

**SUNDAY SCHOOL CURRICULUM
AND
LESSON PLANS**



1st Quarter

2020

INTRODUCTION

Sunday School is an important part of any church. Our children are vital members of the church as well as being the future of the church. Many schools no longer have any form of religious education, and so apart from children's parents, we are their primary Christian educators.

As Sunday school teachers we are very much aware of the need for a structured, theologically sound Anglican curriculum that meets our needs and provides guidance and direction to our teachers. This need is even greater in less privileged, under resourced parishes.

Consequently, it is hoped that these resources will do the following:

- Provide a structured programme for teachers with easy to follow lessons.
- Give choices of what to include so that the lessons can be adapted to different contexts.
- Address the spiritual needs of our Sunday school children.

About this Curriculum

In this curriculum we aim to provide the children with a firm knowledge of stories from both the New and Old Testaments, to deepen their faith and spiritual growth, while at the same time, observing the Seasons of the Anglican Church and the readings as set out in the lectionary.

As Anglicans, we would like to follow the lectionary as closely as possible as it offers a richness to our faith and means the children and the adults are hearing the same scriptures. There are, however, a number of obstacles associated with this when trying to design a Sunday School Curriculum:

- Lectionary readings do not always follow on from one week to another, hence the children do not get a sense of the chronological order of events of the Bible.
- The topics for a particular week are sometimes not that applicable to children.
- Some Bible stories are not covered in the Sunday readings.
- Sometimes two stories that we would like to cover come up in the same week.

Each year will begin with stories relating to the life of Jesus. We then follow a Lenten theme. After Easter the topics chosen for the second term involve living our faith. The third and fourth term will focus on the Old Testament stories.

The section on the Old Testament that the lectionary focuses on in a given year will be covered:

- Year A: The Creation through to Moses
- Year B: Joshua through to Solomon
- Year C: The Prophets.

The last few lessons of each year are devoted to Advent and Christmas.

A basic lesson plan, including ideas for crafts and physical activities has been suggested for every week. You are, however, encouraged to develop your own lessons that suit your situation. Explore other resources and the internet, and prepare a lesson that you are comfortable with. These resources are not

intended to remain stagnant, but to move with the times. Should you have any comments or ideas pertaining to these lessons, please contact Caroline Tuckey at tuckeyjohnson@gmail.com

The Anglican Diocese of Johannesburg offers excellent training should you need advice in preparing and facilitating a lesson. For further details, see www.anglicanjoburg.org.za - look for the link to the Sunday school / Children's Ministry.

We wish you a lot of fun as you prepare your lessons, and through this ministry may you also grow in your faith and find great fulfilment. Most of all, may your children build a relationship with God and have fun as they learn about their faith!

God Bless you all!

Diocese of Johannesburg Children's Ministry

PRAYER

The following are some ideas to use for worship with the children before the lesson. If the children go into church for the first part of the service then you may not need to use it. But you might like some form of worship together if the children do not go into church.

Leader: The Lord be with you.

Children: And also, with you.

Sing a song

Have a time of confession.

Then ask the children "What do we want to thank God for this week?"

You can find out if anyone has a birthday in the coming week?

What do we want to pray for this week?

Another idea is to make a **Prayer Box**. Children write their prayers. Each prayer should have a theme. The children may decorate the cards in whatever way they wish and write on their name and age. Cover and decorate a cardboard box to hold the cards. Put the cards in alphabetical order of topic. Give the box of prayers to your minister or priest to use in family services, for example.

Spontaneous prayers are also encouraged. You should also pray whenever the need arises as there is no special formula, time or place for prayer.

How to prepare for a lesson

There is no short cut to preparation. You have been called by God to teach and you need to take time with the task of lesson preparation. The following steps are useful when preparing for a lesson:

Pray for yourself, the children and the lesson message.

Read the bible passage for the lesson. Study related bible passages and other translations.

Enrich your understanding. Read the information for the teacher. If you are able to, look at reference books, consult an atlas etc. This will give you more insight into the meaning of the reading and help you to discover the spiritual truths

Prepare. Preferably, you should be thinking of your lesson a week before you are due to give it, so that you are able to collect the materials you need over that week. Decide how you will present the material and what activities you will do. Prepare the teaching aids and anything else needed for the lesson. It is important to plan a lesson which is not too short or too long. It is good to have a few extra activities planned should the church service be long.

Here follows a basic lesson structure you can use, although not everything is necessary for every lesson. It will also vary depending on whether the children start in church and then leave to go to Sunday school and when they come back into the church.

Altogether as a group:

- Welcome. Anyone with a birthday in the coming week. Tell the children about the season in the church (colour on altar).
- Sing a song and say a children's confession if the children are not in church for the Gloria and Confession

Split into older and younger groups

- Introduction to the theme and attention grabber
- Bible reading followed by questions and discussion
- Prayer
- Memory verse
- Craft
- Physical activity
- Worksheet
- Snack

Aim of the lesson. Know what you wish to accomplish during the lesson.

Reach the children. Use age appropriate ways to teach. Remember that children learn best by actively doing things and exploring and discovering for themselves. The activities as planned offer variety with some crafts, games, talking etc.

Evaluate the lesson after teaching it. Ask yourself questions such as:

- What went really well?
- What did the children enjoy?
- What will I do the same next time and what will I do differently?

(The PREPARE idea is inspired by The South African Sunday School Association)

UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN

It has been aptly said that we must 'learn' our children before we can teach them -in order to be an effective teacher, we need to know the children we teach. This means knowing a little about their families, their brothers and sisters and the circumstances in which they live. It also means having knowledge of the characteristic behaviour of children at various ages as this helps to understand the needs of the children and what really makes them "tick".

"And Jesus grew both in body and in wisdom, gaining favour with God and people." Luke 2:52

This scripture asserts that no one is born fully mature and complete. As humans we are in a process of growth. This maturation process can be seen in terms of physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual development. Within each of these domains typical characteristics are evident for each age group.

Birth, One, Two and Three-Year-Olds

For the very young children and babies it is often best if a parent or caregiver comes with them to Sunday School. Children under two years need individual attention. They are timid and emotionally sensitive and need individual care from a familiar adult.

This age group is continually active and so need opportunity and space for activity. They do not sit still for any length of time and their concentration span is no more than a couple of minutes. So keep stories short and action packed with plenty of pictures. They love repetition and routine - this helps them feel secure. It is therefore good to follow a similar format for your lessons each week. Perhaps start with a song, follow with prayer and so on. Stories should be short and familiar in the sense that the child can identify with the characters. So even though bible stories happened hundreds of years ago, show how they are still relevant for today and use modern scenarios.

Two and three year olds are individualistic rather than functioning as part of a group. Give individual care and provide time for free play. Craft activities can be part of free play, but so can puppets and other toys which they can use to re-enact bible stories or simply play with. Provide them with sensory experiences such as sand, water play, paint and play dough. Encourage them to appreciate colour and beauty and especially the beauty of nature - God's creation. Point out pretty flowers, interesting cloud formations, trees and encourage them to look around their environment and to think of ways to care for and even improve their environment. Maybe plant a garden as an activity. They are open to spiritual things and to an awareness of God.

Four, Five and Six- Year- Olds

This is a time of rapid growth. These children are still extremely active as well as being inquisitive and asking countless questions. They imitate those around them and especially the five year olds have a strong desire to please. They learn best through play and this means that stories and teaching are short and free play, organised games and craft activities fill much of the Sunday School time. Alternate your programme with times of activity and times of quiet and rest. Answer questions honestly. Seek the reasons behind the questions and encourage the children to think for them selves.

They are full of wonder and eager to be taught. They need routine and security but also new experiences and challenges. Be a consistent example to them as they learn acceptable behaviour from your guidance and example. By your love and care for them you will help them to experience God's love. Stimulate their desire to worship by having short, fun times of worship using action songs. Build reverence for prayer and for church.

Six, Seven and Eight-Year-Olds

Their growth is now slower and they are refining their skills and improving their muscle co-ordination. They need to use large muscles so encourage climbing and running as far as is possible. They are starting to read and write and this opens new opportunities for teaching. Their thinking is still concrete and literal, so be careful how you explain the mysteries of faith. Avoid symbolism which is beyond their understanding. They have a strong sense of fairness and are concerned about right and wrong. They tend to see things as black or white and struggle to understand and appreciate uncertainty and that there are shades of grey.

They have keen senses. They are eager and curious, extremely conversational, highly sensitive, friendly and have a whole hearted approach to things. It is a time when you can build their self esteem by giving them simple tasks that are easily completed. Provide objects to see and handle. Allow them to learn with active participation. Encourage and promote self expression and also working together. Be fair and encourage them to make their own rules. Help them to apply the bible to real life situations in which they have to make decisions. Most importantly help them to experience God's love and care for them through your love and care.

Nine, Ten, Eleven-Twelve Year-Olds

This age group is very active and so lessons need to include games and various activities. They have a great interest in facts, a good memory, like recognition, and are loyal. It is a time where they are learning who they are; they often identify with heroes and will form groups or gangs. Let Sunday School be "The Club" or "The gang" and set Christ as their hero.

They enjoy humour. Teach what is funny and what is not. They need constructive activities that will challenge their ability. Give plenty of facts, encourage memorisation of scripture, praise them when they do well. Answer questions truthfully and help them to find answers in the bible. Provide devotional help by setting an example of prayer and trust in God. Encourage the church to have family services that are inclusive of the children and teaching which is suitable for children, so that they come to enjoy going to church. Encourage them to make a practice of daily devotions.

Remember that children develop at different rates in different areas and must always be treated as individuals. Remember that God loves each and every child and that we have a huge privilege as well as a responsibility as we teach them about God's love and deepen their faith and understanding.

References:

"Called to teach" Sunday School Teacher Training Manual, Anglican Church of Southern Africa, Diocese of Johannesburg, Molly Robinson, 2013

"Almost every answer for practically any teacher", Dr Bruce Wilkinson, Multnomah Press, 1992

Curriculum

	Date	Week in Church year	Lesson	Readings	Page
The Life of Jesus					
1	5 January	Second Sunday after Christmas	Jesus, no ordinary baby! The visit of the 3 wise men	Matthew 2:1-12 John 12:44-50 (gospel)	8
2	12 January	First Sunday after Epiphany	This is my son Baptism of Jesus	Matthew 3:13-17	14
3	19 January	Second Sunday after Epiphany	Jesus calls his disciples We too are called	John 1:29-34-35-50	20
4	26 January	Third Sunday after Epiphany	Jesus ministry in Galilee	Matthew 4:12-23	27
5	2 February	Fourth Sunday after Epiphany	The Beatitudes The Sermon on the Mount	Matthew 5:1-12	35
6	9 February	Fifth Sunday after Epiphany	Salt and Light	Matthew 5:13-20	41
7	16 February	Sixth Sunday after Epiphany	Anger and me	Matthew 5:21-37	49
8	23 February	Eighth Sunday after Epiphany	Transfiguration	Matthew 17:1-9	56
Lenten Theme: Pilgrimage of penitence faith and gratitude					
1	1 March	First Sunday in Lent	Temptation happens...now what?	Gen 2:15-17; 3:1-7 Matthew 4:1-11	64
2	8 March	Second Sunday in Lent	Promises and Blessings	Gen 12:1-4a	73
3	15 March	Third Sunday in Lent	Living water	John 4:5-42	83
4	22 March	Fourth Sunday in Lent	Healing of the blind man	John 9:1-41	89
5	29 March	Fifth Sunday in Lent	A true friend Death of Lazarus	John 11:1-45	99
6	5 April	Palm Sunday	The entry into Jerusalem	Matthew 27: 11-54	107
7	12 April	Easter	Jesus rises from the dead	Matthew 28:1-10	111



Jesus, no ordinary Baby!

Second Sunday after Christmas Between 24 December and 6 January

Readings: Matthew 2:1-12

Theme: Epiphany – The Revelation of Jesus to the world

Memory verses: taken from the gospel reading John 12

- “Jesus said: “I have come into the world as a light, so that everyone who believes in me should not remain in darkness.” Jn 12:46
- I can not to judge the world but to save it” Jn 12:47



Information for the teacher:

We have just had Christmas, a time when we celebrate the birth of Jesus and the mystery of the incarnation: Emmanuel – “God with us”. Our focus for today is the journey of the wise men as they follow the star to Bethlehem to worship Jesus and present him with gifts. This is known as the Epiphany.

Three events are recognised as being part of the Epiphany:

1. The Three Wise Men* who brought gifts of:
 - gold - symbolic of kingly power
 - frankincense - a symbol of deity i.e. a gift for a God
 - myrrh - a spice used in the Jew’s burial rites and a symbol of the life of sorrow and suffering which was to be the destiny of the newly born Christ.
2. The Baptism of Jesus. ‘The Spirit of God Descended like a dove and a voice was heard saying, “This is my Son, with whom I am well pleased.”’ Matt 3: 16 -17
3. Jesus performs His first miracle at the Wedding of Cana, changing water into wine.

All these events showed that Jesus was more than a human – He was God. Today’s lesson will take a closer look at the revelation of Jesus as God.

(*Note that the story of the magi or wise men is found in the book of Matthew. These magi came from the East. The number of magi is not mentioned, although the three gifts has led to the widespread assumption that there were three men.)

Lesson Suggestions:



Younger Children:

Lesson Objectives:

- To realise that Jesus was no ordinary baby – Jesus is God!
- To learn about the visit of the Three Wise Men.
- To encourage the children to live their faith.



Attention Grabber:

- Play pass the parcel. Wrap something in sheets of paper (newspaper is fine). It is passed from one child to the next (the children are sitting in a circle) while music is playing. When the music stops the child, who is holding the gift unwraps one piece of paper and then as the music starts again passes the parcel to the next child again. This continues until the last piece of paper is removed and the gift revealed.
OR
If you could choose any present what would you choose?
OR
What was one of your gifts that you received at Christmas?

Mention that we will be coming back to these ideas later in the lesson.



Bible story and Discussion (Luke 2; Matthew 2:1-12)

- Making use of a children's bible, briefly remind the children about the birth of Jesus. The first people to visit baby Jesus were the shepherds who were told of the baby's birth by the angels. Ask the children if they know the story of the Three Wise Men. Emphasise that the Three Wise Men did not arrive on the night of Jesus' birth – they came from far away and it took them a long time to find Jesus.
- If you are able to, dress up 3 children as the Wise Men and give them each a box to carry – The first box needs to contain something that looks like gold e.g. chocolate coins wrapped in gold. The second box can contain incense to represent frankincense and the third box can contain a bottle of perfume to represent myrrh.
- Just as the Three Wise Men did, take the children for a walk where they follow a trail of stars that leads to a baby – Baby Jesus!
- Open the presents that are for Baby Jesus and discuss what each gift means:
Gold: Jesus is King
Incense: Jesus is God, not just a person
Myrrh: Jesus will die one day
- Discuss that the wise men recognised Jesus as very special.



Discussion and questions:

- Discuss that throughout the year the Church has different seasons. We have just had Christmas and now it is the season of Epiphany.
- The one event that marks the epiphany is the visit of the wise men to see Jesus. The other we will learn about next week and it is the baptism of Jesus.
- How do you think the wise men felt after their long journey? How did they feel when they saw the baby Jesus?
- The wise men were led by a star to Jesus. How are you led to Jesus / God?
- The wise men travelled a long way to bring gifts to Jesus. What do we have that we can give to Jesus?



Craft ideas:

- Draw a star. On every point of the star write something about the story or draw a picture in the middle of the star.
- Make wrapping paper so that you can wrap a gift for a friend or your mommy or daddy. There are many ideas on the internet for how to make wrapping paper. Basically, it involves decorating a piece of paper that is big enough to wrap the present in. You can use paint, crayons, stickers, potato printing or any other kind of printing.
- You could ask the children to draw a picture of the 3 kings. They can include Jesus and Mary and Joseph.



Snack: Make star sandwiches. Use a star-shaped cookie cutter to cut out bread which already has margarine on it. The children will love to decorate their sandwich with hundreds and thousands and then eat!



Song: Sing songs of Praise. If you have musical instruments such as drums and bells, let the children use them to make a joyful noise!



Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus. We thank you that you are our King and our God. Thank you that you loved us so much that you came to earth as a little baby. Amen.

Physical activity / game

Follow the star – like follow my leader



Older children:

Lesson objectives:

- To realise that Jesus was no ordinary baby – Jesus is God!
- To know what is meant by the Epiphany



Attention Grabber:

If you could choose any present what would you choose?

OR

Think about what gift you would give to either your mother, father, sister, brother, friend. Why would you choose that gift for them?



Discussion and questions:

Star Quiz – if you have a torch, every time a child gets the answer right shine the torch.

- What town was Jesus born in? *Bethlehem*
- Who talked secretly to the wise men (magi)? *Herod*
- Where did the magi go after seeing Jesus? *Home*
- What was one gift that the wise men (Magi) brought? *Gold, Frankincense, Myrrh*
- What did the wise men follow? *Star*
- What was another gift?
- In what city did the magi meet Herod? *Jerusalem*
- How did the magi know where to go after they left Jesus? *A dream*
- What was the third gift the magi brought?
- Discuss that throughout the year the Church has different seasons. We have just had Christmas and now it is the season of Epiphany.
- The one event that marks the epiphany is the visit of the wise men to see Jesus. The other we will learn about next week and it is the baptism of Jesus. Another event is the changing of the water to wine. This is the first miracle of Jesus and shows that he was no ordinary person.
- Explain **how** each of these events revealed that Jesus is Lord – He is not just another human – He is God! *(The gifts of the wise men were gifts for a king and a God. It was during Jesus Baptism that a voice was heard proclaiming that Jesus is the Son of God; Jesus was able to perform miracles - Jesus was therefore not just another human – Jesus was God!)*
- How do you think the wise men felt after their long journey? How did they feel when they saw the baby Jesus?
- Ask the children if they know what the name, “Jesus” means. *(The Lord saves)*
- Can you think of other names that describe Jesus?
(Messiah - saviour; Emmanuel - God with us; Prince of Peace; Wonderful Counsellor; Redeemer etc)
- The wise men were led by a star to Jesus. How are you led to Jesus / God?
- The wise men travelled a long way to bring gifts to Jesus. What do we have that we can give to Jesus?
- What character in the bible story would you be? Why?
A wise man/woman
Herod
A chief priest



Song:



Worksheet: A word search can be found on the next page. The words can be written forwards, backwards and diagonally. (The answer to the word search is: Jesus came to save us.)



Craft:

- Make a crown. Perhaps provide coloured paper and stickers for the children to decorate their crowns. Write on the crown: "Jesus is my King".
- Make wrapping paper so that you can wrap a gift for a friend or your mommy or daddy. There are many ideas on the internet for how to make wrapping paper. Basically, it involves decorating a piece of paper that is big enough to wrap the present in. You can use paint, crayons, stickers, potato printing or any other kind of printing.
- You could ask the children to draw a picture of the 3 kings. They can include Jesus and Mary and Joseph.
- They could make a star. On each point they can draw / write a gift they can give to God. Discuss things like being kind, praying, coming to church, helping a friend etc



Prayer:

A candle can be lit during this time of prayer as a reminder that God is with us -Emmanuel.

Jesus, name above all names
Jesus, name above all names
Beautiful Saviour, Glorious Lord
Emmanuel, God is with us
Blessed Redeemer, Living Word

Physical activity / game

Magi, Magi, Herod (Duck, duck, goose game):

RULES: Pick one child to be IT first. The other children sit in a circle on the ground. IT walks around the circle tapping heads and saying "magi" on as many as desired. IT says "Herod" when tapping one head, then starts to run around the circle. "Herod" jumps up and chases IT trying to catch IT. If IT sits down in Herod's spot before being caught, then Herod is the new IT; if Herod tags IT, then IT has another turn of being IT. (If anyone tries to grab or trip Herod and IT, they must sit out for a turn.)

Tell the children that we don't really know how many magi there were. We say three because of the three gifts. So the children can say magi as many times as they want to.

WORD FIND



Find the many names of Jesus in the puzzle. The letters left over spell the puzzle's answer.

M E S S I A H A
S U S E J A H D
A S L A G P K R
V V A E L I E O
I M M A N U E L
O O B G D R O W
R E D E E M E R
U S C H R I S T

Alpha	Christ
Immanuel	King
Jesus	Lord
Lamb	Omega
Messiah	Savior
Redeemer	Word

Jesus came to earth to _ _ _ _ _ _ _ !

References

<https://www.rotation.org/topic/game-workshop-lessons-and-ideas-for-the-story-of-the-wisemenmagi>

“This is my Son” (The Baptism of Jesus)

First Sunday after the Epiphany
Between 7 and 18 January

Readings: Matthew 3:13-17

Theme: *The Baptism of Jesus*

Memory verses: “And a voice from heaven said: “This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased” (Matt3:17)



Information for the teacher

John told people that he baptised with water but one who was more powerful than him – the thongs of whose sandals he was not worthy to stoop down and untie - would come who would baptise them with the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:7). This man was of course Jesus.

One day Jesus came to the river Jordan, asking John to baptise Him. As soon as Jesus was baptised, He went up out of the water. At that moment heaven opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending on Him like a dove. And a voice from Heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.” (Mark 1:11).

The Baptism of Jesus is an Epiphany moment –when Jesus is revealed as Lord to the world. Jesus’ baptism marked the beginning of His ministry – with the stamp of God’s approval and the Spirit of God upon Him, Jesus went to share the good news and perform great miracles.

Baptism is a sacrament of the Anglican Church – it is an outward and visible sign of the inward and invisible action in which God works within us.

Lesson suggestions:



Younger Children (3 – 6 years)

Lesson objectives:

- To teach children that:
- Jesus is revealed as God’s Son during his Baptism
- Our Baptism is a sign that we are part of God’s family
- To teach children the symbols of our baptism: water, the cross and light.
- To encourage children “to shine as a light in the world”.



Bible Story: The Baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17)

Use a Children’s Bible to relate the story. Remember to have a picture to show the children.

Questions:

1. Today’s lesson is about the Baptism of Jesus. What happened during His baptism? *(Allow the children to relate the story. Emphasise that a voice was heard from Heaven saying “This is my Son” and something like a dove came down from Heaven)*
2. What do you think the dove represented? *(The Holy Spirit)*



Discussion:

1. Do you know if you have been baptised?
2. Have you ever watched a baptism? Can you remember what happens? *(You may want to have a doll to act out the important features of baptism as well as a bowl of water and a candle)*
3. *(Just as Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, the priest baptizes the person, dipping the person in water three times, or pouring over the person three times. The priest says, “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” The water reminds us that Jesus washes our sins away.*
4. *The person is marked with the sign of a cross to show that he / she is a member of God’s family*
5. *The person is given a candle to remind us of Jesus, light of the world. We are also to shine as a light in the world)*
6. Do you think the Holy Spirit lives in you? *(Yes, the Holy Spirit helps us to live our lives as Jesus would like us to)*



Activity:

Play water games - here are 2 examples:

1. **The wet sponge relay.** You will need two buckets filled with water, two empty jars, and two large sponges for this game. Divide the class into teams. Each team makes a line next to a bucket filled with water. When the game starts, the first member of each team puts the sponge in the water, carries it or puts it on his/ her head, and runs to the jar at the other end of the playing area. Squeeze the water into the jar and run back. Continue on with the rest of the players. The first team to fill the jar to overflowing wins. Try this game yourself beforehand to determine how big the jars should be.

2. **Wet sponge tag.** Play the traditional game of tag. Designate one person to be “it”. “It” should have a wet sponge and run around to chase the others with it. The first person tagged becomes the next “it” and refills the sponge with water.



Craft:



Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus. We thank you that we are all members of your family and that you love us all very much. We are sorry for the bad things we do, such as(children can add to the prayer). Help us not to do these things. Thank you for sending the Holy Spirit into our lives to help us live each day as you would like us to. Help us to read our Bible, pray and come to church so that we can shine as a light for you. Amen



Older children:

Lesson objectives:

- To teach children that:
- Jesus is revealed as God's Son during his Baptism
- Our Baptism is a sign that we are part of God's family
- To teach children the symbols of our baptism: water, the cross and light.
- To encourage children "to shine as a light in the world".



Bible Story: **The Baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17)**

Read the story from the Bible



Discussion:

1. During this story, all three parts of the Trinity are mentioned. Explain how. (*God the Creator is the voice from Heaven; God the Son is Jesus being baptised in the River Jordan; God the Holy Spirit descends on Jesus like a dove*)
2. Why do you think Jesus needed to be baptised? Remember, John the Baptist baptised people as a sign of repentance – Jesus had never sinned. (*Jesus asked to be baptised to show His support for John's ministry; to identify with our humanness and sin; to give us an example to follow. It was also during Jesus' baptism that Jesus was revealed to the world as God. It is after this that Jesus begins His ministry.*)

Questions:

1. Do you know if you have been baptised?
2. Have you ever watched a baptism? Can you remember what happens? (*Let the children give suggestions and elaborate on their answers where necessary.*)
 - ☑ *At the beginning of a Baptism service all that is evil is renounced and a statement of belief in God is made.*
 - ☑ *Just as Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, the priest baptizes the person, dipping the person in water three times, or pouring over the person three times. The priest says, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." We are baptised with water as a symbol of purity and cleansing – the washing away of sins and a symbol of new life.*
 - ☑ *Each person is then marked with the sign of a cross to show that they are a follower of Christ, a member of God's family.*
 - ☑ *They are given a candle as a symbol of the light of Christ and to remind them to shine as a light in the world to the glory of God the Father)*
3. Baptism is one of our sacraments. Do you know what a sacrament is? (*It is an outward and visible sign of the inward and invisible action in which God works within us*)

4. Some people choose to rather be baptised when they are older. Does this then mean they are not members of God's family? *(No - Baptism is an outward sign to everyone that we choose to be a follower of Jesus, a member of His family, the Church. Some people choose to baptise their children when they are babies – these parents promise to bring their children up in the Christian faith and promise to bring them to Church. When the children are older, they are confirmed, meaning that they affirm the promises made by their parents and commit to continue to follow Jesus. Other parents prefer their children to be baptised only when they are old enough to understand the promise to follow Jesus. What is important to know is that Jesus loves us all, regardless of whether we have or have not been baptised.)*

5. The Holy Spirit descended on Jesus like a dove. Do you think the Holy Spirit lives in us too? *(Yes - The Holy Spirit prompts us to do good and helps us to live as Jesus would like.)*

6. You may want to discuss the statements "Have you been born again?" or "Are you saved?" To be "born again" or to be "saved" means to make a commitment to follow Jesus. Sometimes this commitment can be pinpointed to a specific moment when that choice is made, but sometimes this commitment is a lifelong journey as you grow into a deeper relationship with Jesus. If our children have made a choice to follow Jesus they should realise that they can confidently reply to both these questions with a resounding "yes!"



Physical activity:

1. **The wet sponge relay.** You will need two buckets filled with water, two empty jars, and two large sponges for this game. Divide the class into teams. Each team makes a line next to a bucket filled with water. When the game starts, the first member of each team puts the sponge in the water, carries it on his/ her head, and runs to the jar at the other end of the playing area. Squeeze the water into the jar and run back. Continue on with the rest of the players. The first team to fill the jar to overflowing wins. Try this game yourself beforehand to determine how big the jars should be.

2. **Wet sponge tag.** Play the traditional game of tag. Designate one person to be "it". "It" should have a wet sponge and run around to chase the others with it. The first person tagged becomes the next "it" and refills the sponge with water.



Worksheet: See the end of the lesson



Prayer: If possible, each child receives a candle to hold which is then lit from one candle. If not, place one candle at the centre of the group as a symbol of Christ's light.

Perhaps start with a time of open prayer, ending with the following prayer:

"Dear Lord, we thank you we are all members of your holy family and we thank you for the love you have for each one of us. We are sorry for all that we do that is wrong – either in thought, word or deed, or what we have left undone. Please forgive us of our sins and help us to live pure lives. We pray that we may grow in our faith and that we may shine as a light in the world. Amen"

Baptism

R N V R E Z J O R D A N S T Y
M I H V T D Q I W S M C P W Z
Y F O O A F Q I N J F P I Y V
G L S D J G G B Z O D Z R S A
B U Y R E N K E Y C W Q I E G
E M M R N S G O D E J J T V N
X H F B H K A B N W W D J O I
S S E N S U O E T H G I R D D
S R Z A E D E W L R E T A W N
J M E K V E C J P P J X H Y E
O H A S L E W W X E L F E X C
H A Z I V L N Z S D K L Z S S
G Q L V B W A U A I L J E F E
K A R K X D S K Z L B D H W D
G Y K P P P I S W A F O C J N

DESCENDING

DOVE

GALILEE

GOD

HEAVEN

JESUS

JOHN

JORDAN

LOVE

RIGHTEOUSNESS

SPIRIT

WATER

WELLPLEASED

Jesus calls his disciples - we too are called

Second Sunday after Epiphany Between 15 and 22 January

Reading: John 1: 35-50; Luke 5:1 – 11

Theme: Discipleship

Memory verse:



Information for the teacher:

Today's story tells of Jesus calling the first disciples to follow Him. This happened very early into Jesus' ministry. The best-known stories of Jesus calling his disciples are found in Luke and describe how the brothers, Simon Peter and Andrew, and two other brothers, Philip and Nathanael left what they were doing and followed Jesus.

A disciple is a follower or pupil of a teacher or leader who in turn can also become a teacher. The twelve disciples of Jesus, as mentioned in Matt 10:2-4 were – Simon, Andrew, James (the son of Zebedee), John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James (the son of Alphahaeus), Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot. The number 12 is symbolic of the 12 tribes of Israel.

However, these were not the only disciples of Jesus. There were also women followers or disciples who also learnt from Jesus (Luke 8:1-3). Mary Magdalene in a sense becomes the first apostle as Jesus entrusts her to tell the other disciples that he is risen. She was the one who stayed at the cross when the other disciples had left.

So, although the 12 are often considered to be the only disciples of Jesus there were other followers. All the disciples were willing to follow Jesus. Through their interactions with Jesus, they became changed people and their faith grew. They became powerful witnesses to Jesus' resurrection, and after Jesus' ascension they were filled with the Holy Spirit and empowered to carry out special roles in the growth of the early church.

We too are disciples of Jesus as we are followers of Jesus' teachings and we try to live as Jesus would want us to. To be a disciple of Jesus does not require that we be perfect – we just have to want to follow Jesus and to try to learn as much as we can about Jesus. May we, like the disciples mentioned in the bible become more like Jesus in all that we think, say and do.

Lesson Suggestions:



Younger Children:

Lesson Objective:

- To know what it means to be a disciple of Jesus and a witness to others.
- To think what it means to follow Jesus and whether we have to give up things to do so.



Attention grabber: Today we are going to play, “Following the leader”. You need to do whatever I do. (Lead the children in activities such as such as jumping, running on the spot, crawling or hopping.)

(The slightly older children may prefer to play “Simon says”. In this game the leader does an action at the same time as saying “Simon says”. For example, if the leader says “Simon says put your hands on your head”, the children must follow the instruction. If the words, “Simon says” are not used, then the children must not do the action.)

Just as you have been following me in what I have been doing, we are now going to learn about the story of how Jesus called the first people to follow Him.



Bible Story: *John 1: 35-50; You can also add in*
The miraculous catch of fish (Luke 5:1-11)

Read the different stories of how Jesus called his disciples.



Discussion:

- How do you think the disciples felt when Jesus asked them to leave everything and follow him?
- Why do you think Jesus asked them to leave everything and follow him?
- What do you think Jesus is asking you to do?



Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus. Just as you called the disciples to follow you, help me to also follow you in everything I think, say and do. Help me to live like Jesus so others too want to be a disciple of Jesus. Help me to share the love of Jesus. Amen

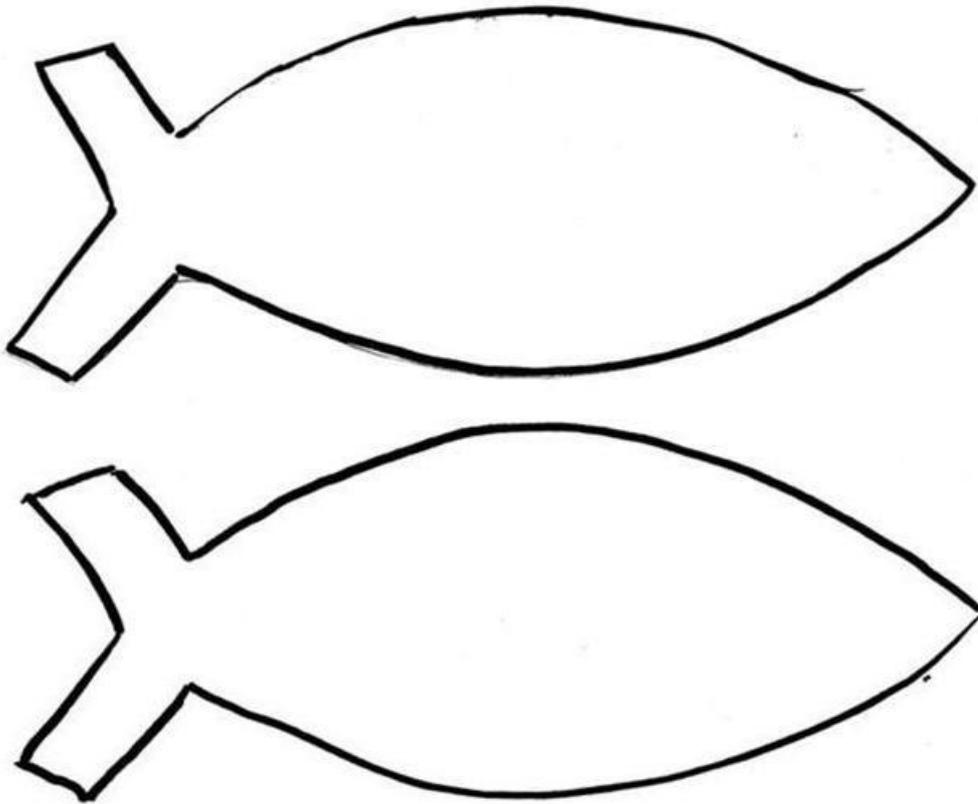


Songs



Craft idea:

You may want to mention to the children that a picture of a fish has been used from the earliest days of the Christian Church to indicate that someone is a Christian – a follower of Jesus.



Children can decorate a fish as found above. Provide colouring-in materials such as kokis, crayons, tissue paper, coloured paper, glue etc and scissors to cut out the fish shape. The words, “Follow me, I will make you disciples” can be added to the fish. These fish can then be stuck on a board and a “net” made from a bag of oranges can be added to the picture.

OR

Have a fish cut out and the children can decorate the fish. They can use bottle tops, little stones, leaves, in fact anything that you can find. They put them on the fish shape and when they are done they pack them away again.



Physical activities:

- Fishing games – a fishing rod can be made by attaching a magnet to a piece of string and attaching it to a wooden stick. If you have a big class, try to have a number of fishing rods. A staple or paperclip needs to be attached to the paper fish so that the magnet will stick to it. The fish will be attracted to the magnet on the fishing rod as it passes over them. The aim of the game is to collect as many fish as possible. The children can fish from their “boat” – the boat can be a washing basket, a big box, or simply use a piece of chalk to draw the outline of a boat.
(**N.B.** If you are not able to make a **magnetic** fishing rod, then the children can instead throw a bean bag at the fish they are trying to catch.)

Another fishing game idea is to place a number of blue and red paper fish on the floor, again attaching staples to each fish so that the fish are attracted to the magnet on the fishing rod. The children are divided into teams – the red and blue team. The children try to catch fish matching the colour of their team. Which team is able to catch all their fish in the shortest amount of time?

Another idea is to put numbers on one side of each fish and place the fish on the floor so that the numbers cannot be seen. Each child then catches a fish. The child who catches the fish with the highest number gets a small treat.

- Fishing memory game: Write a number or put a colour on each fish. In each case make sure there are two fish with the same number. The children then take turns turning over 2 fish at a time. If a child turns over two fish which have the same number, the child gets to keep the two fish. If the numbers do not match, the child puts the two fish back on the floor where they were originally picked up, numbers facing downwards. It is then the next child's turn to pick up 2 fish and the game continues. The other children watch the game so that they start to know what number is under each fish. The child who is able to pick up the most sets of matching cards is the winner of this game.



Snack:



Older children:

Lesson objectives:

- To know what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.
- To think what it means for us to be disciples of Jesus.
- To familiarise the children with information about Jesus first 12 disciples



Attention Grabber ideas:

Play Simon says or Follow my leader but make it more challenging than for the younger children.



Bible Story: Matt 4: 18 -22; John 1: 35-50; Luke 5:1-11; Luke 8:1-3

Read these passages from the Bible and see how there are variations but they all tell of the dedication of the disciples in following Jesus.

How do you see a disciple? What is a disciple like? Do you have to give up all the fun?



Discussion:

- Can you name the other disciples that Jesus called? *(Allow the children to name some of the other disciples that they know of. The 12 disciples as mentioned in Matt 10:2-4 are Simon, Andrew, James (the son of Zebedee), John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James (the son of Alphahaeus),*

Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot. At this stage in the lesson it is not necessary to know the names of all the disciples.)

- We often think that Jesus' disciples were special people of great faith who lived perfect lives. This was most certainly not the case. They had the same human faults that we find in ourselves. But there was one special characteristic that all these disciples shared – their willingness to follow Jesus. As they came to know Jesus more, their lives changed and they became more the type of person that Jesus wanted them to be.
- What type of person do you think Jesus wants you to be? Are there things you will have to change to become this type of person?
- It is said that to be a disciple of Jesus does not require that we be perfect - all that Jesus requires of us is that we be— **Faithful, Available and Teachable**. What do you think this means for you?



Craft ideas:

A symbol of a fish has been used from the earliest days of the Christian Church to indicate that someone is a Christian – a follower of Jesus and a fisher of men.

- Make a fish from beads and a pipe cleaner, as shown in the picture below. Discuss with the children that the fish symbol has been a sign of a follower of Jesus from the earliest times of Christianity.



- The children can decorate a fish as in the younger group section . They can write their name on the fish. Each of these fish can then be placed on a board with the heading, "Follow me, I will make you fishers of men."
- Children may like to create their own art piece as a response to the lesson.



Songs:



Further ideas: List of disciples changes between gospels

- **Lesson review:** This activity requires a number of paper fish. Write a question relating to today's lesson onto each fish. Place the fish with the questions facing the floor so that the children cannot see the questions. Each child then gets a turn to choose a fish. If the child is able to answer the question he/she may keep the fish. Which child is able to collect the most fish? Examples of questions include: What is the meaning of the word, disciple? How many disciples did Jesus call to follow Him? What does it mean to be a disciple? Which disciples of Jesus were fishermen?

Which disciple of Jesus was a tax collector? Who was the brother of Simon Peter? Who were some of the women followers of Jesus? To whom did Jesus first entrust the message of his resurrection?

- **Disciple quiz:** Give the children a copy of the information found on page 22. Have an oral quiz on this information – the children can refer to the information sheet as you ask the question. Perhaps have a small prize like sweets to reward the children.



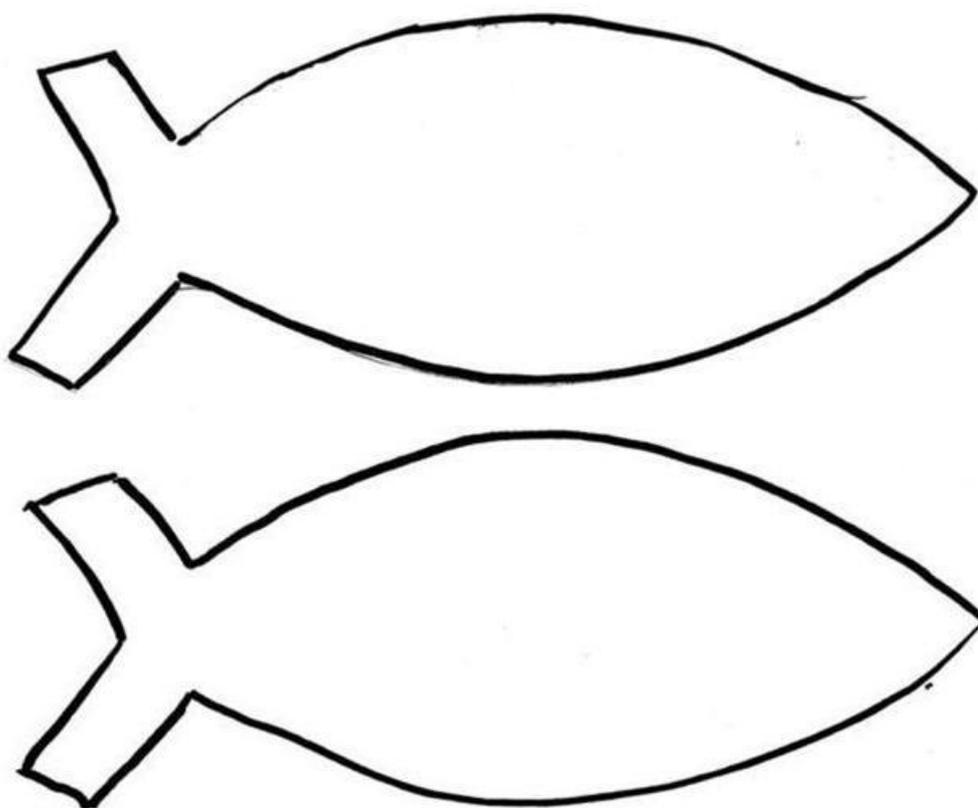
Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus. Jesus, just as you called the fishermen James and John to follow you, help me to also follow you in everything I think, say and do. Help me to be a **FAT** disciple– **F**aithful, **A**vailable and **T**eachable. . Amen

References:

www.kidssundayschool.com

www.biblewise.com

Life Application Bible: New International Version, Tyndale House Publishers and Zondervan Publishers, 1991



Worksheet: A “Fishers of men” worksheet to help the children become more familiar with some of the first 12 Disciples.

Fishers of Men

Jesus' Disciples

Draw a line from the disciple's name to the statement about him.

- | | | |
|----------------|---|--|
| Peter |  | a tax collector |
| Andrew |  | son of Zebedee and brother of James |
| James |  | also called Didymus |
| John |  | brother of John |
| Philip |  | his name means "rock" |
| Matthew |  | betrayed Jesus |
| Thomas |  | son of Alphaeus (also called "the Less") |
| James |  | Peter's brother |
| Simon |  | he brought Nathanael to Jesus |
| Judas |  | a Canaanite, also called Zelotes |

Here are some Bible passages to help you.
Matthew 4:18-21; 10:2-4 (NIV); 16:17-18
Mark 3:14-19
John 1:43-51; 11:16
Acts 1:13

Which two names are missing from the list? _____

Jesus' ministry in Galilee

Third Sunday After Epiphany Between 23 and 30 January

Readings: Matt 4:12-23

Theme: Our Ministry in the World

Memory verse:



Information for the teacher:

Information for the teacher:

Today, we will explore Jesus' ministry in Galilee. After understanding Jesus ministry, we will have to ask what it means for us today. Questions such as how we continue Jesus' ministry today, how we show that we are true disciples/followers of Jesus.

Most of Jesus' ministry took place in Galilee. He performed his first miracle of turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana of Galilee (John 2:1-11). Most of his teaching and healing also take place in Galilee. Peter acknowledges him as "the Christ, the Son of the living God" in Galilee (Matthew 26:32). Even though he dies in Judea, after his resurrection he returns to Galilee (Matthew 26:32). Finally, delivers the Great Commission (where he sends his disciples to the world to preach the Gospel) in Galilee (Matthew 28: 16-20). From these examples, it is clear that Galilee is a significant place where Jesus' ministry took place.

Our reading (Matthew 4:12-23) shows how Jesus' ministry in Galilee began. After fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah, he begins preaching the same message words of John the Baptist, "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (verse 17). This is message of changing from sin to living a life for God.

Then Jesus calls his first disciples (verse 18-22). The phrase "follow me and I will make you fishes of men" is quite unique. In those times, it was the people who search for rabbis or teachers (not the other way around). Jesus is different in that he comes to us wherever we may be (it is God who calls us).

Here are some key components of Jesus' ministry mentioned in the Gospel:

Teaching (Matthew 5:2; 7:29; Mark 6:34; Luke 4:15; John 7:14 etc.)

Preaching (Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:14; Luke 4:43 etc.)

Healing (Matthew 14:14; Mark 3:10; Luke 6:18; John 9:14 etc.)

It is important to understand Jesus ministry and how it impacts our lives. We too, must continue with this ministry. So, Jesus' ministry becomes our ministry. We teach others about the grace and love of God (through different religious and nonreligious programs). Sunday School is the best example of us serving in ministry.

Our ministry is not just for church, it for everywhere. This is what we will explain to the children and youth. What does our ministry of following Jesus look like in the world, when we are at home, school, work and church? Another way of seeing it is how we put God into our everyday actions.

Reference: <https://sermonwriter.com/biblical-commentary/matthew-412-23/>

Lesson Suggestions:



Younger Children (3 – 6 years):

Lesson Objective:

- Learn about Jesus' ministry
- Learn what it means for us
- Enable us to also be disciples of Jesus and continue his ministry in our world



Attention Grabber: What do you want to be when you grow up?

Ask the group to tell you what they would like to be when they grow up. They can say as many things as they like. They can also explain why they would like to be in that profession.

Then ask them what Jesus' job was... We know he helped his father as a carpenter but when he started his journey of faith, what are some of the things he did (hopefully they will note that he was a teacher, healer, preacher, someone who cared for people...)

Discuss with them that as we are all followers of Jesus, today we will be learning what was Jesus' job aka his ministry, and what it means for us today.



Bible Story and Discussion:

Overview of the story: you could tell them that when Jesus began his ministry, he came to a place called Galilee. *Galilee was a small city with a large amount of people (if may be nice to show them some pictures of the city). It is in this city that Jesus did many great things and people learnt about him. He went on to teach, preach, heal and do great miracles in the city of Galilee.*

Jesus as teacher: *ask them what a teacher is. Then ask them if they know some of the teachings of Jesus (like love your neighbour, pray for your enemy, help the poor etc.) Jesus also taught how to pray. When we come to church, we pray together.*

Jesus as preacher: *ask them what a preacher/preaching is. It may helpful to ask or explain to them how preaching works in the church; that we usually read four readings (one from the Old Testament, a psalm, one from the new testament-usually a letter of Paul, and a Gospel reading). The priest then, preaches a message from the readings. They explain the readings and apply it to our everyday lives.*

Jesus as healer: *ask them what healing is. Explain that many times in the Bible, Jesus would see people who were very sick. Then he would be moved by compassion and heal them (sometimes by praying for them, by touching them or by simply saying 'your faith has healed you'). Tell them that in church, we also have healing services and also pray for those who are sick every week.*

Jesus and miracles: *part of Jesus' ministry was revealing that he was truly the Son of God. in doing so, many miracles were seen. Things like feeding over 5000 people (Matthew 14:13-21), turning*

water into wine (John 2:1-12) and raising someone from the dead (John 11:38-44). Miracles also remind us that we serve a supernatural God who is also totally involved and concerned about our lives.

Our own ministry: ask the children the following questions: *How do we carry on with Jesus; ministry? How do we continue to teach, heal and love others?*

How do we show we are followers of Jesus at school? At home? When we play sports? At church?

Some answers: We show we are Christ's followers when we love and respect others. When we are kind, compassionate and helpful to others. Also, when we stand up for what we believe in even if it means we get in trouble. (like standing against bullying, gender-based violence, disrespect).



Prayer: Dear Jesus. Thank you for this day. Thank you that we could come to Sunday school and be with our friends to learn about you and your ministry in Galilee. Please help us follow and continue the ministry of love in our world today. Lord, help us grow our relationship with you!
We love you lots and lots. Amen



Physical activity:

'Anybody who'

How to play: It's very similar to game called open gates. Here, one person stands in the middle and asks things like "Anybody who helped their parents do the dishes," "anyone who has spoken against bullying," or "given food to the poor" or even "anyone who helped out in a church service" (it would be good to ask questions which highlight good practices but you can be as creative as you like). The people who have done the thing mentioned, are allowed to pass the person and go to the safe side (either on the left or right of the room). Those who have not done them must try to run pass the person in the middle and join the others. If the person in the middle touches them, then they join the person in the middle. And so, the game goes, each round the person asks a different practice until we have one last person who will be the winner.

Or

Simon says:

How to play: one person is on as 'Simon'. Simon calls out instructions and the group has to follow. The phrase Simon uses is 'Simon says please do this (action like hands on head)' and the group follow. The Group must not follow if Simon phrase is 'do that (action) or leaves out 'please' 'if someone copies Simon on the wrong phrase they are out. The children who are out can help Simon spot the next out children. The last child standing wins.

Or

Play Church:

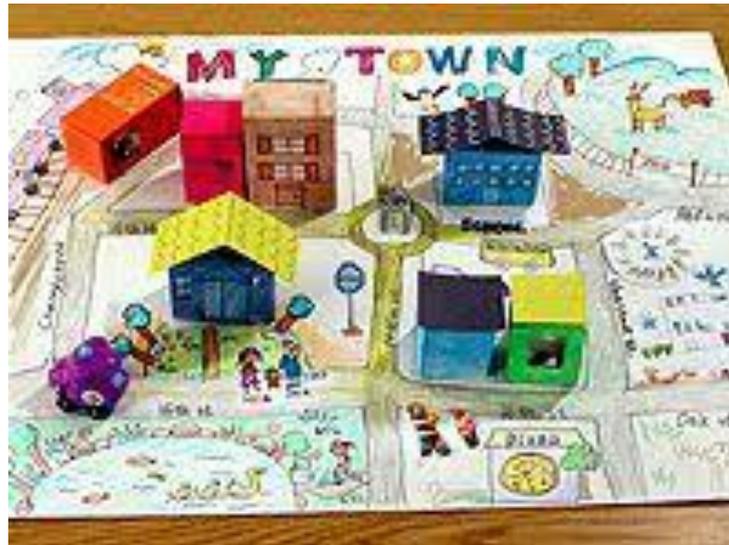
How to play: To show the different roles in church (like priests, parish ministers, sides people, servers, organist, choir, congregation), have the children dress up and act as these different roles. They could design their own vestments or spare vestments can be borrowed from the vestry. The aim is to have fun acting while also learning about how we serve in our church.



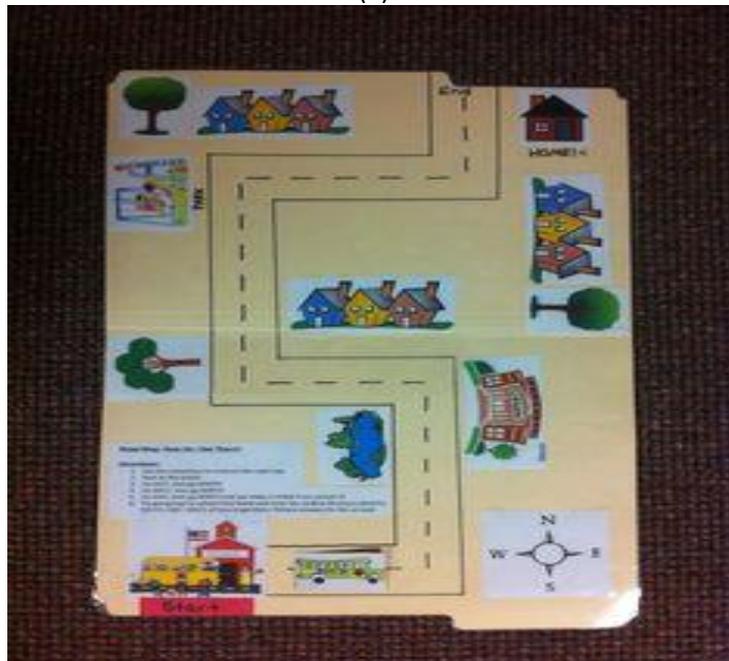
Craft: 3D Map or Layout

- Today we learnt that a large part of Jesus' ministry took place in Galilee. You can ask the children create a map of Galilee or create a layout of where their own ministry takes place (can be a layout of their schoolroom, their home, the church, their Sunday school room etc.). tell them that "like Jesus had his place where he ministered to people, we all have our places where we live out our Christian lives.

Here are some picture examples:



(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)

Or

Ministry pledge list:

In order to join in on Jesus ministry of love and life, ask the children to create their own ministry list for the week.

For example:

Monday: Give food to the poor/ help the poor

Tuesday: Hug and tell someone you love them

Wednesday: Help your parent/guardian with something at home

Thursday: Give someone a compliment at school

Friday: Spend some extra time praying for others (especially those who are sick)

Saturday: Tell someone God loves them

Sunday: Help in some way at church

Children can come up with their own ministry list if they are able to.



Older children (7 – 13 years):

Lesson objective:

Lesson Objective:

- Learn about Jesus' ministry
- Learn what it means for us
- Enable us to also be disciples of Jesus and continue his ministry in our world



Attention Grabber: What do you want to be when you grow up?

Ask the group to tell you what they would like to be when they grow up. They can say as many things as they like. They can also explain why they would like to be in that profession. Then ask them what Jesus' job was... We know he helped his father as a carpenter but when he started his journey of faith, what are some of the things he did (hopefully they will note that he was a teacher, healer, preacher, someone who cared for people...)

Discuss with them that as we are all followers of Jesus, today we will be learning what was Jesus' job aka his ministry, and what it means for us today.



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Jesus as teacher: *ask them what a teacher is. Then ask them if they know some of the teachings of Jesus (like love your neighbour, pray for your enemy, help the poor etc.).*

You must not be envious of your neighbour's goods. You shall not be envious of his house nor his wife, nor anything that belongs to your neighbour. *Jesus also taught how to prayer. When we come to church, we pray together.*

Jesus as preacher: *ask them what a preacher/preaching is. It may helpful to ask or explain to them how preaching works in the church; that we usually read four readings (one from the Old Testament, a psalm, one from the new testament-usually a letter of Paul, and a Gospel reading). The priest then, preaches a message from the readings. They explain the readings and apply it to our everyday lives.*

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How do we show we are followers of Jesus at school? At home? When we play sports? At home? At church?

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Prayer: Dear Jesus. Thank you for this day. Thank you that we could come to Sunday school and be with our friends to learn about you and your ministry in Galilee. Please help us follow and continue the ministry of love in our world today. Lord, help us grow our relationship with you!

We love you lots and lots. Amen



Physical activity:

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How to play: It's very similar to game called open gates. Here, one person stands in the middle and asks things like "Anybody who helped their parents do the dishes," "anyone who has spoken against bullying," or "given food to the poor" or even "anyone who helped out in a church service" (it would be good to ask questions which highlight good practices but you can be as creative as you like). The people who have done the thing mentioned, are allowed to pass the person and go to the safe side (either on the left or right of the room). Those who have not done them must try to run pass the person in the middle and join the others. If the person in the middle touches them, then they join the person in the middle. And so, the game goes, each round the person asks a different practice until we have one last person who will be the winner.

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How to play: To show the different roles in church (like priests, parish ministers, sides people, servers, organist, choir, congregation), have the children dress up and act as these different roles. They could design their own vestments or spare vestments can be borrowed from the vestry. The aim is to have fun acting while also learning about how we serve in our church.



Craft: 3D Map or Layout

- Today we learnt that a large part of Jesus' ministry took place in Galilee. You can ask the children create a map of Galilee or create a layout of where their own ministry takes place (can be a layout of their schoolroom, their home, the church, their Sunday school room etc.). tell them that "like Jesus had his place where he ministered to people, we all have our places where we live out our Christian lives.

For some picture examples see the younger group lesson

Or

Ministry pledge list:

In order to join in on Jesus ministry of love and life, ask the children to create their own ministry list for the week.

For example:

Monday: Give food to the poor/ help the poor

Tuesday: Hug/high five and tell someone you love them

Wednesday: Help your parent/guardian with something at home

Thursday: Give someone a compliment at school

Friday: Spend some extra time praying for others (especially those who are sick)

Saturday: Tell someone God loves them

Sunday: Help in some way at church

Children can come up with their own ministry list if they are able to.

The Beatitudes

The Sermon on the Mount

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany Between 31 January and 7 February

Reading: Matthew 5: 1- 12

Theme: True happiness is found in Jesus

Memory verses:

- “And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” Micah 6:8
- “Rejoice and be glad” Matt 5:12a
- Blessed / happy are



Information for the teacher:

The Sermon on the Mount can be found in Matthew 5,6 & 7. The people Jesus was teaching were poor and oppressed. They were not well-off, educated or part of the religious establishment. Jesus tells them that the Kingdom of Heaven is also for them. Jesus is not outlining a new set of laws for achieving blessedness. One does not have to be poor in spirit or mourn to be blest. Willard (1998:117) points out that the poor are blessed in spite of and in the midst of their poorness and the terrible conditions in which they live. Before it was thought that the rich were blessed by God. Jesus tells the poor that they too are blessed and redeemed by the grace of God.

Jesus aimed his teaching at people’s hearts and habits as these would influence the hearers’ everyday life (Willard 1998:129). Jesus’ teaching was about Spirit and life (Jn 6:63) as he recognised that external obedience to the law alone does not lead to a moral life.

The word ‘beatitude’ means happy or blessed which is “an inner joy and peace that comes from being in relationship with God”. It is more than a superficial happiness – it is a state of well-being, inner joy and peace even when there are difficulties and sorrows or people are poor.

The Beatitudes do not promise laughter, pleasure or earthly wealth. We must not think that those who are wealthy, good looking, intelligent etc are blessed. To Jesus ‘blessed’ means the experience of hope and joy, independent of outward circumstances.

The Beatitudes are not a list of instructions to replace the law. Jesus teaches about the spirit of the law, the true meaning of the laws. He teaches that it is through grace that we can follow the laws, not through our own power. For Jesus, people came before the law, but he still encouraged people to respect and follow the law. The kingdom of God is available to all, despite their life circumstances or position.

Jesus, following in the tradition of the prophets, exposes the corrupt and oppressive systems of his day. He shows the impossibility of separating love for God and love for people. Jesus built on the Ten Commandments in a manner that emphasised an inner following and acceptance of them rather than simply outer obedience

Lesson Suggestions:



Younger Children:

Lesson Objective:

- To teach children what leads to true happiness.



Attention Grabber: If possible, take the children outside and begin your lesson in an area surrounded by nature. The very young children will enjoy pretending that they are going up a mountain, as in the bible story for today. As you make your way outside, skip, hop, pretend to jump over rocks, bend over to smell the flowers, jump over a little stream of water.

Ask the children:

- What makes you happy?



Bible Story: The Beatitudes (Matthew 5: 1- 12)

We need to read from the Bible if we want to know how we should live. Just as we are sitting outside, the Bible story for today tells of Jesus taking His disciples and many other people up a mountain. It was here that He told them how they should **behave** to live happy lives.

(If possible, show the children a picture of Jesus teaching His disciples – many children’s bibles will have a picture of this scene)

Discussion

Most of us think that to be happy means having a lot of money, having plenty to eat, having someone to take care of us, scoring a goal at soccer, or being liked by everyone. All these things may make you happy, but to be truly happy Jesus said you need to also make others happy. You need to be kind to others, help others, try to make others happy when they are sad, be patient with others. Do not be boastful. Try to always keep the peace. (For the slightly older children you may want to mention that they should try to be righteous – explain that this means “to stand up for what is right”). Most importantly, you need to know that Jesus is always with you!



What would you do if:

1. Your friend is being mean to someone else on the play ground?
2. Someone is mean to you?
3. You are very good at something – do you tell everyone how good you are?
4. You have lots of toys that you don't play with very often. What could you do with them?
5. How can you help to make others happy?
6. What can you do that will make you happy?

Jesus says we should love when others hate; we should be nice when others are mean; we should try make peace when others are fighting; we should try to forgive rather than "get back" at someone for something they did to you. The way Jesus said we should behave is different to how the rest of the world may behave.



Craft ideas:

- Make a bookmark using your fingerprints.
You need to cut cardboard in strips to make a book mark. Have some thick paint in different colours, or mud (if you don't have paint) or anything else that the children can dip their fingers in and then press their fingers on the cardboard. They can then decorate their finger prints with eyes or smiles or wings etc. Get creative and let their imaginations run wild.
Remember that how you live your life leaves a mark in the same way as your finger prints do.
- You could write something like "Live simply so others can simply live" on your bookmark.



Songs: Let's sing songs to remind us of the happiness we find in Jesus.

Children love playing musical instruments, so bring along drums, shakers, bells etc to make the singing session a really happy occasion!



Snack:



Physical Activity:

Ladder Game: Put children into two groups (or more) depending on the number of children. Draw a ladder with 6 rungs. The children take turns to jump from one "rung" to the next. With each jump they need to mention how they should behave e.g. be loving, be caring, be kind, be forgiving, be humble, be peaceful. If they can't think of something to say with each jump, it is then the next person's turn. The object of the game is to see which group gets to the top of the ladder first.



Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, help us to be more like you in all that we do. Help us to be loving, caring (encourage the children to add how else we should **behave**). Please help us to remember that you are always with us and that knowing you is what makes us truly happy. Amen



Older children:

Lesson objectives:

- To understand the meaning of the teachings of the Beatitudes
- To apply the Beatitudes to our lives



Attention Grabber:

If possible, take the children outside and begin your lesson in an area surrounded by nature. Ask the children what they think true happiness is. Discuss that in today's lesson we will learn about a day when Jesus took his disciples up onto a mountainside. It was here that He told them the secret of true happiness. As you read through the Bible reading for today you will find that Jesus' teaching on happiness and being blessed is very different to what society teaches. But remember Jesus was talking to poor people – and telling them that even though they were poor and did not have a lot of money, they were blessed.



Bible Story: The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5: 1- 12)

Read this passage from the Bible



Discussion and questions:

1. *Begin by asking the children what they thought of the Bible reading for today. They may have found the bible reading confusing, which is completely understandable. Mention that these teachings on being blessed are known as the **Beatitudes**.*
 2. With which word does each beatitude start? (**Blessed**)
 3. What is the meaning of 'blessed'? (*"Blessed" means more than happiness. It implies the fortunate state of those who are in God's kingdom. The Beatitudes do not promise laughter, pleasure or earthly wealth. To Jesus, "Blessed" means the experience of hope and joy, independent of outward circumstances. To find hope and joy, the deepest form of happiness, follow Jesus, no matter what the cost.*)
- *Write each Beatitude on a separate piece of paper and put in a box. Put children into 8 groups and each group takes one piece of paper from the box. Ask them to discuss that particular beatitude in their groups and then share with the class.*
 - *The following information can be used to help you in the discussion on the meaning of the beatitudes.*
1. **Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of God**
This Beatitude can be seen as an overall summary of all the Beatitudes that follow. When you are feeling down, for whatever reason – it may be that you have lost someone close to you, or you have no money, or you have been mistreated. It is when you are in difficult times and you have nothing else to turn to that you realise that God is always there for you to give you strength and to guide you.
 2. **Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted**

When you feel that you have lost what is most dear to you, it is often then that you feel the love of God most strongly. God is our great comforter.

3. **Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth**

To be meek is to be humble, considerate, tolerant and understanding with others. You do not treat others harshly. To be meek is to be gentle but not a “push-over” – you are firm on what you stand for. Jesus is the best example of meekness and we are called to follow His ways.

4. **Blessed are those who hunger for righteousness, for they will be filled**

When you stand up for what you believe to be right, rather than just fitting in with the crowd, it is then that you find fulfilment – purpose in your life.

5. **Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy**

When you show compassion and forgiveness to others, others (as well as God!) will show compassion to you.

6. **Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God**

When your heart is right with God – when God is at the centre of your life and when you are free of sin, it is then that you will see God is at work in the world around you.

7. **Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God**

When you help others to get along peacefully with one another, the world will become more like that which God intended it to be. You will then truly be a child of God.

8. **Blessed are they who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.**

Persecution does not necessarily imply physical torture. Simply being isolated by others, or bullied or teased because of what you stand for is also a form of persecution. If this happens to you, remain firm in your beliefs - the ways of the world are not always the ways of God.

The persecution of black South Africans during apartheid is well known to us. In our world today we hear and read about Christians in Egypt and Nigeria being persecuted. Jesus comforts the persecuted by saying that they are blessed and that the kingdom of heaven belongs to them.



Application Questions

- What is the difference between joy and happiness?
(Happiness is dependent on external circumstances e.g. wealth, friends. Joy is not dependent on external factors – it comes from within us – it comes from knowing God and following God’s ways.)
- What is Ubuntu? How does Ubuntu help us to live a life that is pleasing to God?
(Ubuntu is an ancient African word meaning ‘humanity to others’. It also means ‘I am what I am because of who we all are.’ Ubuntu is a very different way of living from what modern society teaches.)
- Discuss which beatitude each child would like to work on / think about this week.



Craft ideas:

- Make a collage of pictures and drawings that represent the Beatitudes. Example, draw a picture of a cross, then label it “Blessed are the persecuted” or get a picture of Nelson Mandela and write, “Blessed are the peacemakers”. A picture of a doctor looking after a patient or a little child saving an insect could represent the merciful.
- Make a bookmark. This craft is useful in helping the children to remember the beatitudes. Label the bookmark “The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12)”. Write the beatitudes or draw a picture that represents them. You could write things such as Be kind/merciful; Be righteous; Be humble/meek; Be joyful/content/happy/ Be a peacemaker; Be pure; Be a comforter.



Songs:



Physical activity:

- **Ladder Game:** Put children into two groups (or more, depending on the number of children) and have them draw a ladder on the ground. They must then take turns to jump from one rung to the next repeating the Beatitudes from 1-8. If they make a mistake they will exit the game and the person next in line will start again from the beginning. The object of the game is to see which group gets to the top of the ladder first.
- Play **hangman** based on the words from today’s lesson. Here are some words: Beatitudes; comforted; inherit; peacemakers; persecuted; rejoice; righteousness



Prayer:

Put the children back into their groups and ask each group to write a prayer for their particular Beatitude on a piece of paper. Now pray these prayers as a group. Finish off with the following prayer:

Dear Lord God. Help us to be filled with happiness – happiness that comes not from what happens to us, but from what happens inside of us. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.



We are called to be the salt and light of the world

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany Between 4 February and 10 February

Reading: Matthew 5: 13-16

Theme: Shine for Jesus!

Memory verse: "Let your light shine so that people will see your good deeds and praise God."
(Matt 5:16)



Information for the teacher:

This lesson is part of the Sermon on the Mount which begins with the Beatitudes which we covered in last week's lesson. It's part of Jesus' teaching on how we should live.

In biblical times salt was very valuable for preserving food and giving it flavour. Light was also very important and not easy to get in the way we can just switch on a light today. If seasoning has no flavour, it has no value. Similarly, if Christians do not live as children of God and if they make no effort to make a difference in the world around them, they are of little value to the world. If we are too much like the world, we are worthless. Christians should not blend in with everyone else in the sense that they should not simply accept all the values of the world.

Instead, we should reflect the values of Jesus. We care for those in need. We care about the environment. We treat all people equally. We stand up for what we know is right and just. In this way we influence others positively, just as seasoning brings out the best flavour in food.

Jesus is the light of the world - He takes the darkness away. He overcomes all that is evil and not of God. Jesus wants us to go out into the world to also be a shining light – to do as He would do and tell others about Jesus.

Lesson Suggestions:



Younger Children:

Lesson Objective:

To understand what it means to be salt and light in the world.



Attention Grabber

If possible, take your children to a dark room or make your class dark.

Questions:

- Who likes it when it is dark?
(Answers will vary)
- What do you do to take the darkness away?
(Switch on a light; light a candle etc)

Light one or a number of candles.

- Who likes candles? Why?
(Answers may include: they give us light; take away darkness; warmth; remind us of parties!)



Bible Story: Jesus teaches about salt and light (Matthew 5: 13 -16)



Discussion and activity:

- What do you think Jesus means when he says that we are a light in the world?
- To shine for Jesus means to do things that would make Him happy. What do you think you can do to make Jesus happy? *(Be kind to others; care for those in need; care for the environment etc.)*

For the very young children: For this activity you require a candle /candles. Call out actions such as telling a lie, sharing a sandwich, picking up toys, pinching a younger child etc. If the action is a good action the children can light a candle. If a bad action is called, the candles can be blown out. The children will enjoy lighting and blowing out candles but be very careful that they don't burn themselves or cause a fire!



Song: Let's sing a few songs to remind us that we need to shine for Jesus wherever we go.

Craft ideas:

- **Candle jars:** You will need: small glass jar, tea light or small candle, tissue paper, glue, glitter. Decorate the jar and then when the candle is lit it will shine through the tissue paper decorations. This craft reminds us of the light of God which shines through us.



- Draw a candle.
- **Sun catchers** and **CD light catchers**– see older children’s section



Physical Activity:

- **Power surge:** Before playing this game, mention to the children that people used to only have candles to give them light at night. Today, we have many other things that can give us light. Can you name some of these things? (*Light bulbs, torches, solar lights etc*)

Instructions for game: This game is similar to the game “fruit salad”.

- Divide the children into groups by naming each child a type of light such as, headlight, torch, light bulb, candle, spotlight, fire etc. The number of children you have will determine how many groups you need – there need to be at least 2 children in each group.
- Form a circle of chairs that is one chair fewer than the number of children.
- One of the children is “it”. This child stands in the centre of the circle and calls out the name of one of the groups. If the child calls, “headlight”, then all children who are part of that group must get up quickly and change places. The children who are not part of that group remain seated.
- The person who is “it” tries to sit in an empty seat while the members of that group are swapping positions. The person who does not find an empty chair is now “it”.
- This child now calls the name of another group. If “it” calls “power surge”, then everyone who is seated needs to change seats.
- The game finishes whenever you like.

- **Find the lantern:** The children can be placed in teams. One child in each team is blindfolded. A lamp is placed on the other side of the room / play area. The blind-folded child needs to find the lamp with the help of the other members of the team. Once the blind-folded child has touched the lamp he/she needs to get back to the starting point. Another member of the team can be blind-folded for the next round.



Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus. Help us to let our lights shine for you and to always do what is good.
Amen



Older Children

Lesson objective: To know that Jesus wants us to be as salt and light in the world - to make a difference to those around us.



Attention Grabber

Let the children taste some popcorn without salt. Ask them to describe how it tastes. Is it missing something? Then add salt and ask them whether they prefer the popcorn with or without the salt.



Bible Story: Jesus teaches about salt and light (Matthew 5: 13 -16)

Read this passage from the Bible



Discussion:

- Jesus says we are to be the salt of the earth. What do you think He meant by that? *(We add flavour to the world; we make the world a better place; we make a difference to the world).*
- Now light a candle or shine a torch. Jesus also said we are the light of the world. When you see a candle, what words / emotions do you associate with it? *(Answers should include: brightness; takes darkness away; warmth; shine etc)*
- What do you think Jesus meant by saying we are the light of the world? *(Answers should include: we make a difference for the better; we show others how to live by our example; we bring warmth)*
- Jesus is also described as the Light of the World – He takes darkness away. What is the darkness in the world? *(Sin)*

- Jesus wants us to be like Him and shine as a light in the world and do as Jesus would do. What happens if we cover our light? *(The light goes out or you no longer see it. We therefore no longer make a difference!)*
- It is sometimes difficult to shine for Jesus, especially when it is just you, but when there are a number of you, you can make a great difference! *(Light a number of candles to illustrate this point).*
- What good deeds can you do so that your light shines and people can see God in you? *(Allow the children to share their thoughts. Here are some ideas: We care for those in need; we care about the environment; we treat all people equally; we stand up for what we know is right and just; we are kind to everyone.)*
- If others see the good things you do and the way you treat others, this is a way of showing God to others. It is through what you do that others will want to get to know God.
- A candle was given to you at your Baptism. What does the priest say as the candle is given to you? *(If the children do not know, send them home to find out. Perhaps next week have a small treat for the first person to give you the correct answer. The answer is, "Shine as a light in the world to the glory of God")*



Craft:

- **Candle jars:** You will need: small glass jar, tea light or small candle, tissue paper, glue, glitter. Decorate the jar and then when the candle is lit it will shine through the tissue paper decorations. This craft reminds us of the light of God which shines through us. (See picture at bottom of page)
- **Light catchers:** Cut out a shape of clear self-adhesive paper, something related to this lesson such as a candle, a star or even a cross. Decorate the shape with tissue paper, sequins, glitter etc. Cover with another piece of self adhesive paper and press down firmly. Trim the ends. Punch a hole in the shape and attach a thread. Hang in your window to catch the sun. (See picture at bottom of page)
- **CD light catchers:** Use permanent markers to brightly colour "used" CDs. (Before you start, wash the CDs in warm, soapy water. This will remove any dust that might interfere with the marker ink adhering properly. Dry well. The children should colour both sides of their CD, making sure the entire surface is covered. (If there is a label on the one side of the CD that you cannot remove, perhaps glue two CDs together, shiny sides facing outwards.) When the CD's are coloured, hang them up threading a string or fishing line through the middle of each CD. The CDs can be hung from the braches of a tree.



- **Decorating a Candle with Melted Crayons:** You will need a tea candle, lighter, and a few old crayons. Each child needs a white candle. Cover the work area with newspaper. Remove the paper coverings from the crayons. Each child, being closely supervised by the teacher, will take a

turn holding a crayon over the burning candle and then draw a cross on the white candle with the softened crayon. They may also want to write their names (or initials) on the candle. The cross on the candle reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world. Be sure to tell the children that the wax is hot.

- If it is difficult to obtain materials for the above crafts, the children can simply draw a picture of what they have learnt today.



Worksheet: A worksheet can be found at the end of the lesson



Songs:



Physical activities:

- **Power surge:**

Before playing this game, ask the children where people got their light from in Biblical times when it was dark at night. *(In early times lamps were stone bowls filled with melted animal fat, in which floated a wick of twisted plant fibres. During the time of Jesus, people used olive oil instead of animal fat. Olive oil gives off less smoke than animal fat.)*

Today, we have many other things that can give us light. Can you name some of these things? *(Light bulbs, torches, solar lights etc)*

Instructions for game: This game is similar to the game “fruit salad”.

- Divide the children into groups by naming each child a source of light such as, headlight, torch, light bulb, candle, spotlight, fire etc. The number of children you have will determine how many groups you need – there need to be at least 2 children in each group.
 - Form a circle of chairs that is one chair fewer than the number of children.
 - One of the children is “it”. This child stands in the centre of the circle and calls out the name of one of the groups. If the child calls, “headlight”, then all children who are part of that group must get up quickly and change places. The children who are not part of that group remain seated.
 - The person who is “it” tries to sit in an empty seat while the members of that group are swapping positions. The person who does not find an empty chair is now “it”.
 - This child now calls the name of another group. If “it” calls “power surge”, then everyone who is seated needs to change seats.
 - The game finishes whenever you like.
- **Find the lantern:** The children can be placed in teams. One child in each team is blindfolded. A lamp is placed on the other side of the room / play area. The blind-folded child needs to find the lamp with the help of the other member of the team who call out instructions. Once the blind-folded child has touched the lamp he/she needs to get back to the rest of the team. Another member of the team can be blind-folded for the next round.



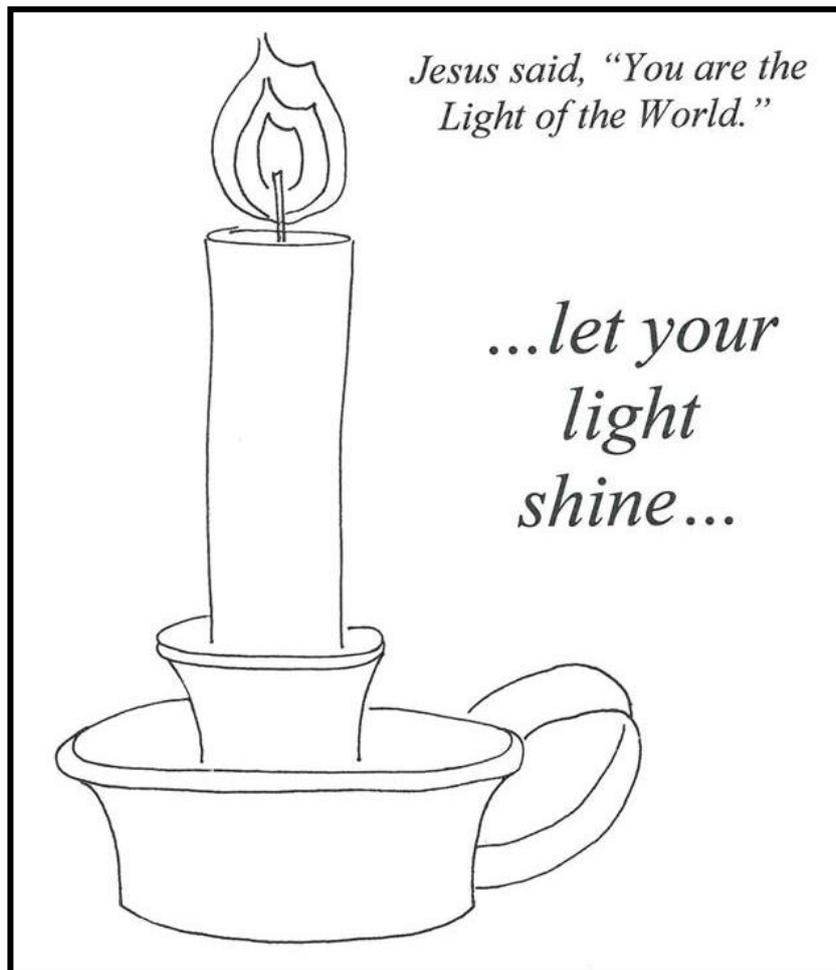
Prayer: Light a candle at the beginning of this time of prayer.

Allow the children to offer their own prayers. You can talk before about things they would like to pray for. Try to get each child to contribute to the prayer.

Jesus, you are the light of the world. You take darkness away. You overcome all that is evil and not of God. May we go out into the world as a shining light - to do as You would do and spread the good news to all. Amen

References:

- People of the Way Sunday School Manual, Anglican Diocese of Johannesburg, 2011
 - Life Application Bible: New International Version, Tyndale House Publishers and Zondervan Publishers, 1991
 - Learning Centres for Advent and Lent, Doris Murphy, Twenty –Third Publications, 200
- www.threethirtyministries.org
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LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

Instructions:
 First cross out all words that are days of the week
 Second cross out all words that are colors
 Third cross out all words that are names of animals
 Fourth cross out all words that are numbers

SUNDAY	BROWN	SEVEN	LET	PIG	WHITE	SIXTEEN
THREE	YOUR	TURTLE	GOLD	EIGHT	LIGHT	FRIDAY
SHINE	HORSE	FOUR	RED	BEFORE	TUESDAY	ORANGE
PURPLE	OTHERS	WEDNESDAY	ALLIGATOR	FIVE	THAT	FIFTY
RACCOON	THEY	FROG	BLUE	MAY	MONDAY	TWO
THIRTEEN	GREEN	SEE	THURSDAY	NINETEEN	SNAKE	YOUR
SATURDAY	GOOD	SQUIRREL	DEEDS	SUNDAY	TIGER	AND
GLORIFY	YOUR	PINK	TUESDAY	YELLOW	FATHER	BLACK
BEAR	IN	FRIDAY	HEAVEN	GIRAFFE	FIVE	WEDNESDAY

What do the remaining words say? Write them in order on the lines below.

Matthew 5:16 NIV



The Lighted Path

Anger and Me

Sixth Sunday after Epiphany Between 12 and 19 February

Readings: Matthew 5:21-37

Theme: Anger and controlling it

Memory verse: 'All you need to say is simply "Yes" or "No". ' Matt 5:37



Information for the teacher:

In today's scripture Christ's teaching on adultery and divorce may affect children but it does not involve children directly. And so in this lesson we will look at is anger and how anger can lead us to do things that we may regret and that we may not do if we were not so emotional and angry.

To be angry is not a bad thing! However, we do need to reflect on what makes us angry and why we get angry about certain things. If we are often angry that is also a reason to reflect on why this is.

For young children a burst of anger may be the only way they know how to communicate. They are not so in control of their emotions. That is something we learn as we grow older. There is normally a reason behind anger, and sometimes a very good reason. However, we can be angry but we need to find acceptable ways in which to show our anger.

Jesus takes about holding grudges and having 'racca' or contempt for someone. Contempt means the feeling that a person or a thing is worthless or beneath consideration. As Christians we are meant to treat people in a way that is opposite to contempt. You can see why Jesus takes such a strong stand against that kind of anger as it might become a way of life.

God is not concerned with outside appearance but rather with what's on the inside. Gods looks at our hearts. But God is concerned with hurtful, unloving behaviour that we sometimes try to justify. In other words our behaviour often reflects what's really going on inside us.

In today's lesson we will focus on anger and the importance of resolving anger before we do things that are wrong and that we will regret, such as break promises(vs. 33), cheat (vs.27), or end friendships (vs.31).

Lesson Suggestions:



Younger Children (3 – 6 years):

Lesson Objective:

To consider if there is ever a good time to be angry?

To think about the consequences of expressing our anger in ways we may regret.



Attention Grabber: Coke and Mentos experiment.

Best to do this outside. This will be messy!!

You could also just ask the children to make an angry face. And then talk about what makes them angry.

If you don't want to do the experiment you can show videos like this one

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cts3MrHnYIU>.

What you need:

A bottle of coke diet or regular

Packet of Mentos (any)

What you do:

Show the class the coke bottle, tell them this is them on a normal day.

Open your bottle of coke.

But then something starts to irritate you or make you upset. Show the Mentos.

Ask your group for examples of things that could make them angry

Pop a couple of Mentos inside the bottle as fast as possible.

Watch the explosion.

After it all calms down tell your class that that is how anger works. It makes us do things that are not like us. We get all upset and explode.



Bible Story and Discussion: Matthew 5:21-27

Ask your group:

Who has ever been angry?

What does it feel like?

Have you ever said or done something you didn't mean when you were angry? (like hit your sibling, said something mean, broken something)

Getting angry is not a sin, it's what it makes us do that could be a sin!

Is it possible to spot yourself exploding with anger?? (yes!)

How do we do that? It's called the ABCDE

- A- Awareness: you can begin to feel your self-getting angry.
- B- Breathe: breathe nice deep breaths
- C- Count: count to 10. Count between breaths e.g. Breath in, out 1, breath in, out 2...
- D- Distance: sometimes when the first three aren't enough we need to move away from what made us angry. Go for a walk in the garden if you can.
- E- Express yourself: only when you have calmed down go to the person who made you angry and tell them why. E.g. I feel that the way you treat me made me angry, I felt angry because of xyz.



Prayer: Dear Jesus. Thank you for this day. Thank you that we could come to Sunday school and be with our friends to learn about you. We know that we all get angry sometimes. Please help us control our anger and not let it control us. We love you lots. Amen.



Physical activity:

Bubbles

What you need:
Bubble mixture.

What you do:

Have all your children sitting in a circle.
Tell them that you are going to blow lots of bubbles for them. They are allowed to pop as many as they like.
They can jump up, move to where the bubbles are etc.
Once you feel like they have popped enough bubbles have them sit in a circle again.
Tell them that you are going to blow lots of bubbles again BUT they cannot touch a bubble, they not allowed to move at all... even if one lands on their nose!

Explain to your class that sometimes we really really want to do something, like lose our temper, but resisting it is called self-control.
Blow some more bubbles at the children and praise them when they show self-control.

Or

Wacky relay.

What you need:
An object to carry (the bigger it is the easier the game is)

What you do:

Two children carry an object of choice (ball, teddy bear, pencil etc) down a path and back using designated body parts between the two children.
You can make this into a race by splitting your group and having the same object for each group.
Call put a different body part each time a pair of children have a turn e.g. Hand to hand, shoulder to shoulder, chin to chin, knee to knee, back to back, head to head etc.



Craft: Paper Roll Dragon Craft

These fire breathing dragons are so easy to make! Here's what you'll need:

- Paper Roll (Toilet paper roll, paper towel roll, or wrapping paper roll)
- Green or Red colour Paper
- 2 Medium Pom Poms per child (optional)
- 2 Small Pom Poms per child (optional)
- 2 Medium Googly Eyes per child (optional)
- Red, Yellow and Orange Tissue Paper
- Glue Stick

What to do:

Cut the wrapping paper tube to about the same size as a toilet paper roll.

Cut the colour paper to the size of the paper roll so it would completely cover it and use a glue stick to attach it to the roll.

Next, you're going to need to choose two medium pom poms, two small pom poms, and a set of googly eyes.



(Use super glue to attach the pom pom and googly eyes)

Attach the googly eyes to the pom poms.

Next, attach the pom poms to the paper tube:



For the fire, use red, yellow and orange tissue paper, cut into about 20cm or 25cm long, pointy strips.

Then glue them to the inside of the paper tube.

Blow through the top end and watch your dragon breathe fire!!!



<https://onelittleproject.com/paper-roll-dragon-craft/>



Older children (7 – 13 years):

Lesson objective:

Learn that getting angry is not always bad

Reflect on how we express our anger and what we do when we are angry.

Learn how to control our anger so we do not do things we regret.



Attention Grabber: Coke and Mentos experiment.

Best to do this outside. This will be messy!!

If you don't want to do the experiment you can show videos like this one

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cts3MrHnYIU>.

What you need:

A bottle of coke diet or regular

Packet of Mentos (any)

What you do:

Show the class the coke bottle, tell them this is them on a normal day.

Open your bottle of coke.

But then something starts to irritate you or make you upset. Show the Mentos.

Ask your group for examples of things that could make them angry

Pop a couple of Mentos inside the bottle as fast as possible.

Watch the explosion.

After it all calmed down tell your class that that is how anger works. It makes us do things that are not like us. We get all upset and explode.



Bible Story and Discussion:

Ask your group: read through Matthew 5:21-37.

Explain what each topic means

Murder: the unlawful premeditated killing of one human being by another.

Adultery: voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person and a person who is not their spouse. You can explain this as cheating or having an affair.

Divorce: the legal dissolution of a marriage by a court or other competent body.

Oaths: a solemn promise, often invoking a divine witness, regarding one's future action or behaviour.

Ask them what these could mean in their own lives e.g. Murder: bullying someone, making someone feel less than.

Adultery: cheating on tests, losing faith

Divorce: not being a good friend, ending friendships

Oaths: breaking promises or keeping private information private.

Ask your group what they think contempt means (answer in info for the teacher)
If we think of that meaning when we are angry with someone does it make a difference?

When we let anger control us it can make us do things we wouldn't normally do, what kinds of things have you done when you were angry that you regretted?



Discussion: if you want to show your class a video on anger use this video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3bKuoH8CkFc> (optional)

Have you ever said or done something you didn't mean when you were angry? (like hit your sibling, said something mean, broken something)

Getting angry is not a sin, it's what we do with our anger that could be a sin!

Is it possible to spot your self-exploding with anger?? (yes!)

How do we do that? It's called the ABCDE

- A- Awareness: you can begin to feel your self-getting mad.
- B- Breathe: breathe nice deep breathes
- C- Count: count to 10. Count between breath e.g. Breathe in, out 1, breath in, out 2...
- D- Distance, sometimes when the first three aren't enough we need to move away from what made you angry. Go for a walk in the garden if you can
- E- Express yourself, only when you have calmed down go to the person who made you angry and tell them why. E.g. I feel that the way you treat me made me angry, I felt angry because of xyz.



Prayer. Dear Jesus. Thank you that you are interested in me. Please would you guide me every day and help me through difficult times. Please meet me here in my prayer. Please help me to find you in all that I do, please help me be the person you designed me to be. Help me be in control of my feeling and actions. We love you lots
Amen.



Physical activity:

Ready, set, go!

What you need:

Children

Space.

What you do:

It's basically a race. You can decide where the children run to and back.

BUT the children need to wait for the complete phase of READY, SET, GO!

Subsite words for Go like ready, set, guava or ready, set, gorilla

They can only run when the correct words are said.

Or

Clapping game.

What you need:

Nothing

What you do:

The leader or chosen person creates a clapping pattern and the rest of the group must try and repeat

Or

walk and stop

what you need:

Nothing

What you do:

Have your class standing anywhere they can hear and see you.

You tell them they can only walk when you say walk and stop when you say stop.

They need to move around the area any way. They can't talk or touch anyone

Once you have done this a few times tell your class you going to mix it up

When you say walk, they must stop and when you say stop, they must walk.

Once you have done that for a while tell your class you are going to add 2 more commands. Name and clap.

When you say name, they must respond with their name and when you say clap they must respond with a clap. The key with clap is that they must all clap at the same time to make it 1 loud clap.

You can do name and clap while they are moving.



Craft

Stress balls

What you need:

Balloons

Flour

Koki's

Empty water bottle

What you do:

Pour flour into the empty water bottle

Stretch the balloon over the opening of the bottle

Shake and squeeze the bottle until the balloon is filled

Tie a knot in the balloon

Draw a face on the balloon or decorate the way you want.

Squeeze it whenever you feel upset.





The Transfiguration of Christ

The Last Sunday after Epiphany

Between 20 and 25 February

Reading: Matthew 17: 1-9

Theme: An invitation to meet with God.

Memory verse: 'Lord it's good to be here,' Peter exclaimed. Matthew 17:4

'The disciples saw Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus.'" Matthew 17:3



Information for the teacher:

Today marks a turning point in the church year; we turn from the Incarnation cycle of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany and look ahead to the Redemption cycle of Lent, Easter, Ascension and Pentecost. Ash Wednesday will follow in a few days, and then our Lenten journey in preparation for Easter.

The Transfiguration of Christ is an Epiphany story –a story that reveals God's glory and radiance. For this reason the Gospel writer, Matthew, uses language that is full of images and symbols that point to something more. The transfiguration takes place on a mountain. Mountains are often associated with the appearance of God. For example, Mt Sinai where Moses received the 10 commandments. After 6 days Moses took two disciples and went up the mountain. The mountain was covered with a cloud and Moses face was also transfigured (Exodus 24).

Jesus' shining face and clothes show (according to common symbolism of the time) the presence of God in the person of Jesus. In addition, the cloud that covered them is also sign of the presence of God; as in the Exodus story, a pillar of cloud protected the Israelites - the visible sign of God's presence.

Moses and Elijah represent the Law and the Prophets. Moses is the one who gave the law to his people while Elijah is considered to be the greatest of all the prophets.

The voice from the cloud reminds us of the voice heard at Jesus' baptism. Jesus is God's son. He is beloved, he is marked with the LOVE of God. And then there is the added "**Listen to him!**" If the Israelites were to listen to Moses, how much more are they to LISTEN to Jesus.

When the disciples raise their eyes the only one they see is Jesus; Moses and Elijah have disappeared, their mission is over. They have presented Jesus, the new prophet and new law-giver. It is Jesus who, through his presence, makes obedience to the commandment of love possible through the grace that he gives.

Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, tells us to see Jesus' light and allow it into our hearts. It is not about empty ritual but about a relationship with God. To have faith in Jesus is to be in relationship with Jesus. It is not only about believing certain truth. It is a commitment to follow Jesus and live as his disciple.

Lesson Suggestions:



Younger Children (3 – 6 years):

Lesson Objectives:

- **Know:** That God continues to meet with us in our daily lives.
- **Feel:** Excited that we able to meet with God.
- **Do:** Help them to explore how Church can be a place where everyone can experience God's love and care.



Attention Grabber:

Have a number of pictures placed on the wall of the room. These should be a picture of a mountain, pictures of beautiful places in nature. Also have the words **“LORD IT IS GOOD TO BE HERE”** printed in a ‘bright cloud’. You could have one of these cut out for each child. Gather and welcome the children. Look at the pictures and ask which place do the children like best and why? They place their ‘cloud’ at the place they really enjoy.

If you can't stick up pictures etc.

Ask what is their favourite place and why?

Mention that some places are very special and that Church is a special place. Why?

Lead into the lesson saying that today is the last Sunday of Epiphany (explain) we are going to hear what happened when Jesus and his friends climbed a mountain. Look at the picture of the mountain or ask if any of the children have climbed a mountain.



Bible Story: Matthew 17:1-9 – The Transfiguration of Jesus

Read the story from the Bible and then summarise the story, speaking with expression and action. Have the children participate in the story as they take turns to mime each part of the reading.



Review Questions:

1. Where did Jesus take Peter, James and John?
2. What did they see?
3. What did they hear?
4. Why was it such a special place? (It was a special place because it was the place of God's sign of special love for Jesus.)



Application Questions:

Encourage children to think how the Church can be a place where everyone finds it good to be, and is a special place of God's love. Emphasise that 'Church' is not only the building but more importantly it is the people that gather there to worship God.



Prayer: Dear God thank You that you always meet with us. Help us to show your love to all people so that they may want to worship you.

AMEN



Craft:

Have a number of magazines that have pictures of nature, animals, plants, birds.... Have the children paste their 'bright cloud' in the centre of a blank sheet of paper and then to cut out the pictures of the magazines and paste them and around their 'cloud.'

OR The Craft at the end of the lesson.



Songs: Sing songs of praise.



Discussion points for home with other family members

Where do you think Jesus is now?



Older children (7 – 13 years)

Lesson objectives:

- **Know:** That God is with us every moment of our lives.
- **Feel:** To feel secure that God is always with us.
- **Do:** Live our lives so that others may encounter God.



Attention Grabber: Our Mountaintop Experiences.

Ask group to share moments when they have felt at peace and harmony with everyone and everything. Those moments when one says, 'This is it... everything fits.. all I ever hoped for is here.'

After they have shared go on to say that this is the experience that Peter, James and John had on the top of Mount Tabor when they saw Jesus' face change and his clothes become sparkling white. They wanted that moment to last forever.



Bible Story: Matthew 17: 1-9 – The Transfiguration of Jesus

Perhaps use children who can read well to do a dramatic reading of the transfiguration of Jesus.



Application Questions:

- . How might the transfiguration experience be part of our lives?
- . Do we fully recognise our mountaintop experiences, do we still see Jesus' glory in these, or do we write them off as insignificant and trivial compared to all the other 'stuff' in our daily lives?
- . Jesus was transfigured before his Gethsemane experience; how might our mountaintop experiences help us during the times we spend in the valley - in our dark times?
- . How might our experiences bring hope and faith to our communities?



Prayer: The group can stand in a circle, each holding an unlit candle. You light your candle and then the next, who will light the next and so on. As you light them recall how they are used referring to the light they represent. Then remind them Jesus shines brighter than any of them or all of them together.

When all the candles are lit sing a song

Then say together the prayer of St. Ignatius of Loyola:

*Fill us, we pray, Lord, with your light and life
 That we may show your wondrous glory
 Grant that your love may fill our lives
 That we may count nothing too small to do for you
 Nothing too much to give,
 And nothing too hard to bear
 Through Christ, our Lord
 Amen*



Craft: Transfiguration of Jesus sun-catcher – see end of lesson



Songs: Sing songs of praise.

References:

- www.catholicinspired.com
- www.calvary-kids-pages.com
- www.sermons4kids.com

TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS ~ CRAFT

This "sun-catcher" is meant to resemble the transfiguration of Jesus. "His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light" Matt 17: 2

To make this craft you will need:

Image found at the end of the lesson, printed on white cardboard. (You may want to enlarge this image)

Wax paper

Crayons or coloured pencils

Tape

Scissors

Instructions:

Colour the background behind Jesus - It can be as simple as rays of light to as detailed as a mountain scene with clouds.

Now cut out the circle around the image as well as the image of Jesus.



Tape wax paper to the back so the light can shine through Jesus.

Use string, tape or tack putty to hang it on a window or a light/lamp. Kids love shining a torch through it too!!



Optional idea: To make it "gift quality" or sturdy enough for younger children to play with, you could laminate it.



Worksheet: A crossword and a word unscramble can be found at the end of this lesson

Answers to word scramble: bright, shine, face, voice, to change

Answers to crossword: 3 across: transfigured; 9 across: Moses; 2 down: voice; 4 down: afraid; 1 down: Jesus;

10 across: only; 8 across: risen; 7 across: Elijah; 6 down: restore; 5 down: understood



Transfiguration

Word Jumble

Unscramble the four words and use the letters in the numbered boxes to solve the puzzle. The solution will explain the meaning of the word transfiguration.

RTHIBG
7 1

HEINS
4 6 8

CEAF
5 3

IVECO
2

1 2

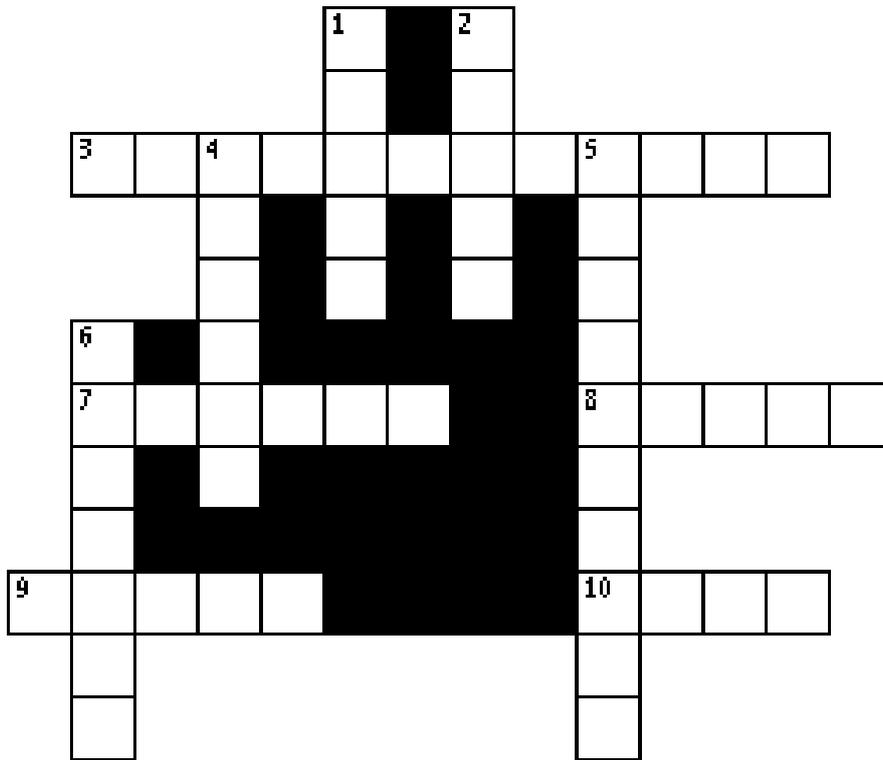
3 4 5 6 7 8



Jesus, Moses, and Elijah on the mountain.

THE TRANSFIGURATION

(MATTHEW 17:1-13)



- 3 ACROSS "Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, brought them up on a high mountain by themselves, and was _____ before them..." **MATTHEW 17:1-2**
- 9 ACROSS "And behold, _____ and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him." **MATTHEW 17:3**
- 2 DOWN "While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a _____ came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!' **"MATTHEW 17:5**
- 4 DOWN "And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly _____." **MATTHEW 17:6**
- 1 DOWN "But _____ came and touched them and said, 'Arise, and do not be afraid.' **MATTHEW 17:7**
- 10 ACROSS "And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus _____. **MATTHEW 17:8**
- 8 ACROSS "Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, 'Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is _____ from the dead.' **MATTHEW 17:9**
- 7 ACROSS "And His disciples asked Him, saying, 'Why then do the scribes say that _____ must come first?' **MATTHEW 17:10**
- 6 DOWN "Then Jesus answered and said to them, 'Elijah truly is coming first and will _____ all things.' **MATTHEW 17:11**
- 5 DOWN "Then the disciples _____ that He spoke to them of John the Baptist." **MATTHEW 17:13**



Temptation happens ... now what?

First Sunday in Lent

1 March 2020

Readings: Gen2:15 – 17; 3:1 -7

Theme: Reconnecting with God

Memory verses: You could use a verse from the New Testament reading Rom 5:17b:

“All who receive God’s abundant grace and are freely put right with God will rule in life through Christ.” OR

Rom 5:1 Now that we have been put right with God through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.



Information for the teacher:

During Lent this year we are reminded that God loves us and created us good. But we do not always do what is right and we fail to live abundantly and lovingly as God created us to live. The idea we would like to convey to the children this Lent is that despite the fact we sin and move away from God, God loves us no matter what, and that they will live most happily if they follow God’s laws that are there to help us experience life in all its fullness.

So we will think about sin and explore ways in which we can grow closer to God. God gives us strength and faith to help us live as disciples of Jesus in this imperfect world. Even though at times we fail and move away from God, God, who has an infinite love for us, constantly embraces us and empowers us to keep going and to remain in Christ.

It is important to help children (even from a young age) to connect with God. In this lesson there are two different forms of meditative prayer that you can explore with your children to connect with God.

On the **First Sunday of Lent** we will think about the ways in which we are tempted. To help us think about this we will look at the story of Adam and Eve and their experience in the **Garden of Eden**. We need to resist the forbidden fruit, that draws us away from God. It is important to understand that the Adam and Eve story is just that a story- it is not fact and should be taught this way.

In this lesson, try to encourage (not force) your children to commit to connecting with God during this Lenten period, whether it's giving something up or doing something for someone else.

Lesson suggestions:



Younger Children (3 – 6 years)

Lesson objectives:

- To learn about the story of Adam and Eve.
- To understand that what sin is when we are far away from God.
- To learn to connect to God in different ways.



Bible Story: Gen 2 and 3 (Adam and Eve and their temptation)

It may be good to read from a children's bible.



Discussion:

- Discuss that Adam and Eve had been told not to eat from one tree in the garden, but they were tempted by the snake to and did so. They had free choice.
- As a result, they separated themselves from the presence of God had to leave the Garden of Eden.



Questions:

- What do you think sin is?
- Why is sin not good?
- How do we connect to God?
- What do you do to stay connected with God?



Activity:

For the activity there is a Christian meditation below it is important to help children connect with God. The meditation is written to allow children to create a space to be quiet and connect with God. Get the children to sit comfortably on the floor (if you have cushions or mats or shapes to sit on that would be advisable) try to have them to sit in their own space and not on top each other. Explain to the children that we are going to have some quiet time with God and we can always find some time to be with God and this is one way in which we can do it. Try your best to not rush through the meditation.

Begin with the Sign of the Cross.

God made each of us, including our imaginations. Today we will use our imaginations to experience a guided meditation. Remember, Jesus said, "Seek, and you will find." If we seek Jesus and offer him our imaginations, we can sometimes meet him and spend time with him in a way that helps us understand how he wants us to live. Let's try it and see!

Close your eyes and relax. . . . Listen to your breathing. . . . Don't change it, just listen to it. . . . As you inhale, breathe in all the love God has for you. . . . As you exhale, feel all your distractions leave . . . any aches and pains . . . any worries . . . any distractions at all. Try to feel your heart beating . . . the heart God created for you. . . . [pause]

Now picture, right before you, a large door, standing all alone. . . . [pause]

Go to the door, push it open, and walk through. . . . You find yourself in a beautiful garden. . . .
Take a moment to look around . . . feel the grass beneath your feet . . . smell the flowers . . .
listen to the birds. . . . Enjoy! [pause]

In the distance you see a stream winding through the garden. . . . There is a shade tree next to the
stream, and a bench beneath the tree. . . . Jesus is there, waiting for you. . . . He smiles, and calls
you by name. . . . Go to him. . . . [pause]

Jesus takes you into his arms with a warm hug. . . . “I’m so glad you came,” he says. . . . “Come,
let’s sit down and be together for awhile. . . .” So you sit on the bench and enjoy each other’s
company. . . . [pause] Think about what Jesus is like. . . .

Jesus takes you by the hand and says, “I have been with you always, through times of joy, and times of
sadness.” [pause] Then Jesus shows you moments in your life, beginning when you were very young. .
. . . He shows you how he was there, sharing each moment with you.
. . . [pause] What does Jesus show you? . . . How do you feel? . . . [pause]

Then Jesus says, “At your Baptism, you became a child of God and a member of the Body of Christ.
Through the Holy Spirit, I will be with you forever, during the good times and the difficult times. . . .
[pause]

Jesus points out the stream, and invites you to go into the water to renew yourself as you call to mind
your Baptism. . . . [pause] Together you go, hand in hand.
. . . To your surprise the water is warm and life-giving. . . . With great joy Jesus gently dips you into
the water. . . . Think about what it feels like. . . . [pause]

As you stand in the stream with Jesus, you hear invisible voices cheering and clapping. Jesus laughs
and says: “You hear our family, the Church, greeting you! They are the family and friends you meet
every day and all those in Heaven and around the world who pray for you each time the Eucharist is
celebrated.”

The sound fades, and you and Jesus return to the bench. . . . As you leave the water, you become
completely dry, and your heart fills with God’s peace. . . . As you sit beside Jesus . . . you realize
you can tell him anything. . . . What do you tell Jesus? .[pause] . . . How does he respond? . . .
[pause]

Jesus then tells you it is time to go . . . but first he has something for you . . . something that will
unite you closer with him and with all your brothers and sisters in the Church. . . . He takes from his
cloak a small loaf of bread. . . . He blesses it, . . . breaks it, . . . and says, “This is my Body,” . .
. . . “take and eat.” Together you share the meal. . . . [pause]

Now you both stand up to go. . . . He invites you to return anytime and says he will be waiting. . . .
He tells you he will be with you throughout your journey.
. . . You will sense his presence in the people and events of your daily life. . . . You will be able to
hear his voice in the Bible and find his love in the Sacraments.
. . . Then Jesus says, “I look forward to being with you in the Eucharist.” He takes you into his arms for
a farewell hug. [pause]

You turn to go, and you see the door is still standing open. . . . As you walk up to it, you take one last
look at Jesus and remember that you can return at any time.
. . . You go through the door, closing it behind you . . . and find yourself back here in this room. . .
. . . Slowly you wiggle your fingers and toes . . . stretch your arms and legs . . . and, when you are
ready, open your eyes.

Close with the Sign of the Cross.



Craft:

A Finger Labyrinth

How to do a Finger Labyrinth Meditation?

1. Take deep breaths to begin to relax and focus on the entrance to the labyrinth.
2. Place your pointer finger from your non-dominant hand on the entrance of the labyrinth. If you find this too awkward at first, use your dominant hand. However, over time, keep trying your non-dominant hand. This helps keep the mind focused on the meditation due to the challenge it presents.
3. Slowly trace the pattern of the labyrinth with your finger allowing your mind to clear from extra thought and focus solely on following the path of the labyrinth.
4. "Walk" to the centre of the labyrinth and rest momentarily, taking deep breaths observing how you are feeling.
5. Retrace your path out of the labyrinth.
6. Sit back, breathe deeply and relax. Observe how you are feeling again.





Snack:

Put out any snack that would be very tempting to eat e.g. cake, popcorn, chips. Put it by the children as they do their craft but instruct them NOT to eat the snack until they have finished their work.



Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus. We are sorry for the things we do wrong, like (ask the children to say what they are sorry for). Please help us not to do these bad things again. Amen



Older children:

Lesson objectives:

- To know that this is the start of Lent and to teach them the meaning of Lent (**lent is not just about giving something up, it is a time in which we can reflect on our own lives and a space we give ourselves to connect with God**).
- To gain an understanding of the Lenten theme
- To learn about the story of Adam and Eve (**Adam and Eve is a story, please try to teach it as a story not as fact-it is an example of how people separate themselves from God**).
- To learn to connect with God and how to come back to the source of good.



Bible Story: Gen 2 and 3 (The story of Adam and Eve)



Discussion:

- Introduce the Lenten Theme, Reconnecting with God.
- Briefly discuss the Creation Story and the perfect world that God created. (**if you would like you can bring in the current climate crisis, and how the earth was perfect but when we manipulate the earth for financial gain, this separates us from God**).
- Discuss that Adam and Eve had been told not to eat from one tree in the garden, but they did and
- That Adam and Eve blamed one another instead of taking responsibility for and owning up to what they had done.
- They had to leave the Garden of Eden.
- We live in a blame culture – like Adam and Eve did.

Questions: (There are a number of these – choose the ones that will work best for you and your group of children)

- Would you have eaten the apple from the tree?
- This is the start of Lent, the time before Easter, when we remember the 40 days that Jesus spent in the desert without food and water, resisting temptation. It is during this time where we look at our lives and think of what we are doing wrong in our lives and attempt during this time to stop a particular type of behaviour and live more as God would have us live.
- Traditionally in Lent this often meant giving up something like sweets - or trying to stop a particular type of behaviour. Something that takes us away from connecting with God.

- Think of what you would like to give up for Lent. Whenever you want to do the activity that you have given up, that is the time you should say a prayer to God.

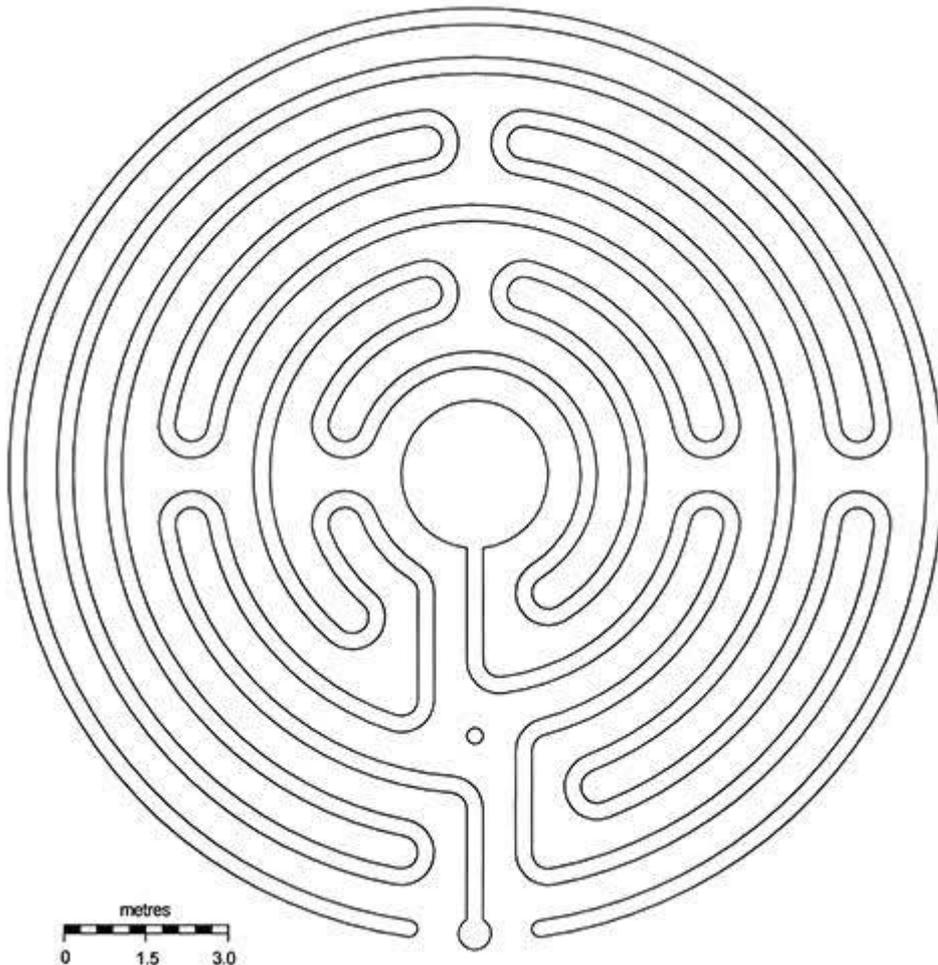


Craft:

A Finger Labyrinth

How to do a Finger Labyrinth Meditation?

7. Take deep breaths to begin to relax and focus on the entrance to the labyrinth.
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9. Slowly trace the pattern of the labyrinth with your finger allowing your mind to clear from extra thought and focus solely on following the path of the labyrinth.
10. "Walk" to the centre of the labyrinth and rest momentarily, taking deep breaths observing how you are feeling.
11. Retrace your path out of the labyrinth.
12. Sit back, breathe deeply and relax. Observe how you are feeling again.





Physical activity:

For the activity there is a Christian meditation below it is important to help children connect with God. The meditation is written to allow children to create a space to be quiet and connect with God. Get the children to sit comfortably on the floor (if you have cushions or mats or shapes to sit on that would be advisable) try to have them to sit in their own space and not on top each other. Explain to the children that we are going to have some quiet time with God and we can always find some time to be with God and this is one way in which we can do it. Try your best to not rush through the meditation.

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Close your eyes and relax. . . . Listen to your breathing. . . . Don't change it, just listen to it. . . . As you inhale, breathe in all the love God has for you. . . . As you exhale, feel all your distractions leave . . . any aches and pains . . . any worries . . . any distractions at all. Try to feel your heart beating . . . the heart God created for you. . . . *[pause]*

Now picture, right before you, a large door, standing all alone. . . . *[pause]*

Go to the door, push it open, and walk through. . . . You find yourself in a beautiful garden. . . . Take a moment to look around . . . feel the grass beneath your feet . . . smell the flowers . . . listen to the birds. . . . Enjoy! *[pause]*

In the distance you see a stream winding through the garden. . . . There is a shade tree next to the stream, and a bench beneath the tree. . . . Jesus is there, waiting for you. . . . He smiles, and calls you by name. . . . Go to him. . . . *[pause]*

Jesus takes you into his arms with a warm hug. . . . "I'm so glad you came," he says. . . . "Come, let's sit down and be together for awhile. . . ." So you sit on the bench and enjoy each other's company. . . . *[pause]* Think about what Jesus is like. . . .

Jesus takes you by the hand and says, "I have been with you always, through times of joy, and times of sadness." *[pause]* Then Jesus shows you moments in your life, beginning when you were very young. . . . He shows you how he was there, sharing each moment with you. . . . *[pause]* What does Jesus show you? . . . How do you feel? . . . *[pause]*

Then Jesus says, "At your Baptism, you became a child of God and a member of the Body of Christ. Through the Holy Spirit, I will be with you forever, during the good times and the difficult times. . . . *[pause]*

Jesus points out the stream, and invites you to go into the water to renew yourself as you call to mind your Baptism. . . . *[pause]* Together you go, hand in hand. . . . To your surprise the water is warm and life-giving. . . . With great joy Jesus gently dips you into the water. . . . Think about what it feels like. . . . *[pause]*

As you stand in the stream with Jesus, you hear invisible voices cheering and clapping. Jesus laughs and says: "You hear our family, the Church, greeting you! They are the family and friends you meet every day and all those in Heaven and around the world who pray for you each time the Eucharist is celebrated."

The sound fades, and you and Jesus return to the bench. . . . As you leave the water, you become completely dry, and your heart fills with God's peace. . . . As you sit beside Jesus . . . you realize you can tell him anything. . . . What do you tell Jesus? . . . How does he respond? . . . [pause]

Jesus then tells you it is time to go . . . but first he has something for you . . . something that will unite you closer with him and with all your brothers and sisters in the Church. . . . He takes from his cloak a small loaf of bread. . . . He blesses it, . . . breaks it, . . . and says, "This is my Body," . . . "take and eat." Together you share the meal. . . . [pause]

Now you both stand up to go. . . . He invites you to return anytime and says he will be waiting. . . . He

tells you he will be with you throughout your journey.

. . . You will sense his presence in the people and events of your daily life. . . . You will be able to hear his voice in the Bible and find his love in the Sacraments.

. . . Then Jesus says, "I look forward to being with you in the Eucharist." He takes you into his arms for a farewell hug. [pause]

You turn to go, and you see the door is still standing open. . . . As you walk up to it, you take one last look at Jesus and remember that you can return at any time.

. . . You go through the door, closing it behind you

. . . and find yourself back here in this room. . . . Slowly you wiggle your fingers and toes . . . stretch your arms and legs . . . and, when you are ready, open your eyes.

Close with the Sign of the Cross.



Worksheet: Unscramble Words. See end of lesson for this activity. The answers do appear on the worksheet, so remove them if you want to make it harder for the kids!



Snack: Put out any snack that would be very tempting to eat e.g. cake, popcorn, chips. Put it by the children as they do their craft but instruct them NOT to eat the snack until they have finished their work.



Prayer: God of ultimate kindness and compassion, help us to find a way to connect with you during this Lenten time.

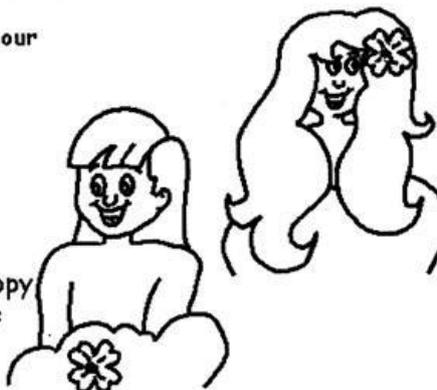
Amen

Unscramble the letters to find the words in our

Adam & Eve Anagram

Word List:

ashamed, clothes, disobey, garden, happy
life, partner, snake, temptation, unique



efil _____

einquu _____

aenprrt _____

adegnr _____

ahppy _____

ækns _____

bdeiosy _____

aadehms _____

cehlost _____

aeimnopttt _____

Promises and Blessings

Second Sunday in Lent 8 March 2020

Readings: Genesis 12:1-4a, Exodus 20: 1- 22; Deuteronomy 5: 1- 22

Theme: Gods blessings and Gods rules

Memory verse: I will bless all nations.” Gen12:3b



Information for the teacher:

The story of Abram represents a new beginning and Lent calls us to new beginnings and new hope. God acts in history by calling those who have faith in God, and by their response they become channels for God's purposes to be carried out in the world.

The call of Abram marks the beginning of a special relationship between God and humankind. Abram is called into the unknown, which is fraught with difficulties. God called him to leave his homeland and to go to a new land that God would show him. The possession of land, being a great nation and being a blessing to the peoples of the earth is a three-fold divine promise given to Abram which continues to run throughout the history of Israel.

God invited Israel into a covenant relationship. In those times there were two kinds of covenant, one was a covenant which was made between equals. The other was known as a suzerainty treaty between for example a king and his subjects. The subjects had to obey the king, but in return they were protected. The most important aspect of this covenant was the generous acts and care that the king would give to his people. So the people would obey the covenant out of gratitude for the goodness and protection of the king.

The Ten Commandments were given to the people of Israel on their way out of slavery in Egypt to the Promised Land around 1450BC. Moses received the commandments. They were mostly absolute laws - "do not do this" rather than conditional laws, "Don't do this or that will happen". They were short and to the point. Over time extra bits were added in to suit a more settled, farming community. (Compare Ex 21:17 to Ex 21:2-6)

What is important for us is that these commands are a guide through life and enable us to live in peace and enjoy a relationship with God and with one another. God's laws are not to restrict us. They are a gift to show us how to live, and to free us to live in order and harmony.

The Ten Commandments occur in two places in the Bible. Exodus 20 tells us how they were given to Moses on Mount Sinai, and in Deuteronomy 5 they are repeated in the introduction to the Jewish laws. The first 3 Commandments deal with our behaviour towards God. Commandments 4 to 10 deal with our behaviour towards other people.

Jesus taught a new law, the law of love. Jesus did not abolish the old law. The new law goes to the spirit of the old law, and so brings it to perfection. Jesus summarised all of God's laws to: Love of God and love your neighbour. There is only one law-the law of love.

Lesson Suggestions:



Younger Children (3 – 6 years):

Lesson Objective:

- We are blessed just like Abraham
- God has made promises and God doesn't break them
- Rules can be helpful/good for us.



Attention Grabber: The Traffic Light Game:

Everyone stands facing the leader. The leader explains that when “red” is called everyone must stand still with their arms at their sides. When “yellow” is called everyone should walk on the spot and when “green” is called everyone starts running on the spot. You can call out the commands faster and faster to make it harder.

Discuss that it is important obey a traffic light to avoid an accident. God has also given us rules to follow. He gives us rules to follow so that we can live happily.



Bible Story and Discussion:

Ask your group:

Do you have any rules you follow at home?

Are those rules the same at school?

Do we like rules? Why?

Do we think rules are important?

Do you know God has given us 10 very important rules? Do you know what we call them? (*The Ten Commandments*)

Does anyone know what these rules are?

(You shall have no other Gods but me.

You shall not make for yourself any idol, nor bow down to it or worship it.

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

You shall remember and keep the Sabbath day holy.

Respect your father and mother.

You must not commit murder.

You must not commit adultery.

You must not steal.

You must not give false evidence against your neighbour.

You must not be envious of your neighbour's goods. You shall not be envious of his house nor his wife, nor anything that belongs to your neighbour.)

Why should we follow these commandments?

(there are lots of reasons, Jesus followed them, God gave them to us- God loves us so we can trust that Gods words are good, God wants to give us a good way to live and to have a loving relationship with God, the 10 commandments can be simplified into 2 things: loving God and loving each other (Matthew 22:37-40).)



Prayer: Dear Jesus. Thank you for this day. Thank you that we could come to Sunday school and be with our friends to learn about you and your 10 commandments. Please help us follow them and help us grow our relationship with you!

We love you lots and lots. Amen



Physical activity:

Game without rules:

Kickback

How to Play It: Form two lines of people. There is one ball. Each line of people kicks the ball back and forth.

What Makes It Great: There are no real rules or any sense of scoring or competition. Just a fun way to pass the time.

Game with rules:

Simon says:

How to play: one person is on as 'Simon'. Simon calls out instructions and the group has to follow. The phrase Simon uses is 'Simon says please do this (action like hands on head)' and the group follow. The Group must not follow if Simon phrase is 'do that (action) or leaves out 'please' 'if someone copies Simon on the wrong phrase they are out. The children who are out can help Simon spot the next out children. The last child standing wins.

Musical statues

Music is played and when it stops the children have to stand still. If a child moves they are out.



Craft: • The children can make a traffic light. Cut out red, green and yellow circles and glue them on a black rectangle.

The following rhyme can be added:

Stop and listen to God's rules.

Be slow to anger and never cruel.

Go with God and God will go with you.

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The children can be encouraged to learn this rhyme.

Or

- The class can produce the memory verse "Love the Lord your God with all your heart....." Luke 10:27. Children can write the words on a heart and decorate it to remind them that they are to love the Lord and their neighbours.



Older children (7 – 13 years):

Lesson objective:



Attention Grabber:

Same as for the younger group



Bible Story and Discussion:

Ask your group:

Who knows what the ten commandments are?

Does anyone know what they are?

Some thoughts regarding the 10 commandments that can guide your discussion or that the children might ask.

Does having no other gods mean that our God recognises other gods? What could be other gods in your life? For example, can sports become worshipped like an idol? What about celebrities?

Does OMG count as using God's name in vain?

Is the Sabbath always the day we go to church?

Why must I respect my parents if they lie to me? What does it mean to respect our parents?

What's the difference between killing and murder? What if you are at war?

Does it mean we are meant to be vegetarians?

What if I tell a lie that will protect someone from harm?

If I'm not truthful I keep myself out of trouble.

What is the difference between having aspirations and coveting?

"Digging deeper" into the Ten Commandments

1. **I am the Lord your God; you shall have no other gods than me.** The Israelites had just come from Egypt, a land of many idols and gods. God wanted the Israelites to know that He was the only true God. Our God is not a strange and distant God – God is our friend and counsellor. How do we get to know our God better? By praying, reading the bible, worshipping and praising God, and going to church – in this way we will come to love the Lord with our whole heart, and mind and strength.
2. **You shall not make an idol of anything and worship it.**
Today we can allow many things to become gods to us – money, fame, work, pleasure. No one sets out with the intention of worshipping these things. But by the amount of time we devote to them, they can grow into gods that ultimately control our thoughts and energies. Letting God hold the central place in our lives keeps these things from turning into gods.
3. **You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.**
God's name is special because it carries His personal identity. Using it frivolously or in a curse is so common today that we may fail to realize how serious it is. Discuss with your group some of the curses that people use that misuse the name of God. We should respect His name and use it appropriately, speaking it in praise or worship rather than in curse or jest.
4. **Remember the Lord's Day and keep it holy.**

God commanded a Sabbath because we need to spend unhurried time in worship and rest each week. To have a regular time of rest and worship in our fast-paced world demonstrates how important God is to us.

5. **Honour your father and your mother.**

This means speaking well of your parents and acting in a way that shows courtesy and respect.

6. **You shall not murder.**

Do not hurt another person in any way, by what you say or by what you do.

7. **You shall not commit adultery.**

8. **You shall not steal.**

How often do you make a copy of a cd/DVD? Think of other instances which are regarded as acceptable behaviour but are in fact depriving others of deserved income.

9. **You shall not give false evidence (or lie).**

This includes leaving out part of a story, telling a half truth or twisting the facts. Furthermore, be a light to your neighbour, not a source of darkness. Let your words build up, support and comfort your neighbour. If you find nothing good to say about your neighbour, then remain silent.

10. **You shall not covet (or envy) the possessions of others (or envy).** Coveting or envying is to wish you have the possessions of others. As a result, you may then also resent the fact that others have what you don't. God knows that possessions never make anyone happy for long. Since God can supply all our needs, true happiness or contentment is found only in God. When you

begin to covet, try to determine if a more basic need is leading you to envy e.g. you may covet someone's success, not because you want to take it away from him, but because you would like to feel as appreciated by others as he is. If this is the case, pray that God will help you deal with your resentment and meet your basic needs.

You can also ask:

☒ Do you think these laws apply to today? If not, which ones would you change?

In Genesis 12 – God's promise to Abram. Select pieces of information from the "Information for the teacher" that you think are relevant to your age group to guide you in your lesson. **God spoke to Abraham and asked him to go to a new land.**

- God spoke to Abraham and told him "Leave your country, your people, and your father's household and go to the land I will show you."
- Wow! That was a big request, wasn't it? Leave your country...your people... and your home... That would be tough wouldn't it? Leaving everything that's familiar.
- AND... Abraham didn't even know where God was asking him to go. Remember... he'd never been there. All he knew was that God had asked him to go.
- What would you do? Would you go? Would you chance it?

God promised to bless Abraham

- God promised Abraham to make him into a great nation. This was quite a promise considering that Abraham and Sarah had no children at this stage. Eventually Sarah had Isaac when she was 90 years old.
- God also promised to bless him and to make his name great. God also promised that all peoples on the earth would be blessed through him.

Abraham believed God

- Abraham believed God (What does that mean, to believe someone?) It means that you know that person is trustworthy and will do what they say and be there for you. You know you can have FAITH in that person.
- Abraham believed God. Abraham had faith in God.

Abraham Obeyed God

- So, since Abraham believed God, Abraham obeyed God
- This time obeying God meant going somewhere
- The Bible says that Abraham left his country and went to the land God showed him

God Kept His Promises

- God did make him into a great nation. A son Isaac was born to Abraham and Sarah. Isaac was the father of Jacob who was the father of the twelve tribes of Israel.
- Furthermore, as a result of Abraham's faith, all the peoples of the earth were blessed, because Jesus eventually came from his family!



Discussion:

The link between the 10 commandments and Abraham blessing is that Abraham lived the way the commandments encourage us to live i.e. He had a strong relationship with God and could trust God when God instructed him to do something and Abraham obeyed.

Years later the Israelites had forgotten how to live like this which is why God gave us the 10 commandments. God wants to be in relationship with each of us. These commandments are not meant to take away our freedom but to give us freedom within God.

(You can choose which of these questions you would like to use).

Have you ever felt called to do something that was going to be difficult?

Did you feel that God was helping you and there with you? In what ways did you feel God was with you?

Do you know people who keep their promises?

Do you know people who break their promises? How does this make you feel?

What promises do you think God makes to us? (Listen when we pray; love us; to be there when bad things happen; to make us famous? To help us be the best we can, to give us lots of nice things etc. Some of these God does promise, but not all of them.

Let's pray and thank God for the faith of Abraham, and that we can trust that God will always be there for us!



Prayer. Dear Jesus. Thank you that you are interested in me. Please would you guide me every day and help me through difficult times. Please meet me here in my prayer. Please help me to find you in all that I do, please help me be the person you designed me to be. We love you lots
Amen.



Physical activity:

For children aged 7-9 you could sing father Abraham.

The children will sing and have fun moving around!

Father Abraham had many sons... Mother Sarah had many kids

Many sons had Father Abraham! Many kids had mother Sarah

And I am one of them, and so are you... So, let's just praise the LORD!

Right arm!

(With each of following, repeat chorus and add one movement as described below.) Right Arm,

Left Arm!

Right Arm, Left Arm, Right Foot!

Right Arm, Left Arm, Right Foot, Left Foot!

Right Arm, Left Arm, Right Foot, Left Foot, Chin Up!

Right Arm, Left Arm, Right Foot, Left Foot, Chin Up, Turn Around!

Right Arm, Left Arm, Right Foot, Left Foot, Chin Up, Turn Around, Sit Down!!!

Encourage your group to give ideas for movements, that way it's more fun!

Children age 10-13

Scavenger hunt.

At the end of this lesson there are printable options you can use, or you can create your own.

Spilt your group into teams. Give them a time frame. The group who completes the most wins.

You can decide on whether your team collects items, or if they have cell phones with a camera to take group shots. You could alternatively get some of the leaders or youth members to help you out.

Rules: all the team members must participate, they must stay in the property and finish within a certain time frame, each team must have 1 scavenger hunt list.

You can make up other rules with your group that will suit your choice of scavenger hunt.



Craft

A Blessing Box.

God has and is blessing us all the time. Sometimes we don't notice or forget what God has done for us.

What you will need.

A container per child eg. A small box, jar, bowl, zip lock bag.

Paper

Colour pens/pencils

Things to decorate (glitter glue, ribbon, stickers, wrapping paper etc.)

How to:

Give each child a container.

Ask them to decorate it to their liking

tell them to write a verse clearly on their box. Use verse to remind them of their blessing.

"Praise the Lord I tell myself and never forget the good things he does for me" Psalm 103:2

"May God bless us still" Psalm 67:7

"The LORD bless you and keep you; 25 the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; Numbers 6:24-25

"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." James 1:17

"And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work." 2 Corinthians 9:8

Have them write out all the blessings they can think of and place them in their container. It can be financial, physical, spiritual, as well as personal achievements, funny stories, growth, talents, goals reached. Big and little. Anything really, that they can say thank you for.

You can add blessing at any time.

At the end of the year encourage the children to take it all out and praise God for all that God has done for us throughout the year.

Reference: <http://www.simplysara.ca/2010/05/blessing-box.html>

PICTURE SCAVENGER HUNT

- something red
- something to eat
- something clean
- something sharp
- something hard
- something tiny
- something blue
- something that moves
- something noisy
- something wet
- something pink
- something soft
- something heavy
- something special
- something with hair
- something white
- something black
- something short
- smaller than a mouse
- something green
- something smooth
- something with wheels
- something alive
- something orange
- something tall
- something light
- something fluffy
- something purple
- something colorful
- something dirty
- something shiny
- something yellow
- something stinky
- something glittery
- something tasty
- something you love

Name: _____

Human Scavenger Hunt!

Get to Know Your New Buddies

Has been out of the country: _____	Has a pet that isn't a dog or a cat: _____	LOVES SCIENCE: _____	Favorite subject is math: _____
Had a birthday within the last week: _____	Has visited Washington, D.C. _____	Has a brother or a sister that goes to this school: _____	loves to cook: _____
PLAYS A SPORT: _____	Favorite color is yellow. _____	Was born in another state: _____	Read more than 1 book this summer: _____
LOVES TO DRAW OR PAINT: _____	Has met someone famous _____	Has won a contest of some kind: _____	plays an instrument: _____
HAS DONE SOMETHING ADVENTEROUS: _____	is an only child _____	Loves Broccoli _____	Has been to the Statue of Liberty: _____

Living water

Third Sunday in Lent 15 March 2020

Readings: John 4: 5-42

Theme: *God uses all people.*

Memory verses: Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.' John 4; 13-14



Information for the teacher:

As we are on this Lenten journey, it is important to teach that it is a journey. Sometimes we look at the journey and we just look at the destination and not the actual journey itself.

In the reading today we learn about the Samaritan woman at the well. What is interesting is that the well is placed at what would become a fork in the road leading in different directions to various parts of Israel. This meant that many different cultures would come together to use the well.

There are a number of interesting and important aspects to this story.

Firstly, the fact that the woman was a Samaritan and Jesus was a Jew and therefore they should not have been talking.

Secondly, Jesus should also not have spoken to a woman as he was a man.

And thirdly, this is the first example of a missionary task of evangelism. The woman who was not a Jew spreads the gospel to people that were not the main focus of the journey that Jesus was taking.

For today's lesson we will teach the children that ministry can happen anywhere and often to people who we may not think need us to show them God's love through ourselves.

New Jerome commentary

Lesson suggestions:



Younger Children (3 – 6 years)

Lesson objectives:

To learn that God can use all of us in ways we may not think God will.



Bible Story:

John 4: 5-42



Discussion:

Have you ever had to do something you really, really didn't want to do, and it ended up being the best thing ever? (let the children tell their stories).

Have you ever been told not to be friends with someone or you thought they weren't nice but then you find out that they are really cool?

In the story today we heard Jesus speaking to a woman who he wasn't supposed to be friends with and he teaches her about his ministry and about God. The woman then goes to tell everyone about Jesus.

Do you think the woman was important in the story? Why? **Yes as she told lots of people about Jesus**

Do you think she was important to the people around her? **She was probably just a normal person**

Do you think that God uses all types of people to show God's love? **Yes God does**

Do you think God could use you? In what ways?



Activity:

Water relay.

You will need 4 containers (buckets) and two 500ml coke bottles with holes cut in them.

Split the group into two teams.

On one side you will have a bucket filled with water for each team. On the other side you will leave an empty bucket.

Each team must fill the coke bottle with water and run as fast as they can to fill the other bucket on the other side (as the coke bottles have holes in them the water will spill out).

The first team to fill their bucket wins.

(If you can't get a coke bottle, even a cloth will work)

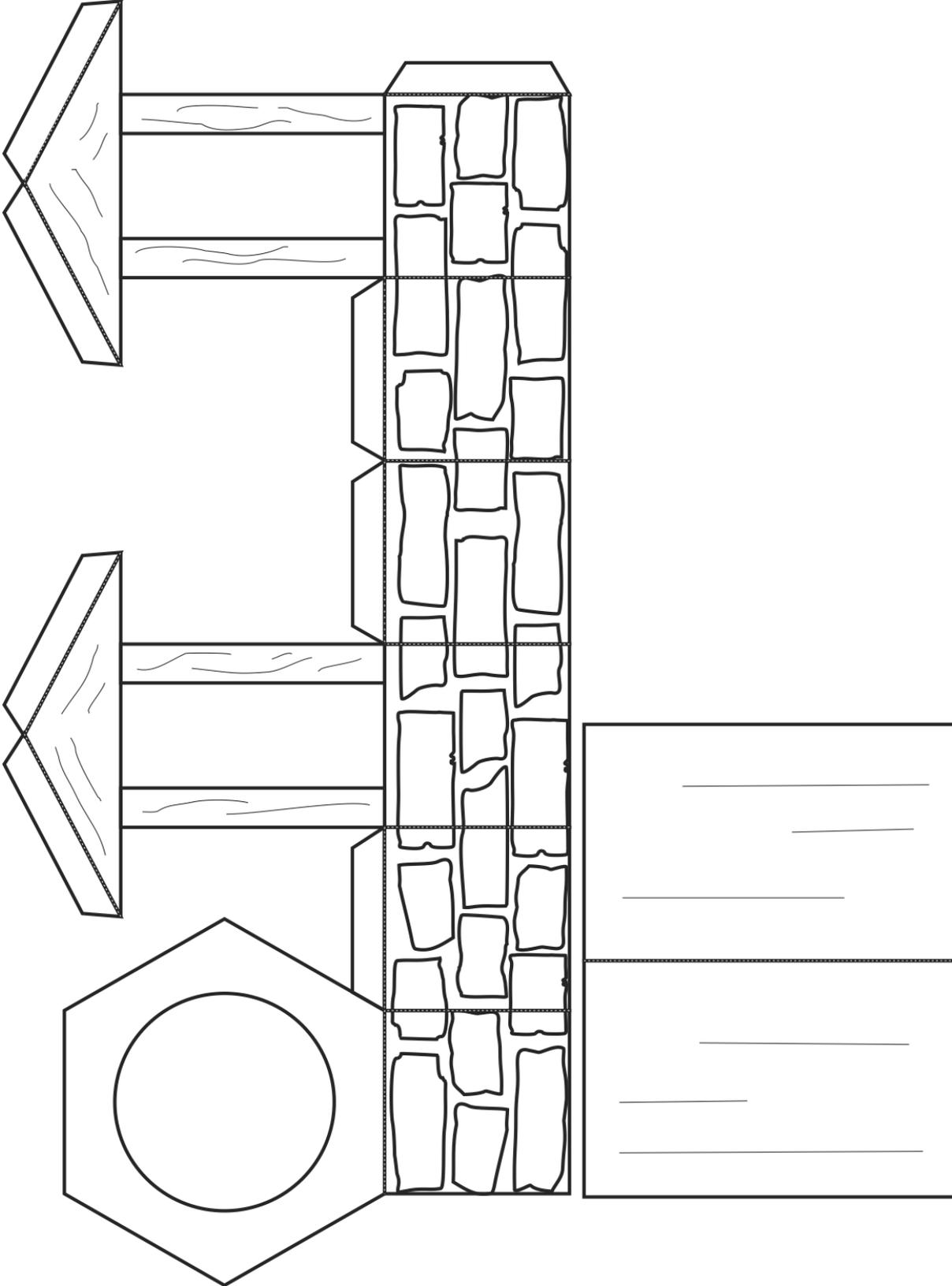
Like with ministry sometimes we think Gods love will go one way but often on the journey Gods love spills out on the way (like the water does on the ground as we run).



Craft:

Make a 3D well.

You will need to have printed and cut out these wells before the lesson. Have the children colour them in and with either glue or tape put them together. Or you could use toilet rolls and string and cardboard and have the children construct their own wells.





Prayer:

Dear God, help us to know when we should show people kindness and love. Help us to be lights in the world around us.

Amen



Older children:

Lesson objectives:

To know that God uses all people to shine God's light in the world.



Bible Story: John 4:5-42



Discussion:

Have you ever dreaded going somewhere or doing something only to find when you got there it was the best thing ever?

Have you ever been in a situation where you are the only one who can help with that problem and you never thought it would come in handy?

In the story we see a woman who is just doing a normal everyday activity of collecting water. She probably did it every day. But on this day, she meets Jesus who then gives her wisdom that changes everything. She then takes that information and goes to spread the light of Christ to all the people around her.

Questions:

Who do you think the woman is?

Do you think she was an important member of her community?

Do you think she was important to the story?

Do you think you would have left the well and gone to tell people about Jesus?

Do you think God could use you like God used the woman? In what ways?



Craft:

If your group likes to do crafts please use the craft provided to make a 3 D well.



Physical activity:

Water relay.

You will need 4 container (buckets) and two 500ml coke bottles with holes cut in them.

You will need to split the group into two teams.

On one side you will have a bucket filled with water for each team. On the other side you will leave an empty bucket.

Each team must fill the coke bottle with water and run as fast as they can to fill the other bucket on the other side (as the coke bottles have holes in them the water will spill out).

The first team to fill their bucket wins.

Like with ministry sometimes we think Gods love will go one way but often on the journey Gods love spills out on the way (like the water does on the ground as we run).



Worksheet: Living water word search



Prayer:

Almighty God, help us to become a light to the world around us. Help us to know when we need to do the right thing and be with us as we continue our journey through lent. We pray this in your name.

Amen

Living water

S L L E W Y X T G Y J P W M M
H A F S X T I B Y F F W A C J
G I M D E R D Y O E U J T R R
Z Y L A I V S J E S U S E U A
F A V P R K P O Q F X M R U H
F P S K G I L I K W M G P J C
Y C S P U J T V H W S M I X Y
A E O T O D Y A F S O C C K S
D O O H R W J F N E R M T A A
J E J I G E Q S T K Y O A L Z
V P N R I C F E F E P A W N G
E K C S Z M R L B Q E N H X Y
U F F T K N R Z S R R T L X G
U K I Y A Z I U Y Z P G W Q T
S D Y L T E H P O R P H S H P

DRINK

ETERNAL

JESUS

LIFE

PROPHET

SAMARITAN

SPIRIT

SYCHAR

THIRSTY

WATER

WELL

WOMAN

The healing of the blind man

Fourth Sunday in Lent 22 March 2020

Readings: John 9:1-41

Theme: Our Ministry in the World

Memory verse: "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," Jesus answered. "This came about so that God's works might be displayed in him" (John 9:3)



Information for the teacher:

The story is colourful and yet it carries a powerful message about sin suffering. The story opens with the disciples asking who sinned that this man should be born blind. Was it him or his parents? This signals the strong belief in God's retributive justice. (an eye for an eye). Sickness, physical disability and social marginalization were seen as punishment from God for sins committed. However, Jesus denies that sin is the reason for such conditions but rather that this situation would reveal the glory of God. This shifts the understanding of suffering and sin: God does not cause suffering but more importantly, God's work is to relieve all suffering. Suffering may exist as a result of evil doing in general, but those who suffer are not always the evil doers. Thus, Jesus reveals God's solidarity with suffering all suffering bodies.

As the story progresses, we begin to realize that the man born blind is given sight and the blindness of the Pharisees is revealed. The Pharisees refuse to believe that Jesus could be someone sent by God. Since Jesus heals the man on the sabbath and speaks with authority they cannot believe him because he does things against their laws and dogma. Even when the man born blind tells them that Jesus has done something only one sent from God can do: He has given sight to the blind (verse 30-33). To this, they cannot respond and choose to remove him from the synagogue. Therefore, the man born blind sheds light on the blindness of the Pharisees.

In today's lesson, we will be exploring how we respond to physical blindness and all forms of disabilities in our society. All people are made in the image and likeness of God and ought to be loved, cared for and respected. We will also briefly unpack the meaning of spiritual blindness (like the Pharisees who refuse to believe Jesus is the Son of God even though he has done such great things).

Lesson Suggestions:



Younger Children (3 – 6 years):

Lesson Objective:

- Learn about the story of Jesus healing the blind man
- Learn what it means for us today
- Enable us to care for all people with disabilities and also to believe in Jesus



Attention Grabber:

As a way of centring ourselves, ask the children to close their eyes and relax their bodies. Ask them to listen to the noises outside the classroom, then ask them to listen to noises inside the classroom and finally ask them to become aware of themselves, others around them and God who is there and within them. Then, ask them to slowly breathe in and breathe out (do it three times, each time they should hold their breathe in for a little longer and then exhale). The point of this is to just help them relax and become aware of themselves, others and God's presence.

Ask the children if they ever been sick before. Ask them to explain these moments sickness (one might need to deal with such topics with great sensitivity).

Explain to them that during Jesus' time, many people believed that if someone was sick it was because they had done something really wrong in secret. In our story today, 'Jesus meets a man who was born blind (he could never see) who people had always assumed was a terrible sinner because he suffered so much.' Tell them to listen carefully to the following story as there is much to learn and you will ask them some questions afterwards:



Bible Story and Discussion:

The story

Because the story is very interesting and easy to follow, it might be good to read the entire story to the children (try read as clearly and creatively as possible to attract the children).

After reading the story, you can ask the class the following questions:

1. *This story tells us that Jesus saw a man born blind. What did his disciples ask him about the man? (Who sinned that this man should be born blind)*
 2. *What was Jesus' answer to this question? (No one sinned, this happened so the Glory of God will be seen in him)*
 3. *How did Jesus heal the blind man? (made mud with his saliva to put on his eyes)*
 4. *Where did Jesus tell the man to go after he put mud on his eyes? (He told him to go wash in the Pool of Siloam)*
 5. *What did the Pharisees say Jesus did wrong? (healed on the Sabbath)*
 6. *What did Jesus ask the man near the end? (do you believe in the Son of Man)*
- (Feel free to add your own questions or ask the questions which are most appropriate for your group)*

Moral of the story

You can ask the children what lessons they learn from this story (tell them there are no wrong answers)

You could say, "In those days, if someone was sick, disabled or poor, they believed that God was punishing them. Does Jesus believe the same thing? NO. Jesus teaches us that we are all loved by God and that God wants the best for us in all situations."

What about people with disabilities? You can ask the children, besides blindness, what other disabilities do people have? (some can't walk, some can't hear, talk, etc.). Tell the children that it is important to remember we are all made in the image of God. We must never make fun or tease people who may seem different from us. If people have disabilities, we must respect, help and love them as God's family.

Finally, this story is also about having fun in Jesus who can do all things in our lives. We too must have faith.



Prayer:

Dear Jesus. Thank you for this day. Thank you that we could come to Sunday school and be with our friends to learn about you healing the man born blind. Please help us follow and continue to love in our world today. Lord, heal your people and heal our land that we may all SEE your Glory. We love you lots and lots. Amen!



Craft: Creating Blindfolds

For the following activities, we will need to make blindfolds.

There are many ways of making blindfolds. Regardless of what you use, the objective is to ensure one is unable to see.

Things you need;

- Material can be almost any kind or colour of cloth as long as it is not see through (even paper can be used).
- Scissors (no running).

First, layout the material and fold over all the edges

Fold the blindfold in half diagonally, it should look something like this;



Fold the corner facing you towards the top like so;



Continue folding until you reach the top, you should wind up with something like this;



Done! You've made Blindfold.

This method is taken from <https://www.maskcraft.com/how-to-make-a-blindfold/>



Physical activity:

Blind Drawing

Have the students turn their paper from the earlier activity over (or give them a new one)

- You are going to tell them what to draw, but they have to do it with their eyes closed (this could be done in partners with blindfolds if you want)
- draw a sun in the top right corner
- draw some grass at the bottom of the page
- draw a house in the center of the page
- put a chimney on the roof of the house
- draw 5 flowers in the grass
- draw 3 clouds in the sky
- draw 4 birds in the sky
- These are just examples of what to say for their picture, you can say anything you'd like for them to draw (like they could draw or colour in Jesus and the blind man).

This game is taken from here: <https://ministry-to-children.com/lesson-jesus-heals-a-man-born-blind-john-91-41/>

Or

Blind race

How to play: Create 2 teams. Each team must select one person each round (each round must be a different person). The person selected must put on their blindfold. Once each team's selected person has their blindfold on, you must then place a object somewhere in the room. When the game begins, the respective teams must direct the person wearing the blindfold to get to the object. Whoever gets the blindfold first, wins. No peeping allowed. Both teams must stand behind a line and cannot physically walk with the blindfolded person. They can only stand behind the line and instruct the person where to go (like "turn left, bend down, stop, walk faster" etc.). Depending on how many people you have, this game could be played until one team has 5 points.

Or

Here is a crossword puzzle the children can fill in.

S	R	E	N	N	I	S	L	E	T
S	E	D	E	V	O	U	T	H	S
P	E	I	R	T	R	O	H	R	T
I	S	L	A	S	A	R	G	E	N
T	E	H	P	O	R	P	I	S	E
T	A	S	P	I	A	A	S	T	R
L	H	G	I	S	C	O	P	O	A
E	O	U	T	I	P	S	I	R	P
E	V	E	I	L	E	B	I	E	S
E	D	N	I	L	B	L	N	D	I

BLIND
SPITTLE
PROPHET
SINNERS

SPAT
SIGHT
PARENTS
DEVOUT

PASTE
RESTORED
DISCIPLES
BELIEVE



Name: _____

JESUS HEALS THE BLIND MAN

W A S H E D U T J I D T S D E K L
R A C Y B B N H H S B E I E V M H
I K B H R O K G H Q X S L X V W D
D Y I F P D R E L O C J Y A L F A
E T R X T S E N Y I V S B I E U S
T O T S J F V N P W U Q G C V H W
E C H P A C D L N S L H I S R A K
M M O C K L E E E I T P T L E T W
O M P R M S I J T F S O R C C H U
H F A P C L A V P N G Q L T E G Q
F D R N S D U M A N I N N A I I T
Y L E H Z G G M T L C O G C V N H
I R N P U Q B P Z G Z X N H E P G
H O T Y E G L G A N B Q I A D P I
I W S Y G N I D E N E P O Q B Q S
Z P E T F V N L L Q P S P I T P N
T S Q L A J D C Y K P O O L S O Y

ANOINTED	BIRTH	BLIND	BORN
DISCIPLES	EYES	HEALED	HOME
JESUS	LIGHT	MUD	NIGHT
OPENED	PARENTS	POOL	RECEIVED
SALIVA	SIGHT	SINNED	SPIT
WASHED	WORLD		

Or

Here is a sheet that the children colour in (you are welcome to find images that are more appropriate for our context).





Older children (7 – 13 years):

Lesson objective:

Lesson Objective:

- Learn about the story of Jesus healing the blind man
- Learn what it means for us today
- Enable us to care for all people with disabilities and also to believe in Jesus



Attention Grabber:

As a way of centring ourselves, ask the children to close their eyes and relax their bodies. Ask them to listen to the noises outside the classroom, then ask them to listen to noises inside the classroom and finally ask them to become aware of themselves, others around them and God who is there and within them. Then, ask them to slowly breathe in and breathe out (do it three times, each time they should hold their breath in for a little longer and then exhale). The point of this is to just help them relax and become aware of themselves, others and God's presence.

Ask the children if they ever been sick before. Ask them to explain these moments sickness (one might need to deal with such topics with great sensitivity).

Explain to them that during Jesus' time, many people believed that if someone was sick it was because they had done something really wrong in secret. In our story today, 'Jesus meets a man who was born blind (he could never see) who people had always assumed was a terrible sinner because he suffered so much.' Tell them to listen carefully to the following story as there is much to learn and you will ask them some questions afterwards:



Bible Story and Discussion:

Overview of the story:

You can ask about 3 children to read the story (each can read different parts).

After reading the story, you can ask the class the following questions:

1. This story tells us that Jesus saw a man born blind. What did his disciples ask him about the man? (Who sinned that this man should be born blind)
2. What was Jesus' answer to this question? (No one sinned, this happened so the Glory of God will be seen in him)
3. How did Jesus heal the blind man? (made mud with his saliva to put on his eyes)
4. Where did Jesus tell the man to go after he put mud on his eyes? (He told him to go wash in the Pool of Siloam)
5. What did the Pharisees say Jesus did wrong? (healed on the Sabbath)

6. What did Jesus ask the man near the end? (do you believe in the Son of Man)
(Feel free to add your own questions or ask the questions which are most appropriate for your group)

Moral of the story

You can ask the children what lessons they learn from this story (tell them there are no wrong answers)

You could say, "In those days, if someone was sick, disabled or poor, they believed that God was punishing them. Does Jesus believe the same thing? NO. Jesus teaches us that we are all loved by God and that God wants the best for us in all situations."

What about people with disabilities? You can ask the children, besides blindness, what other disabilities do people have? (some can't walk, some can't hear, talk, etc.). Tell the children that it is important to remember we are all made in the image of God. We must never make fun or tease people who may seem different from us. If people have disabilities, we must respect, help and love them as God's family.

Finally, this story is also about having fun in Jesus who can do all things in our lives. We too must have faith. The story is not just about physical blindness but also about spiritual blindness. We become spiritually blind when we refuse to accept the truth of Jesus' Christ message of love. We are spirituality blind when we refuse to love others, stand up for what we believe (justice). Even when we are rude and disrespectful to our parents and friend. Physical blindness is can happen, but what we must all open our spiritual eyes to see Jesus and to see where to put God's love in this world today.



Prayer: Dear Jesus. Thank you for this day. Thank you that we could come to Sunday school and be with our friends to learn about you healing the man born blind. Please help us follow and continue to love in our world today. Lord, heal your people and heal our land that we may all SEE your Glory. We love you lots and lots. Amen!



Craft

For the following activities, we will need to make blindfolds. (See younger group)



Physical activity:

Blind race

How to play: Create 2 teams. Each team must select one person each round (each round must be a different person). The person selected must put on their blindfold. Once each team's selected person has their blindfold on, you must then place a object somewhere in the

room. When the game begins, the respective teams must direct the person wearing the blindfold to get to the object. Whoever gets the blindfold first, wins. No peeping allowed. Both teams must stand behind a line and cannot physically walk with the blindfolded person. They can only stand behind the line and instruct the person where to go (like “turn left, bend down, stop, walk faster” etc.). Depending on how many people you have, this game could be played until one team has 5 points.

Or

Activity – Seeing and Remembering

Materials: tray, various items (big and small items like paper, pencils, sticks, paper etc.)

How to play: Fill a tray with various items.

Give each student a piece of paper and pencil.

Show the tray to all of your students for a given amount of time (1-2 minutes).

Remove the tray (or cover it) so that the children can't see the items any longer.

Give the students 2 minutes to write down all of the items that they remember seeing.

See who remembered the most items.

You can change the items as well as the number of items in the tray each round

Or

Blind Drawing

Have the students turn their paper from the earlier activity over (or give them a new one)

– You are going to tell them what to draw, but they have to do it with their eyes closed (this could be done in partners with blindfolds if you want)

– draw a sun in the top right corner

– draw some grass at the bottom of the page

– draw a house in the center of the page

– put a chimney on the roof of the house

– draw 5 flowers in the grass

– draw 3 clouds in the sky

– draw 4 birds in the sky

– These are just examples of what to say for their picture, you can say anything you'd like for them to draw (like they could draw or colour in Jesus and the blind man).

This game is taken from here: <https://ministry-to-children.com/lesson-jesus-heals-a-man-born-blind-john-91-41/>

Or

Blind Person Bluff

Activity

Choose one child to wear the blindfold.

The child then has to wander the room until they find another child.

Once they touch them, they are to guess who they think they have found.

If they are correct, the child they found gets to be blindfolded next.

If they are incorrect, they get to be blindfolded one more time.

If they are wrong a second time, they get to choose who is to be blindfolded next.

A true friend

5th Sunday in Lent 29th March 2020

Readings: John 11:1-44 The death of Lazarus

Theme: Jesus is a true friend

Memory verse:



Information for the teacher:

John 11 is broken into 4 parts. This lesson will focus on the first 3.

The first part is when Jesus was notified about his dear friend Lazarus illness. Lazarus' sisters had written to Jesus in hopes that Jesus would come and heal their brother. However, Jesus stayed where he was for 2 more days, knowing that by the time he arrived Lazarus would have died. He did this for a reason. He had to show the people of Bethany that he truly was the Son of God and by waiting 2 more days there would be no doubt that Lazarus was truly dead.

Lazarus and his sisters lived in Bethany, which is very close to Jerusalem where Jesus knew that his life was already in danger. Despite the great risk of being killed he still went to his friends. Jesus' love for Lazarus and his sisters teaches us that our faith in God's love, even during difficulty, is well grounded. Even those especially dear to God must endure such things. "The one sick, the others sad, all of them beloved: but He who loved them was both the Saviour of the sick, nay more, the Raiser of the dead and the Comforter of the sad" (Augustine *In John* 49.7).

In all that Jesus does we see the glory of God (1:14), for we see God's love and life-giving power. Now, in the raising of Lazarus, God is the one who brings life to the dead out of love. This is the heart of the Gospel. God's glory is therefore seen in God's victory over death.

The close relationship between Jesus and God the Father is clearly shown. This is one of the few times Jesus refers to himself openly as God's Son. The Son of God will be glorified through this illness and thereby the glory of God will be manifested. **Jesus does all of this out of love and to glorify God.**

An interesting note. We usually think of Thomas as "doubting Thomas" from his reactions after the resurrection of the Lord (20:24-28). But in this story, we see another side of Thomas--his loyalty. This is the response of a true disciple. So, Thomas is willing to go with Jesus to death (v. 16). Maybe he is in more danger than the other disciples because Thomas was known as the twin, the church tradition says that Thomas was called "The Twin" because he looked like Jesus, putting him at special risk. If any among the disciples of Jesus were potential targets of persecution, it would be the one who *looked* like Jesus.

Lesson Suggestions:



Younger Children (3 – 6 years):

Lesson Objective:

- Jesus is the greatest friend to have.
- Jesus risked his life for his friends.
- Jesus knows what it feels like to mourn and be sad.
- Jesus comforts us when we are sad.



Attention Grabber: Friendship soup.

What children think should go into making a great friendship.

If you have access to show a video follow this link to friendship soup

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7w7yXkJTu0&list=PLaSegn4AdJAzQX1rIm00kwLk8Z_fiZYU

Or if you would like to demonstrate friendship soup

What you will need:

- A pot
- A spoon
- Multiple objects that are colourful. I.e. shredded paper, beads, sequins, ribbon, smarties or jelly tots etc.

What you do:

- Tell your class that you all will be making friendship soup.
- Ask them what they think this is.
- Explain that it is soup that they going to make that makes a good friendship.
- Ask your group what they think should go in, i.e. kindness, silliness, trust, etc.
- Each time they tell you something add a colourful object to the pot and mix.
- Once all the objects are added write up a list that was put into the pot and you can hang it up in your class.



Bible Story and Discussion:

John 11:1-44

You can choose to read the whole story or paraphrase it as it long.



Discuss:

- Do you think Jesus is a good friend?
- Do you know that Jesus was in great danger going to the area Bethany where his friends were?
- Was he being brave? What other qualities was Jesus showing?

Do you think you have similar qualities?

Are you a good friend?

Do you think Jesus was sad that his friend died? (yes, because he wept)

Sometimes bad or hard things happen to us but it's not because we are bad. Jesus knows how it feels when things like this happen. And is with you through hard times. How does that make you feel?



Prayer: Dear Lord. Thank you that we can make friends every day. Thank you for all our friends. Please bless each of them. Please help me to be a good friend to others and to you. Will you please be my best friend??? Thank you sooooo much! Amen!



Physical activity: toilet paper mummy!
(if you ,the teacher, are brave, you can be the model)

What you need:

A willing model

Lots of toilet paper.

What you do:

Split you group into groups of 2-4

Each group needs to have 1 person as the model.

Each group is given toilet paper rolls.

They have a time limit and they need to dress their model as a mummy or Lazarus coming out the grave

Once the time is up, have the mummy's show off their creations!



Or

Lazarus Come Out, Lazarus Go In

Place a line of tape down the middle of your playing area. Designate one side "inside the tomb" and the other side "outside the tomb".

Have the children stand anywhere they would like?

Tell them that when you say, "Lazarus Come Out", they should all jump to the "outside of the tomb" side of the room.

When you say, "Lazarus Go In", they should all jump to the "inside" side of the room.

You will try to trick them to jump on the wrong side depending on what you say. If a child jumps to the wrong side, the child is out.

Keep playing until only one child is left.

To make it more difficult When you say "Lazarus go in or go out" always jump to the opposite side. The children may automatically follow you to that side even though you said something different.

Variation:

asked the children to make a cave from blankets and chairs and then play the "Lazarus come out, Lazarus go in game".



Craft: Craft Stick Mummy

Heads up! *It might be faster to use hot glue to make the popsicle base ahead of time.*

What you need: craft sticks or any kind of stick,
googly eyes,
strips of white cloth or toilet paper rolls
glue or sticky tape

(For a simpler version, wrap a toilet paper roll with strips of white cloth and add googly eyes.)

What to do: each child is given a stick.
Ask them to scrunch up a small piece of cloth or toilet paper to make a head.
Attach the head to the top of the stick
Once dry wrap up the whole stick in cloth or toilet paper.
To finish it off stick two googly eyes onto the head or you can draw them on.



Older children (7 – 13 years):

Lesson objective: Jesus is the greatest friend to have.
Jesus risked his life for his friends.
Jesus knows what it feels like to mourn and be sad.
Jesus comforts us when we are sad.



Attention Grabber:

The same as for the younger group



Bible Story and Discussion: read John 11:1-44

You can split up the story for a few children to read.



Discussion:

- Who were Jesus' close friends that we learn about in this story? (Martha, Mary, and Lazarus)
- Where did they live? (Bethany, about 2 miles outside of Jerusalem)
- What happened to Lazarus? (he became sick and died)
- What did Jesus do when he found out Lazarus was sick? (he stayed where he was for 2 more days)

- Why didn't his disciples want Jesus to go back to Judea? (Jews there were threatening to kill him)
- Why do you think Jesus went back to a dangerous place?
- Do you think Jesus is a good friend?
- What makes him a good friend?
- Do you have similar qualities?
- What did Martha and Mary tell Jesus when they saw him after Lazarus had died? (that if he was just there, their brother wouldn't have died)
- What did Jesus do when he came to the tomb? (he cried, because of how sad Mary and Martha were)
- Why didn't Martha want them to take the stone away from in front of Lazarus' tomb? (because he had been in the tomb for 4 days, and he would certainly smell by then!)
- What happened after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead? (everyone who saw it told everyone they met about it, and a great crowd began to follow him)

Harder questions:

Teachers please research questions before you ask them or have google on hand!

What makes this resurrection different from the ones we see today?

Do you think Lazarus was already in heaven before Jesus calls him back?

What do you understand about Gods calling on your life?

Why do bad things happen to good people?

What do you think happens after we die?



Prayer. Dear Lord, all mighty. Thank you that you love us so very much. Thank you that you gave up your life for all of us. We are sorry for any wrongdoing we have done this week. Please can we be a friend like you and have you as our best friend? Thank you, lord Jesus. Amen



Physical activity:
Jesus weeps balloon game

Heads up! *This activity is best done outside or over a container that can catch the water, in case of a balloon break.*

What you need:

- Balloons
- Water
- Straight pins
- Cups

What to do:

- Fill balloons with equal amounts of water.
- Draw a face on the balloon with a permanent marker.
- As game begins, use a straight pin to poke a small hole under one of the eyes in the balloon.
- Poking two holes may cause the balloon break.
- Try and catch Jesus' tears in the cup.
- The student that gets the most water in their cup, wins.

or

Honey if you love me

What you need:

Nothing

What you do:

Have your group in a circle. (its easier if they are sitting on chairs)

Have 1 person on, in the middle of the circle.

The person who is on must try and make somebody smile. They **have to say 'Honey if you love me wont you please, please smile'**

They can act silly to encourage a smile.

The person who the "on person" goes up to needs to try resist smiling. They then must respond **without smiling 'honey I love you, but I just can smile'**

Go until someone smiles or giggles, then that person is one and they repeat the above.



You can do the same as for the younger children

Name: _____

Date: _____

Jesus Raises Lazarus

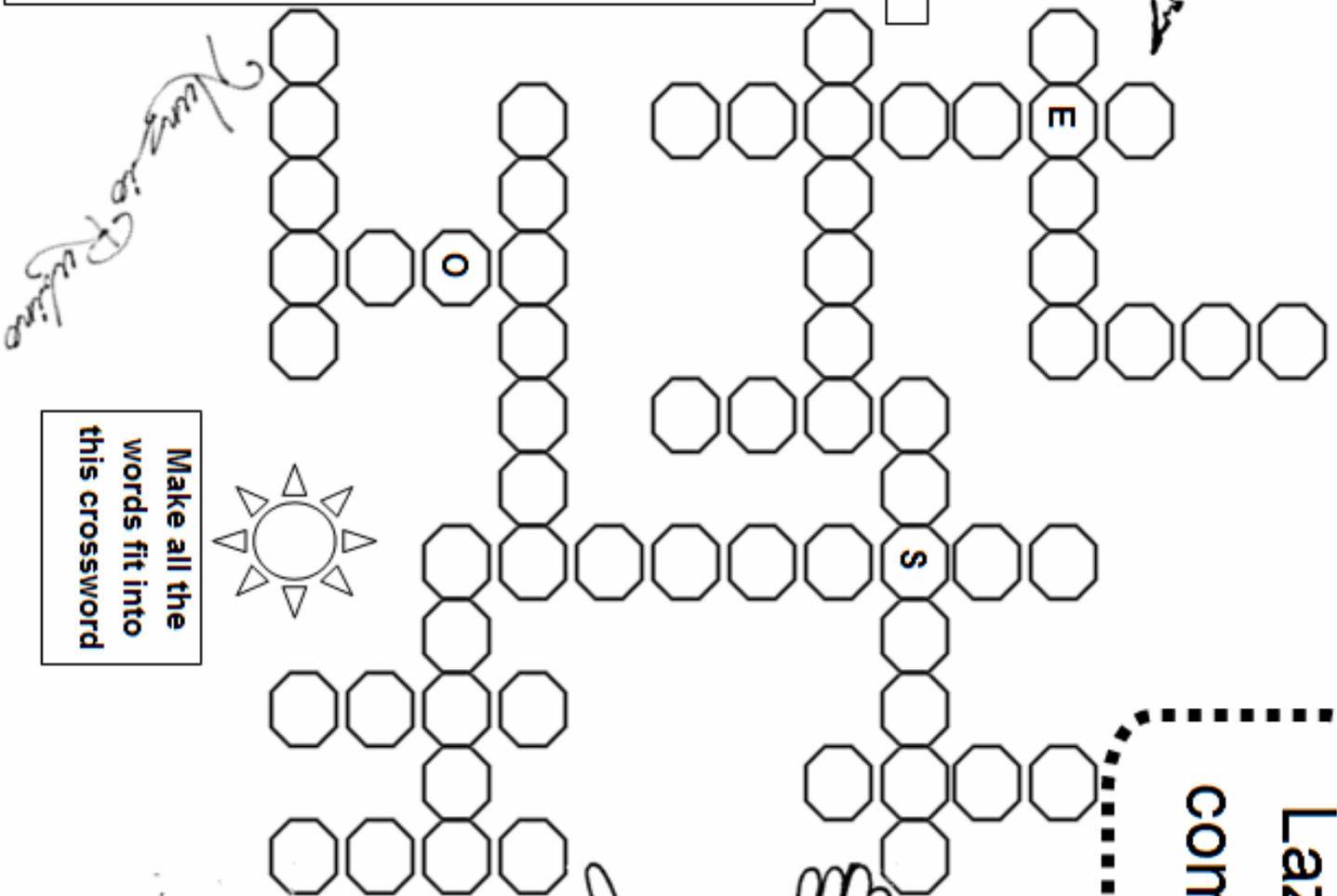
Y Y H X Z E A V G S D F R Z L C A
B B Z B R P L U B M S U R A Z A L
R C A T H A V R F E K D R X E R G
G Z P E S E Y V W L F Q U E Z R X
J E G N I P E E W L B U R I E D U
W Y U T I B O B L J M A R T H A T
Y L I D M F D D S I S T E R S Y E
Z O P S L Z H K C R Q P T L P Z A
I H S K B E G B J H A M E J K A C
B Y V C O Y S N E U Y I E N Q M H
M R Z I T N T M Y Q Y B S F V A E
O A A S N A K D D B T A Y E J V R
T M S E D L Y K X W I C I E A H L
K Q J N G Y A B S D T E S T T X V
Y N A H T E B Q I E N U F K W O Y
I A J P V J I D B Z S R U I E C P
E O A F P B R O T H E R E T L L B

- | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| WEPT | WEEPING | TEACHER | SMELL |
| SICK | LIFE | LAZARUS | SISTERS |
| BROTHER | BURIED | RAISE | BETHANY |
| TOMB | MARTHA | MARY | JESUS |



Word bank

- Bethany
- Mary
- Martha
- Lord
- Jesus
- Disciples
- Tomb
- Dead
- Messiah
- Village
- Bands
- Jews
- Wept
- Stone



Lazarus,
come out!



Make all the
words fit into
this crossword

Nunzio Ruini



Palm Sunday

The Sunday of our Lord's Passion and Entry into Jerusalem.

5 April 2020

Readings: Matthew 27: 11-54 is the gospel reading for today but we will use various readings from the gospels as Matthew does not describe the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.

Theme: Remembering the last week of Jesus' life

Memory verses: The curtain hanging in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51)

AND/ OR the children choose a verse/phrase/idea from the story - one that has meaning for them. Allow them the opportunity to share this with the group.



Information for the teacher:

Lent is often portrayed as a journey, beginning with Ash Wednesday and ending with Holy Week. Palm Sunday marks the start of the last week of Jesus' life. In church, on Palm Sunday we have: **The Palm Procession** and the **Reading of The Passion (meaning suffering)**. The palm procession tells of Jesus' ride into Jerusalem, and the people's response to this symbolic ride. Prophecies about the Redeemer riding a donkey (See Zechariah 9:9) were well known and Jesus knew how the people of Jerusalem would interpret the sign he was giving them – he is the Messiah. They interpret the symbolic ride correctly and rejoice that their saviour has arrived.

However, they were expecting something different - a Messiah who would come as a military leader. And so, Jesus, who enters Jerusalem as a humble king and gentle Messiah, would face humiliation, death and resurrection. His would be a different victory- not a military one, but a spiritual one.

We welcome Jesus with palms and next year they will be burnt to make the ashes for Ash Wednesday service. Palm crosses are a symbol as they remind us that while we accept Jesus as saviour we often deny Jesus in the way we live and we fail to be true disciples of Christ.

Technically speaking, Lent ends after the Wednesday of Holy week. What follows are three days known as the **Triduum**. The Triduum (THREE) is the oldest part of the Easter celebration, and describes the three days from Maundy Thursday evening through to Easter morning.

MAUNDY THURSDAY –Remember the Last Supper, the night Jesus gave us the Eucharist. Also the Command to love one another by serving one another.

GOOD FRIDAY –Remember our Lords Passion

HOLY SATURDAY – Easter Vigil with lighting of the Easter fire and the Pascal Candle

EASTER MORNING----

In short, Palm Sunday celebrates the presence of God in Jesus. God's love for the world is given expression in the life of Jesus, and as he enters Jerusalem his presence brings a sense of hope for the poor, the captive, the blind, and the oppressed; both for that present moment, and for the future.



Lesson Suggestions:

All Age Presentation

Lesson Objectives:

- To learn about the significance of Palm Sunday, and Holy Week.
- To realize that faith must be experienced and lived out - bringing God's love to those around us, and so that we are influences for good in our church, communities, homes, schools and the world.



Setting the scene:

Materials needed:

- . A long strip of red material on which various objects and pictures will be placed. As you tell the story the various objects will be placed, in order, along the cloth.
- . Please do not read the entire scripture passage but summarise these as shown in the first and second sections.
- . Please check for the items that are required for each story section and have these, placed in order, in a basket or a container, so to easily get them as they are required.
- . It would be a great idea to have the children seated on the floor in a circle with the teacher as part of the circle.



Bible Story

Once the children have been seated, and are ready to hear a story, you may start with the following words...*The time is drawing near to the celebration of Easter- a very important celebration for Christians, for it is here that we rejoice in God's promise of new life. So, let us spend some time to reflect on what happened to Jesus during the last week of his life, and how he arrived at Easter day.*

We name the last week of Jesus' life "Holy Week" and the drama begins on Palm Sunday, that we celebrate today. Palm Sunday has two main things to remember 1. The palm procession and 2. The story of Jesus' arrest and death.

Section 1 Scripture reference: Luke 19:28-38

A picture of a donkey, or a toy donkey from a farm set, a palm leaf.

Just a few short days before Jesus' crucifixion Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. The people threw down palm branches before him. He'd become so famous that they treated him like a king. We remember this on Palm Sunday.

Section 2 Scripture reference: John 13: 3-5 Matthew 26: 26-29

A jug and basin with a small towel, a cup, or glass or a chalice, a plate which holds a small piece of bread.

The next important day of Holy Week is 'Maundy Thursday' That's a strange name, but it is a Latin word meaning 'COMMAND' and this means the celebration that take place on this night are all about the 'NEW COMMANDMENT' that says we are to love one another as Jesus loves us. It is an important day because it is during this time Jesus gave us the Eucharist and showed everyone that we must serve one another. While Jesus was in Jerusalem, he celebrated Passover with his disciples. Passover is the most important feast in the Jewish faith because it reminds Jews of the night God delivered them from slavery in Egypt. The Passover meal is unleavened bread (meaning it has no yeast) and a special lamb offered to God. Sharing a meal shows that people are in close relationship with one another. So on that night, in sharing the bread and wine, Jesus shows that there is a special strength of being in community with other believers. It is this meal that we celebrate each Sunday at church, we know it as Holy Communion, where Christ shares himself with us.

Section 3 Scripture reference: Matthew 26:36-46

A flower.

After the Last Supper, Jesus went out into the Garden of Gethsemane to pray....

Section 4 Scripture reference: Matthew 26:47-50

Three coins

Section 5 Scripture reference: Mark 15:1-15

A strip of leather or strips of string tied at one end.

Section 6 Scripture reference: Mark 15:16-20

A thorn or a thorn branch.

Section 7 Scripture reference: Matthew 27:32

A small cross

Section 8 Scripture reference: John 19: 16b- 18

A nail

***Good Friday** from 'GOD FRIDAY' we remember how Jesus died on the cross. The service is three hours long, and begins in silence, with the priest, lying prostate on the floor. It is the only time that we do not celebrate the Eucharist. Since Jesus died only once, we commemorate his Passion as it really occurred in history once each year. However, because Jesus' suffering and death are important to us in our everyday living, we celebrate the Eucharist every Sunday so that we may be reminded to live lives that bear the fruits of Jesus' love that was revealed at his death. Although we do not celebrate the Eucharist, we still receive Communion because the priest has consecrated (set it apart) this the night before at the Maundy Thursday Service.*

The service includes with the Veneration of the Cross, when we come up to the cross and touch it, or kiss it, and say a prayer, as a way of thanking Jesus for his love.

Section 9 Scripture reference: John 19:19

Slip of paper reading "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews."

Section 10 Scripture reference: John 19:23-24

A dice and a small square of white material.

Section 11 Scripture reference: John 19: 28-30

A sponge

Section 12 Scripture reference: Luke 23:50-53

A rock.

Section 13 Scripture reference: Luke 23: 54-56

A few spices, such as whole cloves.

Section 14 Scripture reference: Matthew 28:6

An empty egg shell or a hollow chocolate egg broken in half.

Please do not tell the Easter Story here, this is for the Easter lesson. All that you need to say here is something like... *When the women came to anoint Jesus' body, they found the stone had been rolled away - the tomb was empty. Jesus had risen from the dead.*



Discussion:

Ask the children what, in the story, was most meaningful for them; allow them time to respond and express their ideas freely without interruption.



Craft:

You no doubt have made Palm Crosses for today, however, if the children have not had the opportunity to make their own palm crosses, today would be the ideal time. You would need to have a few palm leaves for this.

Or they can draw a picture that represents Palm Sunday for them



Snack: Hot Cross Buns



Songs:



Prayer: Lord, we leave this place of worship having been reminded of Jesus' Passion. As we leave this place, to go back into the usual routine of our daily lives, we offer ourselves to you. Send us into this week in the power of the Holy Spirit so that we may put aside our selfishness. Help us to love and serve others so that we can be people who change the world.

AMEN.

References:

Basi, K.M. 2011. *Bring Lent to Life*. USA: Liguori Publications

Easter Sunday

Jesus rises from the dead.

12 April 2020

Readings: Matthew 28 1-10

Theme: Jesus is alive

Memory verses: "You must not be afraid. I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He has been raised from death"



Information for the teacher:

Easter is a joyful occasion as we celebrate the resurrection. The Matthew reading is quite short and you might like to include Jesus encounter with Mary Magdalene as found in John 20:11-18.

The tomb is empty. Jesus has risen. This is the good news that the women run to share with the other disciples, who then run to the tomb to see for themselves.

In the lesson you will talk about the empty tomb and the resurrection of Jesus but you can also focus on the new life in each of us, the new beginnings that can grow and make us more Christlike.

Lesson Suggestions:



All Age Presentation

Lesson Objectives:

- To learn about the significance of Easter.
- To think about the areas of our lives where there are new beginnings



Setting the scene:

The liturgical colours for Easter are white and /or gold.

Remind the children of how lovely the church looks. If the children do not start in church, maybe make an arrangement that they will go in and have a look.

You could also have candles and flowers as an Easter celebration.

Teach the children the Easter greeting:

Leader: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Children: He is risen indeed! Alleluia!



Bible Story

Tell them the story of how the women went to the tomb and they were worried as to how they would roll the stone away. And then they got to the tomb and the stone was already rolled away and it was empty. And the angel sitting in the tomb told them not to be afraid. The women ran and told the other disciples. You can add in how Mary met Jesus in the garden and he said her name and she recognised him as Jesus.



Discussion:

1. Who arrived at Jesus tomb first (Mary Magdalene)
2. What did she do?
3. What did the other disciples do?
4. How do you think you would have felt if you had seen the tomb was empty?
5. How do you know that Jesus is alive today?



Craft:

1. Make an Easter garden

This can be done as a group or individually. There are many ways to make the garden – see what you can collect. You could use polystyrene trays (the kind you get meat or vegetables). Put sand, soil in the tray. Find some rocks, stones, leaves sticks, flowers, small branches etc. You could use a small flower pot on its side as the empty tomb, or a potato hollowed out or a card board box or anything else. Have a larger stone that is rolled away from the tomb.

One idea if your children are with you on Good Friday the gardens can be made then with the stone in front of the tomb. Don't use flowers. The leaves etc will start to wilt and die and look sad – in the same way as the disciples and Jesus friends were feeling sad. Then on Easter morning, add flowers and make the gardens joyful to remind you of the joyful resurrection.

2. Paint hard boiled eggs – you can colour them using non toxic felt tipped pens.
3. Make an Easter hat – the children bring a hat with them and then decorate it. Or you can use a strip of cardboard that will go around their heads and decorate that. You can colour it in and add paper butterflies and flowers. You could add in Easter bunny ears.



Snack: Easter egg hunt. Hide enough Easter eggs for all the children. Then send them out to hunt for the eggs. Make sure that all the children find an egg – keep some back for the children who are younger or not so good at finding the eggs.



Songs:



Physical activities:

1. An egg and spoon relay race.
2. The race to the tomb: Line the children up into relay teams. Have a "Mary Magdalene" from each team at the other end (where the tomb is – a box) to start the race. She runs back and touches the first child in her team, who then runs to the box, kneels down, gets up and runs back and touches the next child etc.



Prayer:

Thank you, Jesus, that you are alive and with us. Amen



Discussion with the parents: What does Easter mean for you?