes Jesus as The Way and expresses that life as a disciple is a journey. Read today's passage in which Jesus tells a story to the disciples as an example of how not to faithfully serve God.

<sup>1</sup>Then Jesus said to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. <sup>2</sup>So he summoned him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your management, because you cannot be my manager any longer.' <sup>3</sup>Then the manager said to himself, 'What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. <sup>4</sup>I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.' <sup>5</sup>So, summoning his master's debtors

one by one, he asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' <sup>6</sup>He answered, 'A hundred jugs of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.'<sup>7</sup>Then he asked another, 'And how much do you owe?' He replied, 'A hundred containers of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill and make it eighty.'<sup>8</sup>And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. <sup>9</sup>And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes.

<sup>10</sup>"Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. <sup>11</sup>If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? <sup>12</sup>And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? <sup>13</sup>No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

—Luke 16:1–13 NRSV

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Today's scripture passage can be difficult to understand. What does Jesus mean by telling us a story of the rich man who praised his dishonest manager? Start a discussion with the group about today's passage. Let them work through what they think it means. First go through the events of the story (what's happening), and then discuss its implications (what it means). If needed, use the discussion starters below.

- What is the point of the story of the rich man and his manager?
- Who is represented by the rich man? By the dishonest manager?
- To whom is Jesus talking? How does that change the scope of the story?
- Why is Jesus telling a story of a man praised for his wrongdoing?

In examples such as today's passage, when it's difficult to understand what's going on, it's good to see how it fits in the broader story. What passages come before or after the text? Read verses 14 and 15 for more information and then discuss new insights.

<sup>14</sup>The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all this, and they ridiculed him. <sup>15</sup>So he said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of others; but God knows your hearts; for what is prized by human beings is an abomination in the sight of God.

- How do these extra verses help your understanding of the passage?
- How do they challenge your understanding of the passage?

It seems as if Jesus was joking about how the rich man responded to his manager. The response wasn't meant to be serious; Jesus is making the point that the manager went about making friends the wrong way. He managed the rich man's money poorly and then cheated him out of his wealth to make friends with others. The point of today's scripture passage is to do that which serves God better by putting God first. The rich man represents God who loves all, even when people do what is right for the wrong reasons. The manager was an example of what not to do and the rich man was an example of how we can respond even to those who decide poorly.

## 3 RESPOND

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

### "What Matters" Scale

Write the following words on index cards (words can be added or removed to fit your group): love, relationships, money, school, God, family, friends, clothes, school, cars, church, and nature.

Each group member will do this object lesson individually. If supplies allow, create a set of cards for each group member. Shuffle the index cards, put them in a single stack, and turn them upside down. Group members will take one card at a time and decide where it goes on their "What Matters" scale by placing cards in a single row with what matters more on the right hand side. An example is below.



Group members will have some differences in their scales, but we hope God is at the "matters more" end of their scales. We recognize the importance of putting God first in our lives, unlike the manager from today's story who did what was right but for the wrong reasons. The manager networked for his own good, manipulating the rich man's debtors and effectively ruining his relationship with the rich man. The manager put wealth and power before his relationship with others and God.

The passage says that we cannot serve two masters. Think of a time you've had to decide between something that you wanted, or was popular, and serving God.

- When have you experienced someone like the manager?
- When have you been like the dishonest manager?
- How can we be like the rich man (forgiving and understanding) to the managers in our lives?

## 4 SEND

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

It's OK for clothes and money to matter to you, but Jesus teaches us that serving God faithfully is what should matter more in our lives. We make the choice how we see God and the role God plays in our lives. Write the words "God matters more" on a large writing surface and, around the words, have youth write ways they will make God matter more in their lives this week.

## 5 BLESS

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

Close with a prayer asking that we remember how to serve God faithfully.



# ORDINARY TIME

## (PROPER 21)

LESSON 44  
29 September 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 16:19–31

**Lesson Focus:** Seeing through God’s eyes allows us to love others as God loves.

### Objectives

*The learners will...*

- discuss their thoughts about life and resurrection and eternal life.
- recognize the Lazaruses in their lives.
- choose love instead of fear as their motivation for life as a disciple.

### Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Community of Christ Sings*
- Sticky notes
- Large writing surface
- Markers
- Chair

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Luke 16:19–31 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, p. 112, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

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

Draw a heart on enough sticky notes for each group member to have one. As they arrive, give group members a heart and tell them today’s lesson is about love. When the group is gathered, read today’s scripture passage about Lazarus and a rich man.

<sup>19</sup>“There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. <sup>20</sup>And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, <sup>21</sup>who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man’s table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. <sup>22</sup>The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. <sup>23</sup>In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. <sup>24</sup>He called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water

and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.’ <sup>25</sup>But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. <sup>26</sup>Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.’ <sup>27</sup>He said, ‘Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father’s house— <sup>28</sup>for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.’ <sup>29</sup>Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.’ <sup>30</sup>He said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ <sup>31</sup>He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’”

—Luke 16:19–31 NRSV

Today’s passage is another lesson from Jesus about how to live as disciples, and more importantly, the motivation for life as a disciple, love.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Ask the group to share something they're afraid of.

### Love, Not Fear

Our motivation for being disciples is not about what may happen after our earthly life. The rich man wanted to warn his family about their actions, to influence their actions by fear of what might happen. We believe in resurrection and eternal life, but life as a disciple is about living here and now. We choose lives as disciples out of love for others rather than fear of repercussions in the life after.

Start a discussion with the group about the lives and afterlives of Lazarus and the rich man. What is their understanding of discipleship, the reign of God, and resurrection and eternal life? (Read *Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition, pp. 14–16.)

## 3 RESPOND

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

We must choose God's love. How often are we the rich man walking by a Lazarus? We must learn to see through God's eyes to be the disciples we are called to be.

- Who is a Lazarus in your life that you walk by?
- Why do we ignore those who are in need? What is most challenging to you about seeing someone the way God sees them?
- How can our communities better see those in need?
- Share about a time you've seen through God's eyes.

### Seeing through God's Eyes

For this object lesson you'll need a large writing surface (preferably a dry-erase board), markers, and a chair. If

a dry-erase board is not available, each group member will need a piece of paper. Group members will take turns sitting in the chair in front of the writing surface. The rest of the class will come up to the board and write something they love about the person in the chair. When the group finishes, the person in the chair can look at what was written on the board. Take turns so all have a chance to sit in the chair and have something written about them.

Group members were directed to write what they love about other group members, but we are challenged to take that love beyond the classroom. Can they see through God's eyes and love a stranger or someone with whom they have nothing in common?

smiles  
great hugs  
positive  
hopeful  
happy

## 4 SEND

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

In others' welfare resides our welfare. You cannot pray for God's peaceable kingdom to be a reality and ignore the needs of others. When we see others through God's eyes, we are acting out of love, not fear. Have each group member complete the personal challenge.

### Personal Challenge

I will see the needs of \_\_\_\_\_ and act out of love by \_\_\_\_\_.

## 5 BLESS

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

Close with the hymn "We Are One in the Spirit" CCS 359, which gets at the heart of today's lessons with the refrain, "And they'll know we are Christians by our love..."

# ORDINARY TIME

## (PROPER 22)

LESSON 45  
6 October 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 17:5–10

**Lesson Focus:** With faith, anything is possible.

### Objectives

*The learners will...*

- discuss how faith makes the impossible possible.
- explore the text through a modern lens.
- recognize the blessings of community.

### Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Community of Christ Sings*
- Pieces of paper, pencils
- Erasers
- Large writing surface
- Markers

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Luke 17:5–10 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, p. 113 available through Herald House.

# 1 GATHER

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

Open class with the song “Si tuvieras fe” CCS 249 which translates “If You Only Had Faith.” A recording of the song is available on the *Community of Christ Sings* Audio Recordings. If the youth are interested, encourage them to create motions for the words. This song is upbeat and fun to dance to.

As Jesus journeys to Jerusalem, he continues to teach his disciples lessons which apply to our lives as disciples. Today’s passage provides Jesus’ explanation of faith and the powerful role faith can play in our lives.

<sup>5</sup>The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” <sup>6</sup>The Lord replied, “If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.” <sup>7</sup>“Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, ‘Come here at once and take your place at the table?’ <sup>8</sup>Would you not rather say to him, ‘Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink?’ <sup>9</sup>Do you thank the

slave for doing what was commanded? <sup>10</sup>So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, ‘We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!’”

—Luke 17:5–10 NRSV

On small pieces of paper, write the word “impossible” and give one to each group member. Have them write something they think is impossible on the blank side of the paper. Ask the group, “How can something impossible be made possible?” After there has been some discussion, tell them that with faith the impossible is possible. Give each group member an eraser to represent faith. (If the erasers are big enough, write the word “faith” on them.) With faith, they can make impossible possible by erasing the “im.”

# 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

In today’s scripture passage, the disciples are feeling inadequate in their faith. They are concerned that they are not good enough for lives as disciples. Jesus does not get angry with them for feeling inadequate; instead he tells them to believe in themselves because they

already have faith. Even with faith as small as a mustard seed the impossible is possible. Jesus was challenging them and telling them they were already faithful enough—they just had to know how to use it. If you act in faith, your faith will grow.

Ask: Have you ever said, “That’s impossible,” only to be proven otherwise?

### **Making the Impossible Possible**

Have the group make a list of what may seem impossible. (They can include what they wrote on the back of their pieces of paper from the Gather section.) Write their list on a large writing surface. As a group, discuss possible ways to make their list of impossibilities possible. It’s okay if the answers are silly or seem implausible.

Examples:

- It’s impossible to breathe underwater. (It’s possible to breathe underwater with an underwater breathing apparatus.)
- It’s impossible to abolish poverty in the world. (It’s possible to abolish poverty if you start small. Help one person; then help another.)
- It’s impossible to become President. (It’s possible to be a leader in your school or community.)
- It’s impossible to love everyone. (It’s possible to love everyone when you share God’s love.)

Sometimes to do that which seems impossible requires us to think unconventionally. It takes some ingenuity to make possible what we think is impossible. It’s like Jesus telling his disciples their faith was enough. When challenges face us, we are already equipped to overcome them; we just need to use what we have. God gives us faith to do what was thought impossible.

- Share about a time when you felt inadequate as a disciple.
- What parts of mission seem impossible but could be possible by putting our faith into action?

## **3 RESPOND**

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

### **Modernize the Text**

It’s important to note that although today’s passage mentions slavery, it is in no way promoting or accepting

slavery. However, it does remind us of our relationship to God. It makes us ask ourselves, “To whom or what do we belong?”

A great practice to help youth with tough texts like today’s passage is to modernize the story.

Have the group brainstorm the question, “If Jesus was speaking today, what would this story look like?”

### **Blessings of Community**

Jesus doesn’t want us to quantify our faith; he says that even if our faith is very small, such as a mustard seed, we are capable of much. What Jesus does want is for us to be open to the power and guidance of the Spirit, letting it form us as disciples. When we ask ourselves, “To whom or what do we belong?” the answer is that we belong to God and to one another. We have a relationship to God and we also have relationships with other seekers and disciples with whom we experience blessings of community.

- If we belong to God, what does that mean for our lives?
- How have you experienced the blessings of community?
- How have you witnessed the impossible become possible through a community working together?

## **4 SEND**

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

Have the group reflect on their answers to the question, “What aspects of mission seem impossible but could be possible with faith?” After a few minutes, redirect their attention to their pieces of paper from the Gather section. Remind them that with faith, all things are possible. Have the group consider one act that they can do in the coming week to help them move toward making the impossible possible.

## **5 BLESS**

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

Sing the song, “Si tuvieras fe (If You Only Had Faith)” CCS 249. A recording of the song is available on the *Community of Christ Sings* Audio Recordings.

# ORDINARY TIME

## (PROPER 23)

LESSON 46  
13 October 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 17:11–19

**Lesson Focus:** Gratitude leads to wholeness and healing.

### Objectives

*The learners will...*

- explore the wholeness found in gratitude.
- discuss how they express gratitude to God.
- review that for which they are thankful.

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Luke 17:11–19 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, p. 115, available through Herald House.

### Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Community of Christ Sings*
- Large writing surface
- Markers
- Paper or journals
- Pens or pencils, decorating supplies such as glitter and stickers

## 1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson

*(15% of total lesson time)*

### Thank You Tally

Start the lesson with a “thank you” tally. Each time you hear a group member say “thank you,” keep track with tallies on a large writing surface. Create opportunities for giving thanks such as passing out supplies (such as Bibles, pens, and paper). Make sure to say thank you whenever a group member does something you ask. Read today’s passage as a group.

<sup>11</sup>On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. <sup>12</sup>As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, <sup>13</sup>they called out, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” <sup>14</sup>When he saw them, he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were made clean.<sup>15</sup>Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. <sup>16</sup>He prostrated himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. <sup>17</sup>Then Jesus asked, “Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are

they? <sup>18</sup>Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” <sup>19</sup>Then he said to him, “Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well.”

—Luke 17:11–19 NRSV

Bring the group’s attention to the tallies and explain what the tallies represent. One way we can show gratitude is through words such as “thank you.” We read in today’s passage that the leper showed gratitude to Jesus by returning to say thank you. Today’s lesson will explore gratitude, wholeness, and healing through the Spirit.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

*(35% of lesson time)*

In the last verse of today’s passage, Jesus tells the leper that his faith made him well. There are other versions of this verse which translate what Jesus says as the leper’s faith made him *whole*. “Seemingly gratitude as a permanent trait has a positive effect on health and wholeness...Saying ‘Thank you’ is not only a matter of etiquette; it literally blesses” (*Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, p. 115).

- What does it mean to be grateful?
- How do you express your gratitude?
- After his healing, which was a great gift, the leper showed huge gratitude. Do you think having more would make you more grateful? Less grateful? Explain.
- Even on days when it seems everything is going wrong, how can we find it in ourselves to be grateful for what we do have? How can we be grateful amid struggle?

Also in today's passage, the author notes that the leper who returned was a Samaritan, a foreigner. The one who returned to Jesus was the least like him, yet he was the most grateful. Jesus shows us that we don't get to pick and choose whom the Spirit touches; it is not our job to judge who is healed. Today's scripture passage is about healing and wholeness, and wholeness is not just for people who believe like us or who act like us.

- What does it mean to be whole?
- How are we whole in Christ?
- Wholeness for all means we have to examine our relationships with others. Looking at your relationships, how can you Invite People to Christ and help them experience wholeness through the peace of Christ?

### **3 RESPOND**

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

#### **Gratitude Journals**

Commercially produced journals or notebooks can

be used, or the group can create journals by folding several sheets of blank paper in half to create a booklet. Journals need to have at least 30 pages. These journals will be "gratitude journals" in which group members will be encouraged to take time each day to write about what they're thankful for. Provide the group with decorating supplies (markers, stickers, glue, glitter, and so on). While they decorate, discuss the following questions about gratitude.

- How do you express your gratitude to God? To others?
- Do you take time to daily review your day with God?
- How do you take God's grace for granted?

### **4 SEND**

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

#### **Be Grateful**

Invite the group to review their day and think about that for which they are grateful. In their journals, they can write the things they are grateful for and brainstorm ways to express their gratitude to God and to others. As disciples, we give thanks to God for all that we have.

### **5 BLESS**

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

Close with a prayer or sing "Take My Life and Let It Be" CCS 608.

# ORDINARY TIME

## (PROPER 24)

LESSON 47  
20 October 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 18:1–8

**Lesson Focus:** Perseverance in the face of injustice brings great rewards.

### Objectives

*The learners will...*

- identify different themes in the scripture passage.
- discuss how they've been rewarded through perseverance.
- uphold those living with injustice in prayer.

### Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Community of Christ Sings*
- Small bucket
- Large craft sticks
- Markers
- Equipment to view "Pep Talk" video (optional)

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Luke 18:1–8 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, p. 116, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson

*(15% of total lesson time)*

There are several themes that can be found in today's scripture passage. For example, the difference between God and society, the power of persistent prayer, and justice for those treated unjustly. Read the passage as a group, and then have group members work in pairs to see if they can identify these or other themes.

Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. <sup>2</sup>He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. <sup>3</sup>In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, 'Grant me justice against my opponent.' <sup>4</sup>For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, 'Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, <sup>5</sup>yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.'" <sup>6</sup>And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. <sup>7</sup>And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him

day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? <sup>8</sup>I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

—Luke 18:1–8 NRSV

Discuss with the group the themes they identified and where they were present in the passage. These discussion questions may be used helped to guide the discussion.

- Who might the unjust judge represent?
- Who might the widow represent?
- Did the judge do what was right?

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

*(35% of lesson time)*

### Perseverance

The widow, seeking justice, went to the judge for help only to be refused. Despite being repeatedly turned away, the widow returned. To try to stop the woman from returning and bothering him, the judge granted her

the justice he had been denying. Through the widow's perseverance, she was rewarded.

- Have you ever tried to do something that took much perseverance? (learned to juggle, overcome an injury, worked toward a personal goal, and so on)
- Share when and how you were rewarded because of your perseverance.
- What does it mean to have perseverance in your spiritual life as a disciple?

## 3 RESPOND

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

### Justice

In the society represented in today's passage, for those considered lesser, like the widow, the judge was someone on whom they depended to help them fight for justice. But the judge, described as neither God-fearing nor having respect for others, was not a good person and did not help those who needed it. The judge represents our society and systems that are corrupt and unjust. We work to share God's shalom, and a crucial part of God's shalom is justice. To live in a world centered in God's shalom, we need to show perseverance and work toward a world where injustice is not tolerated.

- Who in your community represents the widow?
- How can you promote justice on behalf of others?

### "Pep Talk"

If time allows, watch "Pep Talk" by Kid President. This video is a pep talk that encourages us to make the world a better place for one another. We are called to persevere like the widow and work toward justice for those living with injustice. We should take Kid President's advice

and make the world a better place for others!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-gQLqv9f4o>

## 3 RESPOND

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

### Prayer Bucket

We are encouraged to pray often and persistently. Prayer keeps us connected and aware of circumstances that are not just. We pray for those who suffer, and we pray for peace and justice; we let those prayers move us into action.

Provide group members with large craft sticks. On their sticks, invite them to write an injustice they've seen that they would like to uphold in prayer. Allow group members to share what they've written on their sticks and then place them in a small bucket. Prayer buckets can be a good way for youth to uphold specific concerns in prayer. Have each youth draw a stick and pray for that condition through the week. Continue this practice in the weeks that follow, encouraging each youth to pray for a different condition each week.

## 5 BLESS

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

Offer a prayer for all the concerns upheld through the prayer bucket. Alternately, each group member could say a personal prayer for the injustice they added to the pail or draw one and pray for it. Remind the group that prayer is important in their lives as disciples. As disciples we pray for justice and peace, and then we must actively pursue justice and peace.



# ORDINARY TIME

## (PROPER 25)

LESSON 48  
27 October 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 18:9–14

**Lesson Focus:** Disciples humbly seek forgiveness.

### Objectives

*The learners will...*

- explore the difference between pride and humility.
- discuss what can be learned from the characters in today's scripture passage.
- commit to life as disciples.

### Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Community of Christ Sings*
- Balloon

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Luke 18:9–14 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, p. 117, available through Herald House.

# 1 GATHER

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

## Pride and Humility

As group members come in the classroom, have half of them sit in one area and the other half sit in another area. The first group will be the "pride" group and the second group "humility". When everyone has arrived, have members from each group take turns acting out their group's word, either pride or humility. What does it look like to act with pride or humility?

When each group member has had an opportunity to act, read today's passage in which Jesus uses the actions of a prideful man and a humble man to teach his disciples.

<sup>9</sup>He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt: <sup>10</sup>"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. <sup>11</sup>The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. <sup>12</sup>I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all

my income.' <sup>13</sup>But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' <sup>14</sup>I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted."

—Luke 18:9–14 NRSV

Reflect on the opening activity and examples from today's scripture passage; then discuss with the group what it looks like when we act pridefully or humbly.

# 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

## Let Go of Pride

Before class, inflate a balloon and write the word "pride" on it; then let the air out. Holding the deflated balloon, make self-righteous statements such as "I'm so glad that I'm so generous with my time, money, and talent" or "Thank you, God, for making me a better Christian than my neighbor." Each time you say a self-righteous statement, blow into the balloon. After several statements, the group will be able to read the

word “pride” on the balloon. When the balloon is blown up, release the balloon (it will fly around until it’s empty again) and use this moment to talk about letting go of our pride.

- Why does Jesus speak against pride?
- In what ways can pride negatively affect our relationship with others?

Jesus uses the Pharisee here as an example, not because Pharisees are bad people. All of us have moments when we think we are doing what is right, but we are missing something important. Pharisees upheld the law and tried to do what they thought was right. But in today’s passage, we see the Pharisee getting caught up in his pride. When we are prideful and self-righteous, we distance ourselves from others and lose the opportunity for developing or maintaining relationships.

### 3 RESPOND

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

There are many characters in today’s passage: Jesus, the disciples, a Pharisee, and a tax collector. Below are ways we can learn from each one, interpretations of what the passage means for our lives as disciples, and questions about how we are all of these characters at different moments in our lives.

**Jesus:** Jesus is a teacher and guide; he spent his life helping others and modeling what it means to live as disciples.

- How are you like Jesus, the teacher?
- In what ways can you help others find the way?

**Disciples:** The disciples are on a constant journey of discovery; they are learning what it means to follow Jesus and seek the kingdom of God.

- What have you learned about being a disciple? How did you learn it?

**Pharisee:** The Pharisee is a leader, upholding the law and living a life that he thinks is right, but gets lost in his pride—thinking he is better than others because of how he lives.

- When have you done what was right but for the wrong reason?
- Share about a time that you were self-righteous, thinking you were better than others because of a decision you made. How could you have acted differently?

**Tax Collector:** The tax collector recognized himself as a sinner. He didn’t always do right, but when he asked for forgiveness from God, he did so humbly.

- How are you like the tax collector?
- Have you ever had to ask God, or another person, for forgiveness?

At different moments in our lives, we can be the Pharisee or we can be the tax collector, and neither is perfect. We can learn from both about how to be better disciples. In today’s passage, Jesus calls us to humble ourselves. Just as the tax collector humbled himself when asking for forgiveness, we must also learn to humble ourselves in our choices and ministry as disciples.

### 4 SEND

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

Through scripture and faith, we know that God forgives us when we humbly seek forgiveness, but that’s not enough. We must live Jesus’ examples as disciples. Being a disciple is more than just doing right. Being a disciple is about giving and receiving grace. It’s about being kind to others and accepting them for all that they are. Living as a disciple means living with intentionality and making the most of every moment. Have the group members get in pairs and discuss the questions below.

- When is a time you acted pridefully?
- How can you live your life as a disciple this week?
- How can you live as an example of God’s grace?

### 5 BLESS

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

Close by singing “Humble Yourself” CCS 211.

# ORDINARY TIME

## (PROPER 26)

LESSON 49  
3 November 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 19:1–10

**Lesson Focus:** Welcome those who feel separated from society.

### Objectives

*The learners will...*

- show what they would do to get Jesus' attention.
- identify outcasts in their community and ways they can welcome them.
- explore tithing as giving from one's true capacity.

### Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Community of Christ Sings*
- Optional: computer, Internet, and viewing screen

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Luke 19:1–10 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, pp. 118–9, available through Herald House.

## 1 GATHER

Activates background knowledge, prepares, and motivates for lesson

*(15% of total lesson time)*

Just like last week, this week's story also involves a tax collector, Zacchaeus. Have the group tell or sing what they know about Zacchaeus; then read today's passage to fill in what they may not know.

He entered Jericho and was passing through it. <sup>2</sup>A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. <sup>3</sup>He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. <sup>4</sup>So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. <sup>5</sup>When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today." <sup>6</sup>So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. <sup>7</sup>All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner."<sup>8</sup>Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." <sup>9</sup>Then Jesus said to

him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. <sup>10</sup>For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."

—Luke 19:1–10 NRSV

The story of Zacchaeus is a popular Bible story. For additional ways to introduce the story, a couple of short videos of the Zacchaeus story can be found at these sites:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=zHXqI1-RA1c](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zHXqI1-RA1c)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=EU4mHfKtLBU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EU4mHfKtLBU)

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

*(35% of lesson time)*

### Outcasts

Today's story reflects the Enduring Principle Worth of All Persons, which upholds the value of persons and community. Jesus welcomes Zacchaeus, an outcast in his community. Jesus invites himself to Zacchaeus' home for dinner and Zacchaeus accepts. Jesus' willingness to accept Zacchaeus confused people because of who Zacchaeus was and his relationship

with the community. Zacchaeus wasn't just any tax collector—he was a chief tax collector, and they were considered the worst. Chief tax collectors would take more from people than they owed.

Take a moment to think of Zacchaeus differently. Instead of thinking of him as the chief tax collector, recognize him for the outcast he was. He was separated from his society by his actions, and we see this physical separation when he climbed the tree. Zacchaeus treated others unjustly in his role as a tax collector, and he was viewed as an outcast by his community. Jesus welcomed Zacchaeus because Jesus taught the Worth of All Persons. Jesus' mission was to the poor and outcasts who needed to know God's love and acceptance for them.

- What did Zacchaeus do to treat others unjustly?
- In what ways was Zacchaeus an outcast?
- Who in your community is considered an outcast?
- How can you help others know God's love and acceptance?

There was something missing in Zacchaeus' life, and he knew it. There was an emptiness that his wealth did not fill. Zacchaeus was searching for something more. So when Jesus came to town, Zacchaeus was transformed when he experienced Christ. Jesus showed him love and acceptance he hadn't known, and this filled Zacchaeus' life with meaning it had been lacking. Our lives are transformed when we accept Christ and live by his examples.

## 3 RESPOND

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

### Giving Formula

The word "tithes" means one-tenth. But when Community of Christ talks about giving mission tithes, we express our giving to our true capacity. Community of Christ encourages every disciple to give according to his or her capacity. It's easier to use a formula, but it's life changing to look at what we have and give to our true capacity. Zacchaeus looked at what he had and gave to his true capacity—not restricting himself to using a formula.

Give some group members ten pebbles (or coins), give some eight pebbles, and give some six. On a piece of

paper or large writing surface, have various items "for sale." Include food for one pebble, water for one pebble, clothing for two pebbles, a home for four pebbles, and a fun activity (such as bowling or a movie) for two pebbles. Ask group members what they would buy with their ten, eight, or six pebbles. Discuss with the group how having fewer pebbles influences what you buy.

- How does one's understanding of mission tithes change if it's based on our true capacity instead of a formula?
- In what ways are you called to give to your true capacity?

## 4 SEND

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

### What Would You Do?

In Zacchaeus' time, it would have been unbecoming of an adult man to run in public and then climb a tree. As a person not well liked anyway, Zacchaeus really risked being laughed at for going after the opportunity to see Jesus. In our daily lives, we must ask ourselves, "What would I be willing to do to get Jesus' attention?"

Invite the group to stand in a circle. Go around the circle and let group members show how crazy and silly they would be willing to act to see Jesus. Show an example to the group, such as jumping up and down while waving your arms and yelling, "Jesus!" to encourage the group to come up with their outrageous examples.

Invite the group to repeat the call to action. We must be willing to risk something new—new challenges, new relationships, new understandings—in order to share the healing ministry of Christ with others.

### Call to Action

This week I am willing to do what it takes to welcome the outcasts in my community.

## 5 BLESS

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

Close with the song "Draw the Circle Wide" CCS 273 which encourages us to welcome others into our circle.

# ORDINARY TIME

## (PROPER 27)

LESSON 50  
10 November 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 20:27–38

**Lesson Focus:** Life as a disciple is for the here and now.

### Objectives

*The learners will...*

- be “tricked” like the Sadducees tried to trick Jesus.
- discuss the meaning of today’s text and questions that arise through reading and discussing it.
- brainstorm what we can do *now* as disciples.

### Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Community of Christ Sings*
- Box of crayons
- Banana
- Needle
- Resealable bag
- Pencils
- Water
- Large writing surface

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Luke 20:27–38 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, p. 120, available through Herald House.

# 1 GATHER

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

### Trick

Ask the class if they’ve ever seen a magic trick or if they know any. Can anyone perform one or share about a time they saw one? Have a magic trick prepared for class. Here are several simple choices:

**Guess the Color:** Give a group member a box of crayons and say you can guess the color of the crayon he or she chooses. Turn around and ask him or her to choose a crayon and place it in your hand. When the crayon is in your hand, turn to face the group. With your other hand, scrape your fingernail on the crayon so some wax gets stuck under your nail. Keeping the crayon behind your back, with a flourish, wave the hand with the wax under the nail in front of your face and sneak a peek at the color of the wax. Triumphant reveal the color, but not the secret to your trick!

**Sliced Banana:** Prepare the banana using a needle to slice the banana without opening it. Along a ridge of the banana, poke a hole with a needle. Do not poke all the way through. When the needle is in the banana, move the needle back and forth to slice the banana. Repeat all the way down the banana, slicing it into several pieces. Peel the banana for the group, turning the holes away from the group so they can’t see them. You will amaze the group with a presliced banana. Share slices of the banana with the class.

**Hole in the Bag:** Ask the group if they think you can poke a hole in a bag full of water without water coming out. They shouldn’t think it’s possible. Fill a resealable bag with water, and then poke a pencil through it—do not remove the pencil. To amaze them, try poking holes with multiple pencils.

Today’s passage is about an encounter Jesus had with a group of Sadducees. (It’s okay if the group doesn’t know who Sadducees are; they will learn more about them later.) The Sadducees presented Jesus with a potentially baffling paradox, but what the Sadducees

were trying to do was trick Jesus! Just like a magic trick is meant to trick people, the Sadducees thought they'd be able to get Jesus to admit he wasn't who he said he was. Jesus didn't fall for their trick, though, and taught us a valuable lesson about what it means to be a disciple.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction

(35% of lesson time)

Read today's scripture passage together and as it is being read, write any thoughts or questions the group has on a large writing surface.

<sup>27</sup>Some Sadducees, those who say there is no resurrection, came to him <sup>28</sup>and asked him a question, "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, leaving a wife but no children, the man shall marry the widow and raise up children for his brother. <sup>29</sup>Now there were seven brothers; the first married, and died childless; <sup>30</sup>then the second <sup>31</sup>and the third married her, and so in the same way all seven died childless. <sup>32</sup>Finally the woman also died. <sup>33</sup>In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had married her." <sup>34</sup>Jesus said to them, "Those who belong to this age marry and are given in marriage; <sup>35</sup>but those who are considered worthy of a place in that age and in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. <sup>36</sup>Indeed they cannot die anymore, because they are like angels and are children of God, being children of the resurrection. <sup>37</sup>And the fact that the dead are raised Moses himself showed, in the story about the bush, where he speaks of the Lord as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. <sup>38</sup>Now he is God not of the dead, but of the living; for to him all of them are alive."

—Luke 20:27–38 NRSV

Some passages can be difficult to understand. More information and rereading can help understanding. Provide the following information about the passage to the group and then reread the passage. Include any new questions or thoughts on the large writing surface.

### Sadducees

- Wealthy, conservative, religious "elite" associated with temple leadership
- Probably only recognized the Pentateuch (Genesis–Deuteronomy) as Scripture, and differed from the Pharisees who upheld the prophetic writings
- Did not believe in life after death or in angels

- Though religiously conservative, they were politically liberal in cooperating with the Romans regarding Jewish political and religious affairs.
- Challenged belief in the law as well as Jesus' authority

### Woman Marrying Seven Brothers

- The marriage law was for preservation of a man's lineage through his brothers.
- Provided security for widows and kept property in the immediate family
- Deuteronomy 25:5–10 records the strict penalty for a brother-in-law who does not take the widow as his wife.

### Resurrection

- Belief that God gives new life in the transcendent world to those who have died (Boring and Craddock, *The People's New Testament Commentary*, p. 262)
- Immortality is a theory about the nature of human beings; resurrection is a conviction about the act of God (Boring and Craddock, p. 262).
- Jesus responds to the Sadducees by stating life after resurrection is different from life in the present age. Therefore, the details of the law are irrelevant.
- Reference to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob through Moses connects the past with the present.

After reading the passage a second time, discuss as a group the thoughts and questions that came up while reading the passage. How does the added information help you understand the passage? What do you think Jesus was saying?

## 3 RESPOND

Takes the learners from hearing to doing

(35% of lesson time)

The Sadducees' question about the marriage paradox was meant to trap or trick Jesus. However, Jesus' response was not focused on marriage and to whom the woman would be married in an afterlife. His response wasn't even about the afterlife. Jesus' response was about salvation for the living, and what we can do in our lives here and now on Earth. Read the following passage about Community of Christ understanding of resurrection and eternal life.

Christ is risen! Thus we believe that God is God of life, not of death. By faith we share in eternal life even now. In Christ, God's love finally will overcome all that demeans and degrades the creation, even death itself. Easter also gives us hope that the tragic suffering and death of victims, throughout history, is not the last word. We believe the Holy Spirit will transform all

creation to share in the glory of God.

—*Sharing in Community of Christ*,  
3rd Edition, p. 16

### What Can We Do?

When we look at our life as a disciple, we understand it to be what we can do *now* for our community, for others, and for the world. We must seriously ask ourselves, “What can we do?” As a group, use a large writing surface to brainstorm these questions:

- What does it mean to believe in a God of the living?
- How does that conflict with the notion that salvation means living with Jesus in heaven after we die?
- What does it mean to experience salvation now—for us, for others, and for creation?
- What can we do for others as disciples?

## 4 SEND

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

Provide each group member with a journal and have them prayerfully consider and write or draw their responses to the following question, “What does it mean to believe that God is a God of life?”

## 5 BLESS

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

Close with a prayer of blessing for the group or the hymn “Amazing Grace” CCS 19.

# ORDINARY TIME

## (PROPER 28)

LESSON 51  
17 November 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 21:5–19

**Lesson Focus:** God is always with us—in times of joy and in times of struggle.

### Objectives

*The learners will...*

- explore ways in which they rejoice and praise God.
- recognize God’s presence in moments of struggle.
- practice their testimony.

### Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Community of Christ Sings*
- Two large pieces of paper
- Large writing surface
- Markers, crayons, or paint
- Labyrinth
- Paper
- Pens or pencils

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read “Exploring the Scripture” for Luke 21:5–19 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, p. 121, available through Herald House.

# 1 GATHER

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

On a table, have a piece of paper large enough for all group members to gather around. Invite the group to draw ways they rejoice and praise God for the blessings in their lives. Provide markers, colored pencils, or paint for the group to use. When they have finished, let it dry, if necessary, and hang it on a wall so everyone can see.

On another large piece of paper, invite the group to draw how they seek God in times of sadness and struggle. Hang this beside the first piece of paper.

Ask: Are there times in your life when it’s easier or harder than other times to thank God? Explain.

There are moments in life when it can be difficult to remember to thank God for the blessings we have received. When we are dealing with difficulty, we forget to be thankful for what we have and for God’s constant

presence in all and through all. In today’s passage, Jesus reminds us that God is always with us, even in the most difficult moments.

<sup>5</sup>When some were speaking about the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God, he said, <sup>6</sup>“As for these things that you see, the days will come when not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down.”

<sup>7</sup>They asked him, “Teacher, when will this be, and what will be the sign that this is about to take place?” <sup>8</sup>And he said, “Beware that you are not led astray; for many will come in my name and say, ‘I am he!’ and, ‘The time is near!’ Do not go after them.

<sup>9</sup>“When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end will not follow immediately.”

<sup>10</sup>Then he said to them, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; <sup>11</sup>there will be great earthquakes, and in various places



famines and plagues; and there will be dreadful portents and great signs from heaven.

<sup>12</sup>But before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. <sup>13</sup>This will give you an opportunity to testify. <sup>14</sup>So make up your minds not to prepare your defense in advance; <sup>15</sup>for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict. <sup>16</sup>You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. <sup>17</sup>You will be hated by all because of my name. <sup>18</sup>But not a hair of your head will perish. <sup>19</sup>By your endurance you will gain your souls.

—Luke 21: 5–19 NRSV

Draw a line down the middle of a large writing surface. Label the left side “Challenges” and the right side “Hopes.” Then read today’s passage. As the passage is being read, have the group identify and list the challenges and suggestions of hope that appear in the passage.

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

In moments of joy and moments of sadness, we know God’s presence. God is always with us. While it would be easier for an opportunity to engage in Christ’s mission to arise when we are experiencing moments of joy, opportunities to engage in Christ’s mission can come in our moments of struggle. Regardless of the circumstances in our lives, it is up to us to be willing to experience these opportunities fully. Even when something bad happens, we have the power to affect our community in a positive way.

- When was a time in your life that something bad happened?
- Who could you rely on at that moment?
- If you could, how did you recognize God was present?

In verse 18 Jesus says, “But not a hair of your head will perish.” He means that no matter how terrible a condition you are in or the struggles you experience, God is always with you. Jesus reminds us that we can find hope for anything we may face because we belong to God.

## 3 RESPOND

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

### Labyrinth

Spiritual practices help us be open and aware of God’s presence in our lives. In moments when we need to seek God’s love and comfort, spiritual practices help us center ourselves. Create a labyrinth the group can walk or use the handout at the end of the lesson as a finger labyrinth. Refer to the list of challenges and hopes the group created earlier. As they prepare to use the labyrinth, have them think of their challenges and suggestions of hope and use the three steps of the labyrinth to be centered in God’s love.

- Release: The journey in—the release of burdens and what challenges us on the journey
- Receive: The center—resting in God’s presence in the center
- Return: The journey out—returning renewed and hope-filled

A supplement can be found on the Community of Christ website at [www.CofChrist.org/common/cms/resources/Documents/Labyrinth-Resource.pdf](http://www.CofChrist.org/common/cms/resources/Documents/Labyrinth-Resource.pdf).

You may also choose a different spiritual practice the group enjoys or would like to try. Guides for spiritual practices can be found at [www.CofChrist.org/resources?tags=Personal%20Spiritual%20Practices|Spiritual%20Practices#](http://www.CofChrist.org/resources?tags=Personal%20Spiritual%20Practices|Spiritual%20Practices#/).

## 4 SEND

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

### Share Your Testimony

Give each group member a piece of paper and a pen or pencil. Encourage them to look at their lists from the Gather section and invite them to write their testimony of God’s presence in their lives.

## 5 BLESS

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

Close with a prayer or “God Forgave My Sin in Jesus’ Name” CCS 627, a hymn about sharing our testimonies. Try singing the hymn in French or Spanish.



## LABYRINTH

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# ORDINARY TIME

## (PROPER 29)

LESSON 52  
24 November 2019

**Focus Scripture Passage:** Luke 23:33–43

**Lesson Focus:** Christ reminds us of the importance of love and our commitment to peace and justice.

### Objectives

*The learners will...*

- experience the scripture passage through *Lectio Divina*.
- learn about the lectionary and liturgical year.
- create a cross reminding them of their commitment to God's vision of peace and justice.

### Supplies

- Bible (NRSV recommended)
- *Community of Christ Sings*
- Bowl or similar container
- Slips of paper
- Black construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue sticks
- Tissue paper of different colors

**Note to teacher:** In preparation for this lesson, read "Exploring the Scripture" for Luke 23:33–43 in *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, pp. 122–123, available through Herald House.

# 1 GATHER

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

### Lectio Divina

*Lectio Divina* ("sacred reading" in Latin), "is a holistic, experiential way of reading scripture that uses mind, emotion, imagination, the senses, and prayer" ([www.CofChrist.org](http://www.CofChrist.org)). Invite the group to get in a comfortable sitting position. First, read today's scripture passage through simply to get an idea of the setting and events. Pause for a moment of silence; then read the passage again. Tell the group to listen for a word or phrase that draws their focus. After a moment of silence, read the passage a third time, considering the question, "Is there an invitation here for me?" After another moment of silence, discuss the questions with the group.

More information on Lectio Divina can be found at this link: [www.CofChrist.org/spiritual-practice-lectio-divina-for-groups](http://www.CofChrist.org/spiritual-practice-lectio-divina-for-groups).

<sup>33</sup>When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. <sup>34</sup>Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots to divide his clothing. <sup>35</sup>And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!" <sup>36</sup>The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, <sup>37</sup>and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" <sup>38</sup>There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

<sup>39</sup>One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" <sup>40</sup>But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? <sup>41</sup>And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong." <sup>42</sup>Then he said, "Jesus,

remember me when you come into your kingdom.”<sup>43</sup>He replied, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

—Luke 23:33–43 NRSV

- Which word or phrase stands out?
- Where do you find yourself in this passage?

## 2 ENGAGE

Invites exploration and interaction  
(35% of lesson time)

Ask the group if they know what a lectionary is. “A *lectionary* is a schedule of scripture lessons to be read in worship on specific occasions or for a given length of time” (“Lectionary Usage: The Living Word of Scripture,” *Sermon & Class Helps, Year C: New Testament*, p. 11). Community of Christ uses the *Revised Common Lectionary* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992) which is based on the Christian calendar and runs on a three-year cycle. “During...that cycle, we remember the events and ministry of the life of Jesus while we hold up our own lives for analysis” (p. 11).

The church year, known as the liturgical year, starts with Advent, followed by Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost, and Ordinary Time. Today is known as Christ the King Sunday, the last day of the liturgical year, the last day of Ordinary Time. Next week is the beginning of Advent.

More information about the lectionary can be found at this link: [www.CofChrist.org/common/cms/resources/Documents/Using-the-Lectionary-14-15.pdf](http://www.CofChrist.org/common/cms/resources/Documents/Using-the-Lectionary-14-15.pdf)

### What Do We Do?

In a bowl or container, have slips of paper with the questions below written on them. Have group members take turns drawing a question from the bowl and reading it to the group. Discuss the question as a group.

When is the end of the calendar year? What do we do at the end of the calendar year?

When is the end of the fiscal year? What do we do at the end of the fiscal year? (Note: Remember, “fiscal year” can be any 12-month period. Some fiscal years are January to December; others may be July to June, September to August, and so forth.)

When is the end of the school year? What happens at the end of a school year?

When is the end of a league year? What happens at the end of a league year? (*A league year is the time professional sports team play and will vary depending on the sport.*)

When all of the questions have been discussed, ask the group, “What do we do at the end of the liturgical year?” How are their lives shaped by the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ?



## 3 RESPOND

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

Because we are nearing Advent, the time of the year when we prepare for Christ’s birth, it seems weird that we are talking about Christ’s death. But today’s passage fits into the journey because we can look back over Jesus’ life and see his whole story. In his final moments, Jesus showed us the power of love and forgiveness through his conversation with the criminals crucified with him. “In this last moment of Jesus’ life shared so poignantly..., we are reassured that the good news of the gospel is fully realized in the *present*” (*Sermon and Class Helps*, pp. 122–123).

### Create a Cross

“The Christian cross symbolizes and emphasizes our commitment to God’s vision of justice and peace for the entire creation” (*Sharing in Community of Christ*, 3rd Edition, p. 5). Provide craft supplies for group members to create “stained glass” crosses.

Using black construction paper cut out a cross approximately 8 in/20 cm tall. Cut out the center of the cross leaving a ½ in/1 cm outline (see example). Using a glue stick, attach small pieces of different-colored tissue paper to the cross. When finished the cross should be filled in and look like a stained glass window.

## 4 SEND

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

In the liturgical year, Advent through Pentecost is the time when we look at the life of Jesus, and Ordinary Time is a time to explore our lives as disciples. Invite the group to reconsider the question, “Is there an invitation here for me?” as you read today’s scripture passage a final time. Then, invite the group to consider the crosses they made—what does the cross mean to me?

## 5 BLESS

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

Ask a group member to close with a prayer focusing on our pursuit of peace and justice.