

# **CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIAL**

## **One Page Lessons Book 3**

### ***TEACHER'S GUIDE***

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# **CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIAL**

## **One Page Lessons**

### **BOOK THREE**

#### **PART I: WE REMEMBER JESUS**

**THEME:** We remember that Jesus taught about love and showed love in everything he did. During Lent and Easter we remember and celebrate God's love made known in Jesus.

- LESSON 1: THE JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM
- LESSON 2: JESUS AT THE TEMPLE
- LESSON 3: THE LAST SUPPER
- LESSON 4: A PRAYER IN THE GARDEN
- LESSON 5: BEFORE THE ROOSTER CROWS
- LESSON 6: THE SADDEST DAY
- LESSON 7: GOD'S WONDERFUL PROMISE

#### **PART 2: THE BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH**

**THEME:** God gave Jesus' followers the power to carry on the work Jesus had begun. They gathered together to hear the Good News of the story of Jesus. They established churches wherever they went. Those people were called Christians and still today there are Christians who have fellowship, worship God and witness to the Good News.

- LESSON 1: FOLLOWERS OF JESUS MEET TOGETHER
- LESSON 2: THE CHURCH GREW
- LESSON 3: CHURCH PEOPLE SHARE WHAT GOD HAD GIVEN
- LESSON 4: FOLLOWERS OF JESUS ARE SERVANTS
- LESSON 5: WE CAN TELL THE STORY
- LESSON 6: CHURCH PEOPLE ARE CALLED CHRISTIANS

## ***THE JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM***

**THE BIBLE:** Luke 19:29-40

**THEME:** We remember that Jesus taught about love and showed love in everything he did. During Lent and Easter we remember and celebrate God's love made known in Jesus.

### **PREPARING THE LESSON**

**1. MAIN IDEA:** When Jesus entered Jerusalem, people praised God for the wonderful things they had seen Jesus do. On Palm Sunday we praise God for Jesus.

**2. MEMORY VERSE:** "...Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory to God."—Luke 19:38 CEV

**3. KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS TO BE LEARNED:**

- a. Passover- one of the most important annual Jewish festivals. It celebrates the night that God freed his people from Egypt.
- b. Holy Week- the last week in Jesus' life.
- c. Palm Sunday- the Sunday before Easter. We remember Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.
- d. Good Friday- the day of Jesus' death on the cross.
- e. Easter- the day that we celebrate Jesus' resurrection.

**4. BIBLE BACKGROUND:**

When Jesus entered into Jerusalem, large crowds had gathered to cheer him. They had waited long for this Messiah. Jesus knew, however, that his death was soon to follow. Jesus rode down from the Mount of Olives on the back of a borrowed donkey, not on a horse like a great military leader of that time. The humble donkey was a symbol of peace, not military might.

**5. UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS:**

Children can relate easily to the Christmas story. The Christmas message is Christ was born, a gift to all. However, children may have some difficulties understanding the Easter message. Christ suffered and died as a substitute for us all. Christ conquered death and guaranteed that we all can have a new life. For younger children, the emphasis should be on the reason for Christ's suffering which is love, and not on the details of his suffering.

This lesson is about the joy and enthusiasm people had at the beginning of Holy Week. Children easily overflow with enthusiasm. Allow their enthusiasm to help you teach. Only by expressing their feeling of joy and excitement can they understand how the crowd felt about Jesus.

**6. DEVELOPING YOUR FAITH:**

Read Luke 19:37. The crowds began praising God for the mighty works they had seen. Have you offered praise today for the things God has done for you? Do you recognize and acknowledge God's blessing in your life? Make it a habit to praise God before making requests each time you pray.

Read Luke 19:37-40. Jesus said that if the people were quiet even the stones would cry out. Where do you see creation proclaiming God's greatness?

Read Psalm 118:24. How will you rejoice in this day that the Lord has made? Do others see you as a joyful person? Pray that God will help you recognize and choose joy in your life.

## ***JESUS AT THE TEMPLE***

**THE BIBLE:** Luke 19:41, 45-48

**THEME:** We remember that Jesus taught about love and showed love in everything he did. During Lent and Easter we remember and celebrate God's love made known in Jesus.

### **PREPARING THE LESSON**

**1. MAIN IDEA:** Jesus was upset when he saw that the Temple was being used more as a marketplace than a place of prayer and worship. God wants us to stand up for what is right even if it isn't easy.

**2. MEMORY VERSE:** "..., 'My house should be a place of worship.'"—Luke 19:46a CEV

**3. KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS TO BE LEARNED:**

- a. Injustice- the practice of being unfair.

**4. BIBLE BACKGROUND:**

When Jesus rode the donkey down the Mount of Olives, he could look over all of Jerusalem. He must have been very happy to see the cheering crowd gathering to meet him. But he was also sad because he knew that these same people would later experience pain when one day they would reject him.

Jesus became angry when he saw the businessman in the Temple because not only were they noisy, but they were cheating people.

**5. UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS:**

Many people would like to ignore the fact that Jesus became angry when he saw how the people had turned the Temple into a marketplace. We often think of Jesus only as a gentle teacher with a soft voice, but God made Jesus human in every sense. He experienced the same emotions as our children experience. He expressed his feelings too.

Anger is not sin. It is perfectly acceptable for children to feel anger. Our responsibility is to direct the anger into nondestructive expressions. Likewise, when children become angry because they have seen wrongdoing, this anger needs to be challenged into action to right the wrong. Jesus would not allow wrongdoing to continue. God expects us to stand up for those people who cannot stand up for themselves.

**6. DEVELOPING YOUR FAITH:**

Read Luke 19:41-44. Jesus wept over Jerusalem's indifference. Look around you. Where do you see pain and suffering because of indifference? How can you or your church reach out and help?

Read Luke 19:45-46. What injustices make you angry? Where do you see persons being exploited? What can you do?

Read Psalm 118:24. Do not focus only on the injustice and the indifference of our world. There are many things to celebrate. Spend some time in praise this week.

## **THE LAST SUPPER**

**THE BIBLE:** Luke 22:7-23

**THEME:** We remember that Jesus taught about love and showed love in everything he did. During Lent and Easter we remember and celebrate God's love made known in Jesus.

### **PREPARING THE LESSON**

**1. MAIN IDEA:** In the Last Supper with the disciples, Jesus gave his friends a way to remember him. As a way to participate in communion, we remember and give thanks for Jesus.

**2. MEMORY VERSE:** "Then he said, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Eat this as a way of remembering me!'"—Luke 22:19c CEV

**3. KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS TO BE LEARNED:**

- a. The Last Supper- the last meal that Jesus ate with his disciples. During the meal, he gave final instruction to his disciples. This event is recorded in all four Gospels.
- b. The Lord's Supper- a ceremony in which Christians meet to remember the Lord's death and payment for our sins. This is also called communion. Jesus asked that this be done at the Last Supper he had with his disciples.
- c. Sacrament- a ceremony or ritual that has a sacred purpose or meaning. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are sacraments. The word does not appear in the Bible.

**4. BIBLE BACKGROUND:**

According to custom, Jesus was planning to celebrate a Passover meal with his disciples and followers. But this Passover would be different. It was to be the last Passover meal he would have with his disciples.

The upper room where Jesus had arranged for his group to celebrate the Passover was a common room found in the homes in Jerusalem. The house looked like one box put on top of another. The upper room was reached by outside steps. During the Passover time, this room was often used as a guest room or by a rabbi to spend time with his favorite disciples.

Jesus was an excellent teacher. He used common, everyday items to help the people understand his message. By using the bread and wine of the Passover meal, Jesus was able to give his followers a special way to remember him. (Traditionally, the Methodist Church uses grape juice instead of wine.)

**5. UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS:**

Children may wish to take part in Holy Communion even though it has little meaning for them. Some churches allow children to take part while others do not. When children see adults approach this sacrament with seriousness and thanksgiving, they will learn that it is important. During our children's lessons, we often lay the foundation for important things to learn in the future.

**6. DEVELOPING YOUR FAITH:**

Read Luke 22:7-13. The disciples followed Jesus' instruction without question. Do you find excuses not to do something to which God is calling you?

Read Luke 22:19-20. Jesus gave thanks during this meal even though he knew what was to come. In what situations do you need to look beyond the difficulties and thank God for the blessings you enjoy? Take time to do so today.

## **A PRAYER IN THE GARDEN**

**THE BIBLE:** Luke 22:39-53; Mark 14:32-50

**THEME:** We remember that Jesus taught about love and showed love in everything he did. During Lent and Easter we remember and celebrate God's love made known in Jesus.

### **PREPARING THE LESSON**

**1. MAIN IDEA:** Jesus asked God to help him be faithful to what God wanted him to do. God is with us when we have difficult choices to make and we can ask God to help us be faithful.

**2. MEMORY VERSE:** "...Do what you want, not what I want."—Luke 22:42c CEV

**3. KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS TO BE LEARNED:**

- a. Prayer- talking to God. Prayer can include four parts: praise, confession, thanks, and requests.
- b. Faith- trust in God, belief that God can and will do what He has promised.
- c. Faithful- dependable, trustworthy. A person who is faithful does what he said he would do.

**4. BIBLE BACKGROUND:**

After the Passover meal, Jesus and his followers left the city and went northeast to a garden on the Mount of Olives called Gethsemane. The garden may have been an olive grove owned by one of the followers. Regardless, the garden was obviously a place that Jesus and his friends frequented. For this reason, it was easy for Judas to lead the soldiers to the exact spot where they would find his friend and teacher, Jesus.

**5. UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS:**

The children may wonder why Jesus didn't simply leave. Here was a man who had healed the sick and brought the dead back to life. Surely he did not have to die if he didn't want to. But this fact is the foundation of our Christian beliefs. Young children cannot understand fully Jesus' scornful death for us. Our task as teachers is twofold: 1) to help the children understand that Jesus was willing to go to the cross because He loved us, and 2) to help the children understand that Jesus obeyed God even when it was difficult to do so.

We should help the children see God's presence in their lives. When Jesus was faced with his difficult choice, God was with him. God will be with the children in their times of crisis as well. They can turn to God, talk to God and share their feelings with God. God does not always keep bad things from happening to people, but God is there with the children to help them through their bad times.

**6. DEVELOPING YOUR FAITH:**

Read Luke 22:39-44. Jesus had an intimate relationship with God. How often do you talk to God? When you say "Thy will be done", do you really mean it?

Read Luke 22:45-46. When have you felt that you let God down? When have you felt God call you to do something that you didn't want to do and then not done it? Ask God to help you face unwanted tasks.

Read Luke 22:47-53. Have there been times when the children in your group have not lived up to your expectations? Are you asking more of them than they are prepared to give?

## ***BEFORE THE ROOSTER CROWS***

**THE BIBLE:** Luke 22:54-62

**THEME:** We remember that Jesus taught about love and showed love in everything he did. During Lent and Easter we remember and celebrate God's love made known in Jesus.

### **PREPARING THE LESSON**

**1. MAIN IDEA:** Because he was afraid, Peter denied that he even knew Jesus. Sometimes we don't do what is right because we fear what others will think of us.

**2. MEMORY VERSE:** "Then they asked, 'Are you the Son of God?'. Jesus answered, 'You say that I am!'"—Luke 22:70 CEV

**3. KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS TO BE LEARNED:**

- a. Promise- to do what you said you would do.
- b. Deny- to refuse to admit the truth.

**4. BIBLE BACKGROUND:**

The Gospel of Luke tells us that Jesus was held prisoner throughout the night at the high priest's house. In New Testament times, the high priest, important scribes and laymen made up an official group called the Sanhedrin. This group held the highest authority over all religious matters and would try offenders for religious crime such as blasphemy. Jesus was tried by this group because he called himself the Son of God.

Even in spite of Peter's denial of Jesus, he was fundamentally loyal to Jesus. Peter was one of the two disciples (John 18:15) who had the courage to follow Jesus into the courtyard of the High Priest's house.

**5. UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS:**

Just like Peter, children at this age make totally sincere promises. They want to be good, to do what is right but often they fail to do so. And like Peter, they do not like themselves when they fail to do as promised. Even when caught doing something bad, children will deny it.

Provide ways for children to be "good" and to "do the right thing". Correct children privately. Allow the children to save face, but do not allow "bad" behavior go uncorrected. God loved some very unlovable people in the Bible. Even when we do things that God does not like, God still loves us. God never rejects us.

**6. DEVELOPING YOUR FAITH:**

Read Luke 22:54-57. Peter's first instinct was self-preservation. Do you ever find yourself in a situation where you deny or fail to speak out about your faith? How does Peter's experience reassure you?

Read Luke 22:59. No matter how much we want to be faithful, no matter how hard we try, we fall short. We mess up even when we are trying to do right. Ask God's strength to live faithfully.

## ***THE SADDEST DAY***

**THE BIBLE:** Luke 22:63-23:49

**THEME:** We remember that Jesus taught about love and showed love in everything he did. During Lent and Easter we remember and celebrate God's love made known in Jesus.

### **PREPARING THE LESSON**

**1. MAIN IDEA:** Jesus prayed for and forgave the people who persecuted him. I can pray for and forgive the people who mistreat me. I can pray and ask God to forgive me.

**2. MEMORY VERSE:** "Jesus said, 'Father, forgive these people! They don't know what they're doing.'"—Luke 23:34 CEV

**3. KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS TO BE LEARNED:**

- a. Forgive- to pardon, release, let go. 'Forgive' is one of the most important words in the Bible because people everywhere need God's forgiveness. Most of the Bible's stories and messages tell of God's desire to forgive people. Jesus came and died to make it possible. This is also one reason God wants his people always to forgive each other.
- b. Persecute- to cause to suffer for religious or political reasons.

**4. BIBLE BACKGROUND:**

Not only did Jesus have to suffer the indignity of being arrested by his own people, but he also had to suffer taunts and abuse. In order for the religious leaders to get Roman support, they had to present Jesus as a troublemaker. They had to convince the Roman rulers that Jesus would upset the peace of the land. So the official leaders brought political charges against Jesus.

**5. UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS:**

At this age we do not go into the graphic details of the crucifixion. Young children are concrete thinkers and it is difficult for them to understand how such a terrible death brings salvation to us. They need to know that Jesus was crucified on a cross and that Jesus forgave those who did this. Surely, if Jesus could forgive and pray for those people who caused him such pain, as Christians we can forgive those who mistreat us and pray for them.

**6. DEVELOPING YOUR FAITH:**

Read Luke 22:63-71. When have you felt that you were abused or not appreciated for what you do? How did you react? Have people ever misinterpreted your intentions?

Read Luke 23:26-43. How difficult is it to offer forgiveness to those who have truly hurt us? Can you ask God to forgive your enemies? Do you think God is asking that of you?

## ***GOD'S WONDERFUL PROMISE***

**THE BIBLE:** Luke 23:50-24:35; Psalm 118:24

**THEME:** We remember that Jesus taught about love and showed love in everything he did. During Lent and Easter we remember and celebrate God's love made known in Jesus.

### **PREPARING FOR THE LESSON**

**1. MAIN IDEA:** Jesus' resurrection shows God's love for the whole world. At Easter we celebrate God's love with great joy.

**2. MEMORY VERSE:** "...The Lord has really risen!"—Luke 24:34a NASV

**3. KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS TO BE LEARNED:**

- a. Resurrection- a return to life after death. Three days after Jesus died, he rose from the dead and now lives in heaven. When Christians die, they also go to heaven.
- b. Easter- a special day to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. The early Christians chose the day to celebrate and called it "Easter".

**4. BIBLE BACKGROUND:**

Jewish custom required that a body be washed, rubbed with perfumes and spices, and wrapped in a shroud. It was also the custom that no one could do any work during the Sabbath. The Sabbath began at sundown on Friday evening. Thus, no one could prepare Jesus' body until after the Sabbath and it was left undone. The women who followed Jesus planned to come back after the Sabbath to perform the task.

Joseph of Arimathea was a member of the Sanhedrin. Joseph did not agree with the council's beliefs about Jesus. He took Jesus' body from the cross and wrapped it in cloth and laid it in his own tomb. The tombs were often like caves dug out of rock. A heavy stone was rolled in front of the opening to seal the tomb.

**5. UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS:**

Children of this age cannot understand the full meaning of Easter. This requires a deeper theological understanding than they have. We are Easter people but it will be many years before the children can absorb the true significance of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. Celebrate the joy of Easter! Concentrate on the greatness of the day and God's unconditional love for the world. Teach the symbols of new life. Help the children identify today as a special day! The full meaning will come later.

**6. DEVELOPING YOUR FAITH:**

Read Luke 24:1-12. Jesus is alive! What does that mean to you? How does the resurrected Jesus make a difference in your life?

Read Luke 24:13-35. How odd that the two followers of Jesus did not recognize him on the road! Have there been times when you have not recognized Jesus' love working in your life? Are there times when you have met God unaware? Think of the children you teach. How do they touch your life and bring God into your life every time you meet for a lesson?

## **FOLLOWERS OF JESUS MEET TOGETHER**

**THE BIBLE:** Acts 1:8; Acts 1:14

**THEME:** God gave Jesus' followers the power to carry on the work Jesus had begun. They gathered together to hear the good news of the story of Jesus. They established churches wherever they went. Those people were called Christians and still today there are Christians who have fellowship, worship God and witness to the Good News.

### **PREPARING THE LESSON**

**1. MAIN IDEA:** The followers of Jesus met together to pray, to remember Jesus and to prepare to tell others about Jesus. We can be followers of Jesus today.

**2. MEMORY VERSE:** "But the Holy Spirit will come upon you and give you power. Then you will tell everyone about me..."—Acts 1:8 CEV

**3. KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS TO BE LEARNED:**

- a. Followers- those who practice what others tell them to do.
- b. Power- ability to do, to act or to accomplish and the authority to do so.
- c. Holy Spirit- the spirit of God, the presence of God in our lives.
- d. Jerusalem- the holy city of Israel.
- e. Judea and Samaria- countries in the time of Jesus.

**4. BIBLE BACKGROUND:**

The Book of Acts was written by Luke, the same author of the book that has his name as its title. It is a continuation of the story told in the Book of Luke. You will see that the book is written to a person by the name of "Theophilus". Luke was telling his friend about the story of Jesus and what happened after the resurrection.

The Book of Acts is the story of the apostles, followers of Jesus, and gives us the basis for knowing about how the gospel of Jesus Christ was spread.

The passages for today are lifted from the very first chapter of the book. The first one helps to identify that God gave the disciples the power to be witnesses about Jesus to the places where they lived and to the rest of the world and the second refers to the disciples. These words show us that the disciples centered their lives in prayer. This is very important for followers to know.

**5. UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS:**

It will be easy for the children to think about the disciples meeting in a group because they are also participating in this lesson as a group. It should also be easy for them to understand that the disciples would pray when they were together, and that they would prepare to tell others about Jesus. The children can be people of prayer and they can also understand how the early people called Christians were followers of Christ. You will need to help them make the connection between the early Christians and the Christians today. The younger children will not have a good understanding of history and will not be able to transfer learning from a time past to the present. They have to begin where they are now in their experience and then have the past related to that.

**6. DEVELOPING YOUR FAITH:**

Read Acts 1. Reflect on these questions: What does Jesus tell his disciples? What do you think it means to be baptized with the Holy Spirit? What did the disciples do when they gathered? Who replaced Judas as a disciple? How did the disciples determine who that person would be? What is your custom or practice for making decisions in your culture? Does the story in Acts have meaning or application for you in your life and give you a better understanding about being a follower of Jesus?

## **THE CHURCH GREW**

**THE BIBLE:** Acts 2:1-4; Acts 2:14, 41-42; Psalm 25:4

**THEME:** God gave Jesus' followers the power to carry on the work Jesus had begun. They gathered together to hear the good news of the story of Jesus. They established churches wherever they went. Those people were called Christians and still today there are Christians who have fellowship, worship God and witness to the Good News.

### **PREPARING THE LESSON**

**1. MAIN IDEA:** The early church grew as people told others about Jesus. They joined together to learn more about Jesus' teachings. We like to be together in our church to learn more about Jesus too. We like to pray together.

**2. MEMORY VERSE:** "Show me your paths and teach me to follow."—Psalm 25:4 CEV

**3. KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS TO BE LEARNED:**

- a. Holy Spirit- the spirit of God, the presence of God in our life.
- b. Breaking of bread- sharing of a meal.
- c. Pentecost- a Christian celebration remembering the coming of the Holy Spirit to the apostles of Jesus Christ.

**4. BIBLE BACKGROUND:**

Pentecost is celebrated the seventh Sunday after Easter in the liturgical tradition of our Church. This is a time when we remember the scripture that is recorded in Acts 2. We remember it as the beginning of the church, or the birthday of the church. It also was a time that completed what Jesus had told about the power that would come to his followers when the Holy Spirit came upon them (Acts 1:8). Actually, Pentecost was a holy day for people of the Jewish faith. The people were gathered to celebrate that holy day when the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles. Therefore, the Christians adopted that holiday, coming fifty days after Easter, as a time to recall the power that made the Christian community move out into mission.

Following the Pentecost experience, the church began to attract converts. They began to practice being together, learning about the teaching of Jesus through the apostles and had fellowship with one another, eating meals together and praying together.

The Book of Acts records this information on the beginnings of the church. As you read further, it also continues the story about the spread of Christianity throughout the world.

**5. UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS:**

Students will enjoy hearing about the "birthday" of the church because they can relate to having birthdays. Some may not have celebrations of the day of their birth and others may have elaborate parties and gifts. That does not matter. They all know that they were born on a specific day and that day is called their birth day.

**6. DEVELOPING YOUR FAITH:**

Read Acts 2. The story begins with the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. In Acts 2:1-13, what does it mean that they spoke in tongues? In Acts 2:14-24, who is the man that is addressing the crowd? What is it that Peter is trying to say to those people who had witnessed this great phenomenon? In Acts 2:25-28, why is Peter quoting David? What meaning does this give? In Acts 2:36-47, we read about the first people to follow the teachings of Peter. How many believed? What was the first thing they did? What were the practices of the new followers and the apostles? What was their life like?

## **CHURCH PEOPLE SHARED WHAT GOD HAD GIVEN**

**THE BIBLE:** Acts 2:44-45; Acts 4:32-35

**THEME:** God gave Jesus' followers the power to carry on the work Jesus had begun. They gathered together to hear the good news of the story of Jesus. They established churches wherever they went. Those people were called Christians and still today there are Christians who have fellowship, worship God and witness to the Good News.

### **PREPARING THE LESSON**

**1. MAIN IDEA:** The people who gathered cared about and for each other. They shared what they had with each other and cared for others in need. We can share with others also.

**2. MEMORY VERSE:** "None of them claimed that their possessions were their own, and they shared everything they had with each other."—Acts 4:32b CEV

**3. KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS TO BE LEARNED:**

- a. All things in common- sharing all the things they had.
- b. Possessions- the things that people own or have as their own.
- c. Needy- someone who is without something they need to live.

**4. BIBLE BACKGROUND:**

The Book of Acts continues to tell us the story of how the early believers lived. Believers formed small groups, as we have already seen in our previous readings from Acts. They began to reach out to others and the message continued to spread. This was the birth of the church in that time.

In the scriptures for this lesson, we see a radical way of living, much different than that of anyone else who lived during this time. Because of the teachings of Jesus, the apostles taught those who became believers that it was their responsibility to care for each other and for others outside of the church. So the small groups of believers practiced what they believed to be central to the life of faith. They cared for each other in many ways. One of them was to give up their own personal possessions for the good of all.

The modern day Christians do not follow this practice as closely as the early believers did. Today we believe in giving a large percentage of what we possess to God through the church and we do believe that we are called by Jesus Christ to care for all people. That means different things to different people. It does mean that we are to work for justice that will help alleviate pain and suffering among our people and other people in our world.

The Book of Acts gives us a pattern to follow in the caring for others.

**5. UNDERSTANDING YOUR CHILDREN:**

Children do not always identify with the needs of each other, or with those of adults outside their own family circle. They are more self-centered and concerned about their own lives and needs much of the time. Through our work with them, we can help them build skills for caring for each other. We can also help them begin to be more sensitive to those around them who are outside the church.

**6. DEVELOPING YOUR FAITH:**

Read Acts 2, Acts 3 and Acts 4. This reading will help your understanding of how the people who believed in Jesus followed the instructions of the apostles, became organized and focused on their task. As you read, reflect on these questions: Where do you see your church in relation to what you are reading? How do you think your church can be more responsive to the Word of God? What are the significant things you learned from the reading that you think the children you teach should know about?

## **FOLLOWERS OF JESUS ARE SERVANTS**

**THE BIBLE:** Acts 6:2-4; Romans 12:10

**THEME:** God gave Jesus' followers the power to carry on the work Jesus had begun. They gathered together to hear the good news of the story of Jesus. They established churches wherever they went. Those people were called Christians and still today there are Christians who have fellowship, worship God and witness to the Good News.

### **PREPARING THE LESSON**

**1. MAIN IDEA:** The followers of Christ who were a part of the early church, and those who follow Jesus today, are active in showing love for others. All of us can serve others in some way.

**2. MEMORY VERSE:** "Love each other as brothers and sisters and honor others more than you do yourself."—Romans 12:10 CEV

**3. KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS TO BE LEARNED:**

- a. Mutual affection- to show love and concern for another.
- b. Honor- being honest and fair in one's actions.
- c. Zeal- enthusiasm, eagerness.
- d. Ardent- with passion, intense feeling.
- e. Service- an act of helpful activity.

**4. BIBLE BACKGROUND:**

The Book of Acts gives us the story of the beginning of the church. It also helps us to know about the behavior of the first followers of Jesus and what was expected of them by the disciples. In today's Bible verses, we see that the disciples could not keep up with the demands placed on them by organizing and keeping records for the growing church. In order to meet the needs of those persons who were being neglected because they could not be everywhere and do everything, they suggested that seven persons be selected from among the believers to be those who made sure that everyone was cared for. This would then free the disciples to be about the business of prayer and the converting of others to the faith.

The verses from the Letter of Paul to the Romans are words that help us to know that it is the task of the follower of Jesus to take care of and serve others. This letter was written by Paul to the church in Rome before he had gone to be with them. He was trying to help the people know more about God and what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

**5. UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS:**

This lesson takes a different look at how we are to do more than share, but we are also to serve one another. This may be a hard concept for the children to understand. Give them plenty of time to ask questions during the lesson.

Children have a tendency to be selfish and unwilling to share what they have. They have had very few opportunities to understand what it means to be in service to someone outside their family. They may even be unable to describe ways others have served them. The important thing is to help them see that they are followers of Jesus and therefore are expected to serve others in some way.

**6. DEVELOPING YOUR FAITH:**

Read Acts 6. Think about what the people are saying about the widows not being cared for. Read the story of Stephen's arrest. It is important that we understand that there were risks in serving God. Read Romans 12:9-21. Ask yourself these questions: How is my church like the early church? How do I measure up to the marks of a true Christian? What must I do to be a servant to others?

## ***WE CAN TELL THE STORY***

**THE BIBLE:** Acts 8:26-31, 35-40

**THEME:** God gave Jesus' followers the power to carry on the work Jesus had begun. They gathered together to hear the good news of the story of Jesus. They established churches wherever they went. Those people were called Christians and still today there are Christians who have fellowship, worship God and witness to the Good News.

### **PREPARING THE LESSON**

**1. MAIN IDEA:** The story about Jesus is for all people everywhere. We can all help tell other people that story.

**2. MEMORY VERSE:** "He went from town to town, all the way to Caesarea, telling people about Jesus."—Acts 8:40b CEV

**3. KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS TO BE LEARNED:**

- a. Ethiopia- a country in East Africa, a long distance from Jerusalem.
- b. Jerusalem- the city where Jews came to worship at the Temple.
- c. Chariot- a light, two-wheel vehicle drawn by horses.

**4. BIBLE BACKGROUND:**

This story of Philip is a good example of how the early Christians influenced others. Philip hears the guidance of God who tells him to go and help this person driving in the chariot to interpret the scriptures that he is reading. Philip responds and joins the man. He is reading from Isaiah scriptures that were prophecy about Jesus. Philip could help the Ethiopian understand what the scriptures meant because of the knowledge he had about Jesus' life and death.

In this lesson, you will help the children understand that even though they are small and have very little experience in sharing their faith, they can help others understand the story of the Bible.

**5. UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS:**

Most likely the children will have had very little or no experience telling others about Jesus. It is important for the children to understand that they do have something they can say but at the same time, we do not want to make them feel that talking to others about Jesus is something they have to do. We want to help them feel comfortable in talking about Jesus with each other and their families. That will be enough for now. As they become older and more capable of understanding what the story of Jesus is and what the Bible says, they will begin to share their faith.

**6. DEVELOPING YOUR FAITH:**

Read Acts 8:26-40. Now read Acts. 8:26-31, 35 again. As you begin to read, see if you can create a picture in your mind of what the scene would have looked like. Perhaps it was a hot day. Perhaps the chariot was moving slowly along a very dusty road. Imagine what that encounter might have looked like. Can you place yourself in the picture as either the Ethiopian or Philip? What might you have said? Think about any time that you have been given the opportunity to witness to your faith, or to tell someone else about Jesus. Recall that time and place. What image do you have of that encounter? How has that encounter helped you grow in your faith? If you have not yet had that experience, perhaps you can find a friend who is also a believer in Jesus and a Christian, and spend some time talking about what you know about the stories of the faith. This will help you as you prepare to lead the children in talking about their beliefs.

Re-read the selected scriptures and pray to ask God's guidance as you teach the children.

## **CHURCH PEOPLE ARE CALLED CHRISTIANS**

**THE BIBLE:** Acts 11:21-26

**THEME:** God gave Jesus' followers the power to carry on the work Jesus had begun. They gathered together to hear the good news of the story of Jesus. They established churches wherever they went. Those people were called Christians and still today there are Christians who have fellowship, worship God and witness to the Good News.

### **PREPARING THE LESSON**

**1. MAIN IDEA:** People who followed Jesus were called Christians. The first place that people were given that name was in the city of Antioch. Today those of us who follow Jesus and are baptized into his church are also called Christians.

**2. MEMORY VERSE:** "There in Antioch the Lord's followers were first called Christians."—Acts 11:26b CEV

**3. KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS TO BE LEARNED:**

- a. Exhorted- to urge, advise or strongly encourage.
- b. Witness- to testify about an event one has experienced or was present at.

**4. BIBLE BACKGROUND:**

This is the first time the word "Christian" has been used to describe the followers of Jesus. You will remember that the Book of Acts has been showing us how the early followers worshiped, had fellowship together, and took care of one another. Because they followed closely to what they believed Jesus would expect his disciples to be, they began to be known widely. The term "Christian" was chosen because Jesus was known as the "Christ", or the Messiah. It was logical that the followers of Jesus would be called Christian.

Barnabas was a companion of Paul. He was working with Paul in many different places to help people know about Jesus and to be baptized. He must have been so pleased with the work in Antioch that he wanted Paul to know about it and to see it for himself, so he went and brought him from Tarsus to Antioch. We don't really know who first started calling these groups of people Christian, but it is recorded in the scriptures at this point for our understanding. And since that time, all who have followed Jesus, giving up their old ways and living lives that have been transformed by the Gospel, have been called Christian as well.

**5. UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS:**

These boys and girls will be familiar, perhaps, with the term Christian. They may have heard the term used in relationship to their community of faith or they may have heard it used by people of other faiths when referring to those who are followers of Jesus. You will need to help them understand how the term came to be and why it is used for people who follow Jesus. They will be pleased to know that they too can be called Christian if they are willing to learn about Jesus and try to live as Jesus taught.

**6. DEVELOPING YOUR FAITH:**

Read Acts 11:21-26. Try to imagine what life must have been like for Jesus' followers. Despite all the troubles the early church faced, the numbers of Christians grew rapidly. Why do you think this might be? Have you ever been persecuted for telling the good news of Jesus Christ? If so, how did this affect you? Does it strengthen your own faith to share your faith with others?

Take time to pray for each child in your group and for their growth as "Christians".