

ENDURING
FAITH[™]

Sunday School • Midweek
Bible Curriculum

ONE-ROOM STUDY GUIDE

Unit 3: Jesus Teaches His Church



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

THE ONE-ROOM CLASSROOM

This guide was created for leaders who teach multiple ages in one classroom. Options for younger and older children, size, and ability of your group help you tailor the lessons to your needs. Checkboxes help you choose and prepare the activities for each lesson.

OVERVIEW

The Overview lets you see the biblical foundation of each lesson at a glance. All levels of the Enduring Faith Bible Curriculum share the same Bible Truth, Bible Verse, Law & Gospel, and Scripture Snapshot, allowing families to learn together each week.

LESSON PREP

Use these suggestions for your own Bible study as you prepare to lead this lesson.

Basic: Begin here—read the full Bible text.

More Time: Read the leader devotion, found in the digital resource center.

In Depth: Gain a deeper understanding of the narrative and its context.

SUPPLIES

For This Lesson: Gather only the supplies for the activities you choose to use. You may want to put together a Supply Box of frequently used items to keep on hand. Look below for suggestions of items to include in the Supply Box.

For Every Lesson: Use this checklist as a reminder of items that you may want to have on hand for every lesson.

SUPPLY BOX

The items in the Supply Box are used frequently. Gather them to be prepared for many of the lesson activities.

- ☐ White copy paper, construction paper, tissue paper
- ☐ Crayons, markers, colored pencils, pencils, pens
- ☐ Paint, paint brushes, and smocks
- ☐ School glue, glue sticks, tape, glitter glue
- ☐ Child-friendly scissors, hole punch, stapler
- ☐ Yarn, pom-poms, craft sticks, pipe cleaners
- ☐ Wiggle eyes, beads, buttons, stickers
- ☐ Paper plates, paper lunch bags, paper cups
- ☐ Play dough and tools
- ☐ Poster board or large sheets of paper

LAUNCH

Begin: Use the Opening Worship, the Lesson Opening, and/or music from the digital resource center.

Say: Choose an option to help get children thinking.

Pray: Call upon God's name and ask for His guidance as you study His Word.

LEARN

Tell the Bible Narrative: Two narrative options are provided—one for younger children and one for older children.

Do This: Choose an option to review the lesson.

Talk about It: Choose questions to fit the learning level of your group.

Key Discussion Points: These points guide your discussion and highlight biblical truths.

Christ Connection: This shows how Jesus is central to every lesson.

LIVE

A variety of activity options lets you choose how you will reinforce the Bible truths of the lesson. Choose from crafts, snack, movement, Bible Verse fun, and more. Remember to gather the supplies you will need for each activity option you choose.

LEAVE

Say: This thought sums up the truth of the lesson.

Pray: Give thanks to God for His blessings, love, and new life in Jesus.

DIGITAL RESOURCE CENTER

Additional resources are available in the online digital resource center at cph.org/digitalcontent. Ask your coordinator for access to the materials in the online digital resource center.

PLANNING PAGES

See Planning Pages for Leader Devotions, Order of Opening Worship, and Lesson Openings.

MUSIC RESOURCES

Ask your coordinator for access to music for each unit.

ENDURING FAITH PAGES

Enduring Faith Pages provide a reproducible take-home resource that gives a summary of each Bible lesson and provides suggestions for “taking home” Bible truths from the lesson. Each page also has an illustrated version of the day's Bible Verse, perfect for coloring.

DOWNLOADABLE ACTIVITY PAGES

Each lesson has an extra activity page that can be downloaded and photocopied.

A MERCY-FULL MESSAGE

The Good
Samaritan
Luke 10:25–37
AD 31

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

Jesus loves us and helps us love others.

BIBLE VERSE

We love because He first loved us. 1 John 4:19

LEARNER GOAL

I understand that Jesus loves me and helps me to love and care for my neighbor.

LAW & GOSPEL

We fail to obey Jesus' command to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39).

In love, Jesus forgives our disobedience and enables us to love others.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

Jesus tells the famous parable of the Good Samaritan, who risks his own life to help a Jewish man whose peril was ignored by his own countrymen. In telling the parable, Jesus answers the question "Who is my neighbor?" for His followers as He challenges us to "go, and do likewise" (v. 37). We also ask, "Who is the Good Samaritan?" Jesus rescues us, dead in our sin, even when we were enemies of God.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read Luke 10:25–37 and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read the leader devotion, found in the digital resource center.

IN DEPTH Read the article "God's Care and Miracles" in *TLSEB*, page 1674.

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- ☐ Small heart stickers
- ☐ Permanent marker
- ☐ First aid items
- ☐ Ball of yarn
- ☐ Toy cars
- ☐ Masking tape
- ☐ M&Ms, pretzels, raisins, four bowls
- ☐ Digital device

FOR EVERY LESSON

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Device with prepped music
- ☐ Copies of downloadable activity page
- ☐ Copies of Enduring Faith Page
- ☐ Supply Box

LAUNCH

Plan your lesson by reading through the options in each section. Choose the activities that will best fit your learners, and mark those boxes to guide you as you teach the lesson.

BEGIN

- ☐ Follow the Order of Opening Worship, use the Lesson Opening, or do both (part of the planning resources in the digital resource center).
- ☐ Sing songs using music found in the digital resource center, or sing your own favorite songs.

PRAY

Dear Jesus, thank You for loving us. Help us to listen and to learn how to be a good friend and show love for others. Amen.

SAY

- ☐ **Jesus loves us so much He died on the cross and rose for us. He forgives our sins. He helps us show love for others.**
- ☐ **When you're having the worst day ever, you want someone to help you, right? But what if no one will help? How does it feel when someone finally does help? In our Bible narrative today, we're going to learn about a guy who was having a pretty bad day.**

LEARN

Show your Bible, and remind the children that all the stories in God's Word are true.

TELL THE BIBLE NARRATIVE

Choose one of the options on the next page to tell the Bible narrative.

DO THIS!

Use one or both of the following activities to talk about the Bible narrative after you've read it.

- ☐ **FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE YOUNGER** Say, **After Jesus told the story about the Good Samaritan, He asked, "Which man showed he was a good neighbor to the man who was hurt? Which man was loving and kind?" What would you answer? Accept answers. Jesus wants us to be loving and kind too. He wants us to use our hands and hearts to show love. Put a heart sticker on the hand of each child. Sometimes we don't act loving and kind though, do we? When we do bad things, we ask Jesus to forgive us and help us do better. Jesus is our Good Samaritan. He changes our hearts and lives. He forgives our sins and helps us live as His children. The Bible tells us, "We love because He first loved us." Say it together, then use a marker to draw a cross on each heart.**
- ☐ **FOR ACTIVE LEARNERS** As you read or review the story, have your students hold up an unhappy-face paper plate when you come to a part that merits a sad face and hold up a happy-face paper plate when the story merits a happy face. To get students more active, have them stand up.

TALK ABOUT IT

Choose the questions that best fit the learning level of your group.

- ☐ What happened to the hurt man?
- ☐ How can we show love to people in our lives? Why would we want to?
- ☐ What does Jesus want us to learn from the story He told?

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

Guide discussion using these key points.

- Samaritans were despised by the Jews. They were seen as enemies, so it would have been a big deal for a Jew to be helped in such a generous way by a Samaritan.
- Jesus shows us that our neighbors are the people who are near us, as well as those throughout the world who need our care.
- It's easy to turn this lesson into a lesson about the Law, about how we should help our neighbor. And yes, God does call us to love our neighbor, but that's not the whole story. Remember, we are not the Good Samaritan in this story; Jesus is. We can love our neighbor only because we have first been rescued from our own deadly condition. This is a story of merciful rescue first.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus, the true Good Samaritan, has saved us from sin, death, and the devil.

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

STORYTELLING DIRECTIONS: As you read the story Jesus told about the Good Samaritan, have children do the actions.

When Jesus lived on earth, He taught people about God's love and healed people. Many people came to listen to Jesus. One day, a man asked Jesus, "What do I have to do to get to heaven?"

Jesus pointed the man to God's Word. He asked, "What does the Bible say?"

The man answered, "You must love God with all your heart and your neighbor as yourself." Then the man asked, "But who is my neighbor?"

Jesus answered this question by telling a story about a man who was walking on a dangerous road.

A man walked down the road to Jericho. (*Walk in place.*) Some robbers jumped out from behind a rock. (*Jump.*) They hit the man and took his things, and then they ran away. (*Run in place.*) They left the man hurt and bleeding. He felt so bad he couldn't walk. (*Hold your head.*)

Along came a priest. He worked in the temple-church. Surely, he would help! (*Nod head yes.*) But no. He just kept walking down the road. (*Walk in place.*)

Another man came by. He worked at the temple-church too. Would he help? (*Put hands up in question.*) No, he just kept walking too. (*Walk in place.*)

Finally, a man came with a donkey. Clip clop, clip clop. (*Pat legs in clip clop pattern.*) This man was from a country called Samaria. The people from Samaria and the people

from the hurt man's country did not like each other. But the man from Samaria felt sorry for the hurt man, so he stopped. (*Say "hooray!"*)

He rubbed some oil on the hurt man's wounds. (*Rub arms.*) He put bandages on his sores. Then he put the hurt man on his donkey and took him to a safe place. Clip clop, clip clop. (*Pat legs in clip-clop pattern.*) In the morning, the man from Samaria had to leave. But he gave some money to the man who owned the inn where they had stayed. He said, "Please take care of the hurt man until I come back."

After Jesus told this story, He asked, "Who was a kind neighbor?"

Someone listening said, "The one who helped the hurt man."

Jesus said, "I want you to be a kind and loving neighbor too."

Jesus told this story to teach about God and His love. The Samaritan showed love for the hurt man and cared for him. Jesus wants us to show love for others and care for them too. The man from Samaria helped the hurt man even though he was from a different country and didn't even know him! Jesus came to help us in an even better way. He rescued us from the hurt of sin by dying on the cross for us and rising again. He forgives us and helps us to love others.

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR OLDER CHILDREN

A lawyer asked Jesus what a person had to do to get into heaven.

Jesus asked him, "What is written in the Law?" Jesus was talking about God's Ten Commandments.

The lawyer answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." These are God's words that show how to keep His Ten Commandments.

Jesus told him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live."

The lawyer was proud. Maybe he didn't love all people as much as he loved himself, but if only certain people counted as his neighbor, he could certainly get into heaven on his own. He asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?"

So Jesus told a story about a Jewish man who was walking down the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. Thieves beat him, stole his clothes and possessions, and left him half dead. This poor man was going to die unless someone stopped and helped him.

Two Jewish leaders went by—a priest and a Levite. Both of them saw the beaten man, but they walked to the other side of the road and passed by like they had never seen

him. Then a Samaritan came along. The Jews hated the Samaritans and treated them badly. But when this Samaritan looked at the dying Jewish man, he felt sorry for him, and he stopped to take care of him.

Jesus asked the lawyer, "Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man?" The lawyer said it was the Samaritan because he stopped to take care of him. Jesus told him to go and do the same: treat every single person as if he or she were his neighbor—even people he didn't like and people who didn't like him.

Some people hear this parable of the Good Samaritan and think Jesus was teaching that if we just love people and treat everyone like our neighbor, we can get to heaven without faith in Him. But He was showing that none of us keeps God's rules. None of us loves God more than everything else, and none of us loves every other person as much as we love ourselves. The only way we can be saved is by trusting in Jesus, who loved every one of us enough to take our sins and die on the cross in our place.

LIVE

Choose from the following activities and crafts to help connect Bible learning to life.

☐ First Aid Kits

Check with your local Red Cross, homeless shelter, or food bank to find out specifications for first aid supplies that are needed. Help your students make first aid kits to share. Include today's Bible verse. To extend this lesson further, send a note home requesting donations of needed items and assemble next week.



☐ Who Is My Neighbor?

Children sit in a circle. Ask, **Who is your neighbor?** Accept answers. **Your neighbor is the person next to you. Shake hands! Your neighbor can be someone far away too. Jesus says our neighbor is anyone who needs our help and care.** Hold the end of a ball of yarn and toss the ball to a child. Have that child hold the yarn and toss the ball to someone else. Continue till everyone is connected. Say, **We made a friendship web! How can we show love to others?**



☐ Neighborhood Map

Put a large sheet of paper on the table. Have children work together to draw streets, trees, parks, houses, and other buildings. They can put toy cars on the streets. Comment on how they are using their hands to work together to make a neighborhood. Say, **Jesus wants us to show love and kindness to others. Who are some people in your neighborhood? What can you do to show Jesus' love to them?**



☐ Be a Helper

Tape a strip of masking tape on the floor. Ask each child to walk, one foot in front of the other, trying to stay on the line. It's not easy! Then pair up children and have one child walk, holding onto another's hand. Talk about how it was easier to balance with a helper. Say, **Jesus helps us look for people who need help and show love for them, just as He shows love for us.**



☐ Share a Snack

Put M&Ms, pretzels, and raisins in three separate bowls. Tell children you are going to make trail mix, but they need to work together to mix and share. Have children scoop items into one big bowl, then give everyone a scoop of the trail mix on a plate or napkin. Talk about how sharing and helping one another makes it more fun. (Be mindful of food allergies when serving snacks.)



☐ Big Heart

Draw (or cut out from a sheet of red construction paper) and decorate a big heart. Think of specific people who need help, and write their names inside the heart. Consider asking your pastor for a list of people he visits who cannot leave their homes because of chronic conditions. Pray for all the people that you've listed in the heart.



☐ Good Samaritan Research

Together with your class, do an online search of the term "Good Samaritan." Count how many times this term is associated with a hospital. Why is this a good name for a hospital? Talk about professions that care for people who are hurt. Pray for the workers who care for sick or injured people.

SEARCH

Good Samaritan

LEAVE

SAY

Just as the Samaritan loved and rescued the injured man, Jesus loves and rescues us. Jesus also helps us to love others. Because we have received so much love from Jesus, we want to share that love with others.

PRAY

Dear Jesus, thank You for being our Savior and rescuing us from our sinful condition. Help us to share Your love by serving our neighbor. In Your name we pray, Jesus. Amen.

A PRAYER LESSON

The Lord's
Prayer
Luke 11:1–13
AD 31

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

Jesus teaches us to pray.

BIBLE VERSE

Pray for one another. James 5:16

LEARNER GOAL

I understand that Jesus teaches me to pray and promises that God hears and answers our prayers.

LAW & GOSPEL

We neglect the gift of prayer, failing to look to God our Father for all things.

Jesus teaches us to pray, promising that the Father hears and answers all our prayers.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

With Jesus' disciples, we, too, implore, "Lord, teach us to pray" (v. 1). Jesus teaches His disciples—and all human-kind—the prayer used throughout the Church to this day. Jesus follows His instruction with a parable illustrating how our heavenly Father unfailingly hears all our prayers.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read Luke 11:1–13 and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read the leader devotion, found in the digital resource center.

IN DEPTH Read through the sections on the Lord's Prayer in *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (2017) for more detail on this essential teaching.

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- ☐ Clay or salt dough
- ☐ Pony beads in blue, white, purple, green, brown, red, yellow, and gold
- ☐ Pipe cleaners
- ☐ Strips of colored paper
- ☐ Pretzel twists
- ☐ Digital device

FOR EVERY LESSON

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Device with prepped music
- ☐ Copies of downloadable activity page
- ☐ Copies of Enduring Faith Page
- ☐ Supply Box

LAUNCH

Plan your lesson by reading through the options in each section. Choose the activities that will best fit your learners, and mark those boxes to guide you as you teach the lesson.

BEGIN

- ☐ Follow the Order of Opening Worship, use the Lesson Opening, or do both (part of the planning resources in the digital resource center).
- ☐ Sing songs using music found in the digital resource center, or sing your own favorite songs.

SAY

- ☐ I'm glad you are here to learn more about our friend and Savior, Jesus! Today, we'll hear how Jesus taught His friends a special prayer. Let's talk to God now. Ask children for prayer requests. Have children echo words.
- ☐ When you need or want something from your parents or caregivers, what is the best way to get it? How do they respond when you ask for things? What happens if you never ask for things?

PRAY

Dear Jesus, we love You. Please take our sins away. Make us kind and make us strong. Thank You for listening when we pray. Amen.

LEARN

Show your Bible, and remind the children that all the stories in God's Word are true.

TELL THE BIBLE NARRATIVE

Choose one of the options on the next page to tell the Bible narrative.

DO THIS!

Use one or both of the following activities to talk about the Bible narrative after you've read it.

- ☐ **FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE YOUNGER** As you reread the narrative to students, have them trace around their hands on a large piece of drawing paper. Inside the hands, draw or write a list of things to be thankful for—gifts that their heavenly Father has given them. Then list or draw things they want to pray about.
- ☐ **FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE OLDER** Have students look up the corresponding passage to this one in **Matthew 6:7–14**. In pairs or a small group, help them compare and contrast the two passages. Talk about why they might be different.

TALK ABOUT IT

Choose the questions that best fit the learning level of your group.

- ☐ What do Jesus' disciples want Him to do?
- ☐ What prayer does Jesus teach them?
- ☐ Prayer is a conversation with God. When are some times you pray? What are some things that you pray for?
- ☐ Does God always answer our prayers? How?

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

Guide discussion using these key points.

- Remind students that as much as their parents love them and want to give them good things, their heavenly Father loves them beyond measure and wants to give them so much more—the gift of the forgiveness of sins and eternal life with Him.
- God always answers prayers. Sometimes He says yes. Sometimes He says no. Sometimes He says wait. God may not always give us what we want, but He always gives us what we need in Jesus.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Christ, the very one who taught us to pray, is the One who has provided for all our spiritual needs through the cross.

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

STORYTELLING DIRECTIONS: As you read the story, have children fold hands in prayer as indicated.

Jesus often talked to His Father in heaven. When He was a young boy just as old as you, He prayed at home. He thanked God for His food. He prayed when He went to bed and when He woke up. He prayed when He was helping and playing.

When Jesus was a grown-up man, He liked to go to quiet places by Himself and talk to God too. He prayed for His friends. He prayed for sick people. He prayed for people who had problems. He prayed for people everywhere.

One day, Jesus' helpers said, "Let's ask Jesus to teach us how to pray." So they went to Jesus and said, "Lord, teach us to pray."

Jesus taught them to pray the Lord's Prayer. It is called that because Jesus is our Lord and He taught this prayer to His friends. This prayer is for you and me too.

Jesus told His friends, "God, your Father in heaven loves you very much. He is happy when His children talk to Him. He listens to your prayers and wants you to pray for what you need. Most parents like to give their children good things. God, your Father in heaven, does too. So when you pray to God, say (*fold hands in prayer*), 'Our Father in heaven. May Your name be holy.'" God wants us to keep His name special and use it to pray to Him and praise Him.

Next, Jesus told His friends to pray (*fold hands in prayer*), "Your kingdom come." God is ruler over all. We want Him

to rule over our hearts and lives too. We want His kingdom to spread throughout the world so everyone hears that Jesus is the Savior of the world.

Jesus also said to pray (*fold hands in prayer*), "Give us each day our daily bread." This means more than just bread. God wants us to ask Him for everything we need each day, like food and clothes and a home, good health, and our family.

God gives us what we need, and what we need most is forgiveness. So Jesus told His friends (*fold hands in prayer*), "Tell God how sorry you are for the bad things you have done and say, 'Forgive us our sins.' Ask Him to help you turn away from temptation and follow what He wants you to do."

Jesus' helpers were glad that Jesus taught them how to pray. They said, "We're glad that we're God's children and that we can talk to our Father in heaven anytime and anywhere."

You are God's child too. He wants you to pray to Him and ask Him for the things you need too. Sometimes He says yes. Sometimes He says no. Sometimes He says wait. But He always listens and answers in the way that is best. You can thank Him for His love and tell Him how much You love Him too.

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Jesus prayed a lot. He prayed when He woke up in the morning, before and after He ate, and when He went to bed. Jesus got up early some mornings to pray—and stayed up really late some nights.

One day after Jesus was finished praying, His disciples asked Him, "Lord, teach us to pray." Jesus taught them a special prayer. Jesus started by saying, "When you pray, say:

"Father, your name is holy.

Your kingdom come.

Give us what we need to eat every day.

Forgive our sins and help us to forgive those who have sinned against us.

Help us to say no when we are tempted to sin."

Then Jesus talked to His disciples about God the Father and how much our God loves us and wants to give us good things.

Jesus told a story about how if our friends came to our house in the middle of the night and wanted something

to eat because they had no food, we would get up and give them what they wanted.

And that when a child asks his father for a fish to eat, the father does not give the child a snake instead. When the child asks for an egg, the father doesn't give him or her a scorpion!

If earthly fathers, who are born with sin, give their children good things, how much more our heavenly Father, who is perfect and loves us more than we can imagine, will give us all good things.

God wants us to pray to Him and ask for what we need. God will answer our prayers. Jesus told the disciples and He tells us, too, that we are to seek God's will and we will find it. Knock and the door to heaven will be opened. Jesus tells us that God will fill us with the Holy Spirit.

God loves us so very much and wants to hear our prayers. He gave us the prayer we call the Lord's Prayer to help us know how to come to Him in prayer.

LIVE

Choose from the following activities and crafts to help connect Bible learning to life.

☐ Praying Hands

Give children a lump of clay or salt dough (find recipes online). Help them flatten it and make their hand-prints, keeping their fingers together to look like praying hands. Air-dry or bake it in an oven. Talk about how we often fold our hands to pray. Say, **We can pray anywhere and anytime. God promises to hear our prayers!**



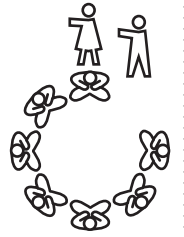
☐ Prayer Bracelet

Give children a blue, white, purple, green, brown, red, yellow, and gold (or silver) pony bead to thread on a pipe cleaner, and twist ends to make a bracelet. Say, **These beads remind us of things we pray for in the Lord's Prayer.** Blue: **Our Father in heaven.** White: **God is holy.** Purple: **Jesus is our King.** Green: **God's will on earth.** Brown: **God gives us daily bread.** Red: **Jesus died for our sins.** Yellow: **God protects us from evil.** Gold: **God is great, forever and ever!**



☐ Sleep, Sleep, Wake

Children sit in a circle with their heads on their hands, pretending to be asleep. One child walks around the circle, tapping the heads and saying, "Sleep," each time. When ready, she taps a child and says, "Wake." That child runs around the circle after the first one, trying to catch her before she takes his spot. Repeat with the new player. Say, **God is with us when we are awake or asleep. He always listens to our prayers and answers them.**



☐ Bible Verse Prayer Chain

Read the verse from **James 5:16**. Say, **God tells us in His Word:**

Pray *Fold hands.*
for one another. *Point to children.*

Talk about people we can pray for. Write prayer suggestions on strips of colored paper. Link together into a prayer chain to use at the closing.



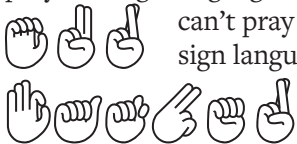
☐ Pretzel Prayer Snack

Serve pretzel twists. Show children how a pretzel can look like a hug or arms crossed in prayer. Tell them that whenever they eat a pretzel, they can remember to pray! Say a snack prayer together.



☐ Sign-Language Prayer

Look up a video of an American Sign Language version of the Lord's Prayer online. Help students learn this prayer in sign language. Explain that some people who can't pray out loud with their voices use sign language speak to God with their hands.



☐ Prayer Journal

Help students create a prayer journal with white sheets of paper folded in half. For a cover, use a piece of construction paper folded over the outside. Staple together. Children can decorate the cover and write "My Prayer Journal." Use a paper punch to make a hole in the fold and tie with yarn to use as a bookmark.



LEAVE

SAY

How wonderful that Jesus Himself teaches us to pray and assures us that God keeps His promise to answer our prayers.

PRAY

Dear heavenly Father, You are the good and gracious giver of all good things. Thank You for the gift of prayer. Thank You for giving us the Holy Spirit to help us believe. Thank You for always answering our prayers. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

A SHEPHERD LOVES

The Good
Shepherd
John 10:1–18;
Psalm 23
AD 32

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

Jesus cares for us.

BIBLE VERSE

[Jesus says,] “I am the good shepherd.” John 10:11

LEARNER GOAL

I understand that Jesus laid down His life for me and promises to lead, guide, and protect me.

LAW & GOSPEL

Because of sin, we face both physical and spiritual danger in this world.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for us; He promises to lead, guide, and protect us.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

Jesus calls Himself the Good Shepherd as He promises to lead and guide His sheep. Jesus willingly laid down His life for His sheep, even those who often ignore the voice of the Shepherd. His flock includes “other sheep,” Gentiles not descended from Abraham. David’s familiar Twenty-Third Psalm describes the work of our Good Shepherd.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read John 10:1–18; Psalm 23 and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read the leader devotion, found in the digital resource center.

IN DEPTH Read the article “The Witness of ‘I Am’ ” in *TLBS*, pages 1784–85, for more information on Jesus’ language in the lesson.

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- ☐ Cotton balls
- ☐ Puppet
- ☐ Leash
- ☐ Egg cartons
- ☐ Plastic spoons
- ☐ Popcorn, mini marshmallows, green napkins
- ☐ Paper or toy sheep
- ☐ *LSB* hymnals

FOR EVERY LESSON

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Device with prepped music
- ☐ Copies of downloadable activity page
- ☐ Copies of Enduring Faith Page
- ☐ Supply Box

LAUNCH

Plan your lesson by reading through the options in each section. Choose the activities that will best fit your learners, and mark those boxes to guide you as you teach the lesson.

BEGIN

- ☐ Follow the Order of Opening Worship, use the Lesson Opening, or do both (part of the planning resources in the digital resource center).
- ☐ Sing songs using music found in the digital resource center, or sing your own favorite songs.

SAY

- ☐ **Hi, friends! I'm glad you are here to learn more about our friend and Savior, Jesus!**
- ☐ **How many of you had a stuffed animal sheep when you were little? How many of you had a real sheep? Have you ever seen a real sheep? What are they like? During Bible times, being a shepherd was a common profession.**

PRAY

Gracious heavenly Father, thank You for bringing us together today to study Your Word. Guide our discussion so that we may learn more about You. In Your name we pray. Amen.

LEARN

Show your Bible, and remind the children that all the stories in God's Word are true.

TELL THE BIBLE NARRATIVE

Choose one of the options on the next page to tell the Bible narrative.

DO THIS!

Use one or both of the following activities to talk about the Bible narrative after you've read it.

- ☐ **FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE YOUNGER** After you read the Bible narrative, make a mind map in a place that all students can see (on a white board or a large sheet of paper). Start by putting a circle with the words "Jesus, our Good Shepherd" in the middle. Then ask students to tell you words that describe Jesus as our Good Shepherd. Put those words in circles around the middle circle with lines connecting to it. If you're not sure what a mind map looks like, search online for examples. The complexity of your mind map will vary depending on the ages and experiences of your students.
- ☐ **FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE OLDER** Have students work in pairs or trios to make their own mind maps on large paper similar to the one described for younger students. When students are finished, have them present their mind maps to the whole group.

TALK ABOUT IT

Choose the questions that best fit the learning level of your group.

- ☐ What does a shepherd do for his sheep?
- ☐ How does Jesus care for you?
- ☐ From whom or what do we need protection today?

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

Guide discussion using these key points.

- The context of this story in the Book of John is that Jesus was talking to the Pharisees. He was telling the Pharisees that they were the robbers and thieves from whom He had to protect His people, the sheep.
- The relationship between sheep and shepherd is very important. The trust the sheep have for their shepherd is essential.
- In Bible times, a sheep pen didn't have a door or a gate that would close, so the shepherd would lay across the opening at night. The shepherd provided the only way to get into the safety of the pen, and the shepherd protected the sheep from the dangers outside the pen. The shepherd also protected the sheep from wandering out of the pen and becoming lost. Jesus protects us and leads us. He is the door in and out of heaven.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Christ is the Good Shepherd, who loved us so much that He laid down His life for us so that we might have eternal life.

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

STORYTELLING DIRECTIONS: As you read the story, invite children to baa like sheep.

Do you remember King David? Before he became a king, he was a shepherd. That means he took care of sheep. David wrote many psalms in the Bible. One of them is about a shepherd taking care of sheep! It is Psalm 23.

Many years later, Jesus lived in the same country as King David. There were still many shepherds and sheep there. So the people knew the important work shepherds do in caring for their sheep. Jesus wanted the people to know about the important work He came to do and how He loves and cares for us. So one day, when Jesus was teaching the people, He told them a story about shepherds and sheep.

Let's pretend you are the sheep in Jesus' story. What does a sheep say? Yes, **baa-aa**. When you hear "**baa-aa**" in the story, can you say that?

In the morning, the good shepherd leads his sheep out of their pen. "Walk, walk, walk, little sheep," he says. The sheep and lambs know his voice, and they follow him. **Baa-aa, baa-aa**, they say.

The shepherd leads the sheep to green grass. "Eat, eat, eat, little sheep," he tells them. "You are safe here. I will take care of you." **Baa-aa, baa-aa**, say the sheep.

"No, no, no, little sheep. Don't go there! That water is too noisy and deep," says the shepherd. "You might fall in and get hurt!" He leads his sheep away from the rushing river. **Baa-aa, baa-aa**, say the sheep.

Finally, the shepherd finds a calm stream of water. "Drink, drink, drink, little sheep," says the shepherd. "Here

is quiet, fresh water for you. You won't get hurt here." **Baa-aa, baa-aa**, say the sheep.

"Watch, watch, watch, little sheep," warns the good shepherd. "Your woolly coat will get caught in that prickly bush. Stay close to me. I will keep you safe." **Baa-aa, baa-aa**, say the sheep.

"Shh, shh, shh, little sheep," says the shepherd. "Don't be afraid. I will protect you. I won't let anything hurt you." **Baa-aa, baa-aa**, say the sheep.

"Follow, follow, follow, little sheep," the shepherd says as he leads them back home for the night. **Baa-aa, baa-aa**, say the sheep. They follow the shepherd's voice all the way back to their sheep pen.

"Have no fear, have no fear, little sheep," says the shepherd. "I will always take care of you because I love you." **Baa-aa, baa-aa**, say the sheep. Then they lie down and go fast to sleep.

Jesus told the people listening to Him that He cares for us the way a shepherd cares for His sheep. Jesus is our Good Shepherd. He knows who we are and calls us by name. He gives us food to eat and clothes to wear. He gives us a warm bed to sleep in. He protects us from things that might hurt us. He gives us moms and dads and others to love us and keep us safe too. Best of all, Jesus died on the cross and rose again to save us. Jesus, our Good Shepherd, loves us so much!

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Long ago, David wrote beautiful Psalm 23, where he compared himself to a sheep. For many years, he had been a shepherd keeping watch over the sheep of his father, Jesse. He realized God watches over us like a shepherd. So he started writing, "The LORD is my shepherd" (Psalm 23:1). In the tenth chapter of John, Jesus said, "I am the Good Shepherd."

To understand what Jesus was saying, we need to know a little bit about sheep. Sheep are not strong animals. They are not extra fast, and they don't have a lot of ways to defend themselves. If a wolf attacks a herd of unprotected sheep, it has an easy time grabbing one. Also, sheep easily wander off from one another in search of food to eat. It is easy for them to get lost and hurt.

So a shepherd has a very important job. He has to watch his sheep carefully and always be ready to keep them safe, remembering that many wild animals are hunting after them.

When Jesus said, "I am the Good Shepherd," He was reminding us of how much we need Him. Like sheep and lambs, we can't see the wolves that are hiding in the tall

grass, sneaking up to grab us. The devil, the sinful people around us, and our own sinful desires put us in great danger. But Jesus knows they are there. He is keeping watch over them—and using His Word and His gifts to protect us from them.

That is the greatest thing about Jesus, our Good Shepherd. Each of us was trapped, and the devil had us in great danger. But Jesus didn't leave us. He went to the cross to suffer and die to save us. But He didn't stay dead—a dead shepherd can't help the sheep anymore. No, Jesus rose again, so He will always be our Good Shepherd, protecting us and leading us to heaven.

There are many scary things in this world, but we don't have to be afraid, because Jesus is protecting us and guiding us through life. Jesus wants to protect everyone from every harm and danger and lead them home to heaven.

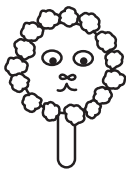
LIVE

Choose from the following activities and crafts to help connect Bible learning to life.

☐ Lamb Craft

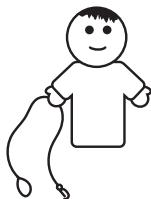
Tape a craft stick to the back of a small paper plate. Have children draw lamb eyes, nose, and mouth on the plate. Give them slightly pulled-apart cotton balls to glue around the face and to the back of the plate. Say, **Jesus is our Good Shepherd.**

We are His sheep! Jesus loves us. What are some ways He takes care of us?



☐ Puppet Talk

Have your puppet hold a leash. He says the leash is a clue about something special he got this week. Ask if they know what it is. It's a puppy! He asks the boys and girls if they have pets and what else he needs so he can take care of it (e.g., dishes and food, a bed, toys). Puppet says he loves his puppy so much and talks about caring for it. Tell him this reminds you of today's Bible story about Jesus caring for us.



☐ Follow the Shepherd

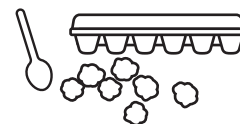
Choose a child to be the shepherd. Other children will follow the shepherd. Sing the following to the tune of "We're Following the Leader."

We're following the shepherd, The shepherd, the shepherd; We're following the shepherd, To see what [he/she] will do. Shepherd does an action (jump, clap, etc.) and others copy it. Give each child a chance to be the shepherd. Say, **Wherever we go, whatever we do, Jesus, our Good Shepherd, loves and cares for us.**



☐ Shepherd the Sheep

Set out cotton balls, egg cartons, and spoons. Have children pretend to bring the sheep (cotton balls) into their pens (egg cups) for the night. Have them count the sheep in each pen. Ask, **How does our Good Shepherd, Jesus, care for us?**



☐ Sheep Snack

Serve cups of water with popcorn and mini marshmallows on green napkins. Let children pretend the snacks are sheep, moving them around and saying baa-aa. Say, **Sheep need someone to take care of them. Who loves you and cares for you?** Accept answers (e.g., Mom and Dad; Jesus, our Good Shepherd).



☐ Hide and Sheep

Hide a paper or toy sheep somewhere in your classroom. Ask children to be good shepherds and look for the sheep. When they find it, hide it again. (Option: Hide a number of sheep to find.) At the end of the activity, talk about how Jesus, our Good Shepherd, cares for us.



☐ Good Shepherd Hymns

Using the *Lutheran Service Book* hymnal look at the hymns "I Am Jesus' Little Lamb" (LSB 740) and "Have No Fear, Little Flock" (LSB 735). Read the words as you would a poem. Talk about how these words connect to today's lesson. Find music online and sing them together.



LEAVE

SAY

Our Good Shepherd, Jesus, cares for us so much that He died on the cross for us and rose again. Wow! That's something to be excited about. I don't mind being a sheep if Jesus is my shepherd.

PRAY

Dear Jesus, thank You for being our Good Shepherd and for loving and caring for us so much. Help us to follow Your voice. Guide us today and always. In Your name we pray. Amen.

A TREE VIEW

Zacchaeus
Luke 19:1–10
AD 32

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

Jesus loves sinners.

BIBLE VERSE

The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. Luke 19:10

LEARNER GOAL

I understand that Jesus came to save and love all sinners, including me.

LAW & GOSPEL

We ignore our own sin and point out the sinfulness of others.

Jesus came to seek and to save us and all who are lost in sin.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

Zacchaeus, a wealthy tax collector, anxiously awaits the arrival of Jesus. Short of stature, Zacchaeus climbs a tree to see the Savior. Despite criticism, Jesus invites Himself to the tax collector's home. Motivated by Christ's compassion, Zacchaeus confesses his sin and promises to make restitution.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read Luke 19:1–10 and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read the leader devotion, found in the digital resource center.

IN DEPTH Read the account of Jesus' calling of Matthew in Matthew 9:9–13 with study notes in *TLSE* for a different instance of Jesus calling a tax collector.

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- ☐ Step stool
- ☐ Poster-size paper
- ☐ Balloon
- ☐ Strips of paper
- ☐ Green washable ink pads or green tissue paper
- ☐ Arch Book *Zacchaeus*
- ☐ Apple, orange, or banana slices
- ☐ Puppet
- ☐ Nesting toys

FOR EVERY LESSON

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Device with prepped music
- ☐ Copies of downloadable activity page
- ☐ Copies of Enduring Faith Page
- ☐ Supply Box

LAUNCH

Plan your lesson by reading through the options in each section. Choose the activities that will best fit your learners, and mark those boxes to guide you as you teach the lesson.

BEGIN

- ☐ Follow the Order of Opening Worship, use the Lesson Opening, or do both (part of the planning resources in the digital resource center).
- ☐ Sing songs using music found in the digital resource center, or sing your own favorite songs.

SAY

- ☐ **Has anyone ever told you, “You’re too little to do that?”** Let children tell. **Today, we’re going to hear about a little man who finds out that no one is too little for Jesus’ love.**
- ☐ **Have you ever climbed a tree? Have you seen any grown-ups climb trees? What would make a grown-up climb a tree? What would be so exciting to see that you would climb a tree?**

PRAY

Dear Jesus, thank You for bringing us together to learn about Your Word today. Help us to be excited to hear the Good News that You have for us. In Your name we pray. Amen.

LEARN

Show your Bible, and remind the children that all the stories in God’s Word are true.

TELL THE BIBLE NARRATIVE

Choose one of the options on the next page to tell the Bible narrative.

DO THIS!

Use one or both of the following activities to talk about the Bible narrative after you’ve read it.

- ☐ **FOR ACTIVE LEARNERS** This story lends itself perfectly for acting out. After you have read the story aloud to your students, help them to organize themselves to reenact the events of this true narrative by asking them the “who, what, where, and what next” of the story. Let them act it out more than once to give various students an opportunity to portray different characters. Use a step stool in place of a tree.
- ☐ **FOR VISUAL LEARNERS** Instead of acting out the events of the story, have students draw the events on poster-size paper to make a storyboard-type of drawing of this narrative. If you have a larger group, divide the group into pairs and assign each group a portion of the story to draw on individual sheets of copy paper.

TALK ABOUT IT

Choose the questions that best fit the learning level of your group.

- ☐ What did Zacchaeus do so he could see Jesus?
- ☐ What did Jesus do when He saw Zacchaeus?
- ☐ How was Jesus a friend and Savior to Zacchaeus?

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

Guide discussion using these key points.

- Zacchaeus might have been small in stature, but his sins were large. He was seen as a traitor to his people for collecting taxes for the Roman government. Even worse, he got rich by cheating his own people. He might have been one of the most hated men in Jericho.
- Jesus’ call to faith and forgiveness for Zacchaeus changed him dramatically. His heart was changed and Zacchaeus immediately made some big changes to his life.
- Sometimes, we may feel small or full of sin, like Zacchaeus, but like Zacchaeus, we can rejoice in knowing that we are never too small or too sinful for Jesus to love us.
- Sin separates us from God. Jesus brings us back together.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Christ came to find me and save me, a lost sinner. He died and rose again to save me from my sin.

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

STORYTELLING DIRECTIONS: As you tell the story, hold your hand low for *little* and high for *big*. At the end of the story, ask children to suggest ways Jesus helps them to show love for others.

Zacchaeus was a **little** man who lived in a **big** city. Zacchaeus didn't have many friends because a lot of people didn't like him. He did bad things. One day, Zacchaeus heard that Jesus was coming to his city. Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus.

He hurried down the street where Jesus would walk. Many other people wanted to see Jesus too. They hurried out of their houses and lined up along the street. Soon there was a **big** crowd of people waiting to see Jesus! But Zacchaeus could not see! He was too **little**! What would Zacchaeus do?

Not far away, Zacchaeus saw a tree. It had strong branches. So Zacchaeus ran over and climbed the tree! Up, up, up he climbed. Soon Jesus walked along the road. Jesus came right up to that tree where Zacchaeus sat. Jesus looked up and smiled at Zacchaeus. He said, "Zacchaeus, you come down! I want to come to your house today!"

Zacchaeus hurried down from the tree. Some people wondered why Jesus would want to go to Zacchaeus's house. Jesus told them, "I have come to save the lost."

Jesus loved Zacchaeus and wanted him to be His child. Jesus came to be his friend and Savior.

Now Zacchaeus knew that Jesus loved him. He wanted Jesus to know that he loved Him too. He said, "Jesus, I'll give back everything that isn't mine. I'll give things to the poor people."

Jesus said, "Today, you belong to God." Zacchaeus was so glad. He knew that Jesus was his friend. Zacchaeus was **little**, but Jesus' love for him was **big**! Zacchaeus did bad things, but Jesus forgave him. Jesus loved Zacchaeus and changed his heart and life.

Jesus has a **big** love for you too! No one is too **little** for Jesus. No one is too bad for Jesus. Everyone sins. But Jesus came to save us all. Jesus died and rose again to take away our sins—the bad things we do. He forgives us and makes us His children. He gives us His Holy Spirit. He puts love in our hearts and helps us show love for others. What are some ways you can do that?

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Zacchaeus was a tax collector. He lived in Jericho, and he learned that Jesus was passing through town on His way to the Passover in Jerusalem. Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector—in charge of all the tax collectors in the area. So the Jewish people hated him even more than they hated most tax collectors.

But Zacchaeus had heard things about Jesus. He heard Jesus talked to tax collectors and ate with them. Jesus even chose one named Matthew to be one of His twelve disciples. So when Zacchaeus heard Jesus was passing through town, he wanted to get a look at Him. But he was too short to see Jesus over the crowds. So he ran ahead and climbed up into a tree.

And sure enough, from the tree, Zacchaeus could see the big crowd of people coming through town. And in the middle of that crowd, he saw Jesus, coming closer and closer. Suddenly, Jesus came near his tree, stopped,

and looked right up at him. With a big smile, Jesus said, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today."

Zacchaeus was so happy that he rushed down, led Jesus to his house, and made a big feast for Him. As he talked with Jesus, he thought about the way he had treated the people he collected taxes from. He felt bad because he took more money than he should have.

He turned to Jesus and made a promise: "Behold, Lord, half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have cheated anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold." That meant if he took more money than he should have, he would pay back four times that amount.

Jesus replied, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For I came to seek and to save the lost."

LIVE

Choose from the following activities and crafts to help connect Bible learning to life.

☐ Balloon Toss

Zacchaeus didn't have many friends, but Jesus came to be his friend and Savior. That made Zacchaeus happy! Draw a happy face on a balloon. Say, **Friends like to play together. Let's play Balloon Toss with our friends. Every time a friend hits the balloon to keep it in the air, say, "Jesus loves you." If the balloon falls to the ground, say, "Jesus forgives you."**



☐ Name Chain

Have strips of paper. Write "Jesus" on one. Say the rhyme for each child, writing the child's name on a strip of paper: **Someone loves [Max]; yes, it's true. Someone loves [Max]; do you know who? Jesus loves [Max]; yes, it's true. Jesus loves [Max]. Now we know who!**

Start with Jesus link and link strips together to make a chain to put in worship area. Remind children Jesus loves them so much He died and rose for them.



☐ Tree Craft

On brown construction paper, trace around each child's forearm and hand, with fingers spread to make a tree trunk and branches. Cut it out and glue it on white paper. Have children add leaves by gluing snippets of green tissue paper or making thumbprints using a green ink pad. Say, **Jesus called Zacchaeus by name to come down from the tree. Jesus knows your name too!**



☐ Zacchaeus Arch Book

Read the Arch Book *Zacchaeus* with students, or read from a Bible story book. Older students could practice reading the story aloud with younger students.



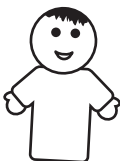
☐ Fruit Snack

Serve slices of apples, oranges, or bananas. Say, **Zacchaeus climbed a tree to see Jesus. Trees are good for many things! They give us shade when it is hot. Some trees give us fruit to eat! What kind of food do you think Zacchaeus served Jesus? Do you think there was fruit?**



☐ Puppet Talk

Puppet's puppy chewed a toy. His sister was mad. The puppy ran away when she yelled at him. Puppet went to look for him. He called his name, and his puppy came running. Puppet forgave him. Say, **People were mad at Zacchaeus. But Jesus loved and forgave him. That made Zacchaeus happy! Jesus loves us and forgives us too.**



☐ Tall to Small

Set out nesting toys such as blocks, stacking dolls, or measuring cups. Have children put the nesting toys in order from smallest to biggest or make different sizes of towers with the blocks. Talk about small to big. Say, **Jesus loves each one of us, from the tallest to the smallest. Jesus loves you!**



LEAVE

SAY

Jesus loves sinners like Zacchaeus and like you and like me. Thankfully, we don't have to climb a tree to be with Jesus. Jesus is with us in His Word and has promised to be with us wherever we go.

PRAY

Dear Jesus, thank You for coming to save lost and sinful people like Zacchaeus and like us. Make us as excited as Zacchaeus to tell others about You. In Your name we pray. Amen.

A CRUSHING TRUTH

Jesus Is Crucified
Matthew 27:11–66
AD 33

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

Jesus died for our sins.

BIBLE VERSE

Christ died for our sins. 1 Corinthians 15:3

LEARNER GOAL

I understand that Jesus paid for my sins by dying on the cross.

LAW & GOSPEL

We are all sinful and deserve eternal death.

Jesus paid the price for the sin of the world by His suffering and death on the cross.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

The events of Christ's crucifixion unfold in a series of brutal and bloody vignettes: questioned before Pilate, mocked and abused by the Roman guard, nailed to the cross. Jesus hangs between life and death—abandoned by His Father—yielding up His life at the moment He chooses. Multiple witnesses see where Christ is laid in a borrowed tomb.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read Matthew 27:11–66 and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read the leader devotion, found in the digital resource center.

IN DEPTH Explore the Passion Week map (TLSB, p. 1690–91) and the burial bench image (TLSB, p. 1823) to visualize this lesson more clearly.

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- ☐ LSB hymnals
- ☐ Travel-size tissue packs
- ☐ Blank address labels
- ☐ Digital device
- ☐ Vegetable oil
- ☐ Pretzel sticks, cheese dip, dark paper plates

FOR EVERY LESSON

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Device with prepped music
- ☐ Copies of downloadable activity page
- ☐ Copies of Enduring Faith Page
- ☐ Supply Box

LAUNCH

Plan your lesson by reading through the options in each section. Choose the activities that will best fit your learners, and mark those boxes to guide you as you teach the lesson.

BEGIN

- ☐ Follow the Order of Opening Worship, use the Lesson Opening, or do both (part of the planning resources in the digital resource center).
- ☐ Sing songs using music found in the digital resource center, or sing your own favorite songs.

PRAY

Dear Jesus, You have done everything for us, even dying on the cross for us. Thank You! Bless our time today as we learn about how much You love us. In Your name we pray. Amen.

SAY

- ☐ Hi, friends! I'm glad you are here to learn more about our friend and Savior, Jesus!
- ☐ What are different kinds of sins? Today, we're going to think about our sin, but also about how Jesus saved us from sin.

LEARN

Show your Bible, and remind the children that all the stories in God's Word are true.

TELL THE BIBLE NARRATIVE

Choose one of the options on the next page to tell the Bible narrative.

DO THIS!

Use one or both of the following activities to talk about the Bible narrative after you've read it.

- ☐ **FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE YOUNGER** Hand out blank sheets of paper. Ask students to divide their paper into sections, giving help as needed. In each section, students can draw elements of this account (a tree for Jesus praying in the garden, a sword for the soldiers taking Jesus away, a crown of thorns for Jesus before Pilate, a cross for Jesus dying on the cross, a tomb for where Jesus was buried, etc.). You could also pair students up to divide the work.
- ☐ **FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE OLDER** Sing "Go to Dark Gethsemane" (LSB 436). Pause after every stanza, and summarize what part of the account the stanza describes. (Focus on stanzas 2 and 3 for the content addressed in the lesson today.) You could also sing "Were You There" (LSB 456). If you aren't comfortable singing, you could ask volunteers to read the stanzas aloud.

TALK ABOUT IT

Choose the questions that best fit the learning level of your group.

- ☐ How did Jesus pay for our sins?
- ☐ What happened to the sky when Jesus died?
- ☐ Crucifixion is still one of the worst deaths someone could go through. Why would Jesus suffer so much for us?

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

Guide discussion using these key points.

- Ever since Adam and Eve sinned, God promised a Savior. Jesus is the promised Savior. We don't like to think about our sins, but everyone is sinful. Jesus paid for all our sins on the cross.
- It's sometimes easy to be angry with the people who put Jesus on the cross. But Jesus went to the cross for our sins too. Jesus willingly went to the cross because He loves us.
- Jesus paid for our sins out of love for us. Now we have eternal life! We don't have to worry about death anymore.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus' death on the cross and rising from the dead is at the heart of God's plan for us.

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

STORYTELLING DIRECTIONS: Make a cross with two fingers each time you hear the word *Jesus* while reading.

Jesus knew that there was a big problem in the world. That problem was sin. Ever since Adam and Eve sinned long ago, sin has been a problem for all people. **Jesus** loves people. **Jesus** loves you and me!

So **Jesus** left His home in heaven and became a person like us, but He was still God too. He came to earth to help us with our sin problem. **Jesus** was born as a little baby. Then He grew bigger just like you are growing bigger. People have a sin problem, but not **Jesus**. He never whined or fussed. He never said no to His parents. He never hit a friend. He never did any naughty things. **Jesus** never sinned! **Jesus** kept all of God's rules for us! When **Jesus** grew to be a big man, He taught people about God's love and healed people for three years. But the biggest reason **Jesus** came to earth was to save us from our sins.

Jesus knew He would soon die on the cross to pay for our sins. So **Jesus** went to a garden to pray. He asked His Father in heaven for strength. Soon, some soldiers came. March, march, march. They took **Jesus** to some important church rulers. These rulers did not believe that **Jesus** was the Savior God promised to send. They wanted to get rid of Him.

They took **Jesus** to a man named Pilate. Pilate was the ruler of the country. They told Pilate, "**Jesus** is a trouble-maker. He should die."

Pilate did not think **Jesus** had done anything wrong. But he was afraid of the people. He let his soldiers put a robe on **Jesus** and hurt Him. They gave **Jesus** a crown, but it was made of thorns. Then Pilate had an idea. He brought out **Jesus** and another man who had done bad things. Pilate asked the people, "Whom do you want to go free? Whom do you want to die?" The people shouted, "Free Barabbas! Nail **Jesus** to a cross!"

So Pilate let the soldiers take **Jesus** and nail Him to a cross. This hurt **Jesus** very much. But **Jesus** stayed on the cross so He could take the punishment for our sins. When **Jesus** hung on the cross, the sky turned very, very dark. It was dark for three whole hours. Finally, **Jesus** cried out, "It is finished." Then He died. The ground shook, and rocks broke apart. A big curtain in the temple tore into two pieces.

A soldier said, "Truly, this was the Son of God!"

Jesus' friends came and put His body in a tomb.

But this is not the end of the story. **Jesus** did not stay dead. On Easter morning, He came alive again! Because **Jesus** suffered and died and rose again, God forgives our sins. Because **Jesus** did this, we can live with Him in heaven someday. **Jesus** loves us so much!

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Jesus continued to heal and to teach about God's kingdom. The Pharisees and others grew so angry that they decided Jesus must die. They arrested Him and took Him to the Romans because they could not put anyone to death. Only the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, could do that.

Early Friday morning, they brought Jesus before Pilate. After talking with Jesus, Pilate told the Jews, "I find no guilt in Him." He knew Jesus had done nothing wrong, but Pilate thought if he had Jesus whipped, that would satisfy the leaders who hated Jesus so much.

So the Roman soldiers took Jesus and whipped Him badly. But when the Jewish leaders saw Him, they shouted, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!"

Finally, Pilate gave up. He ordered his soldiers to take Jesus outside the city and crucify Him.

The Roman soldiers made Jesus carry His cross through Jerusalem to a hill called Golgotha outside the city. There, they nailed His hands and feet to the cross and raised Him up between two criminals.

They put a sign over His head that read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

At noon, the sun stopped shining, and it grew very dark. Jesus was being punished in our place for our sins. God the Father left Jesus all alone to suffer the punishment for all our sins.

This went on for three long hours until Jesus cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

Jesus shouted in a loud voice, "It is finished." He had finished everything God the Father had sent Him to do. Every sin had been paid for, and heaven now stood open for everyone who believes in Jesus.

Finally, Jesus prayed, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit." Then, He died.

The curtain in the temple that divided the place made for God and the place made for people tore from top to bottom. The earth shook, rocks split, and even some people came back to life.

A Roman military leader said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

Many people are scared to die. But we don't have to be. Jesus died, was buried, and rose to life again. He promised that whoever believes in Him will live with Him forever because He saved us by dying for our sins and winning the battle over death.

LIVE

Choose from the following activities and crafts to help connect Bible learning to life.

☐ Loving Others

Bring travel-size packets of tissues and blank address labels. Say, **Because of sin, sad thing sometimes happen.**

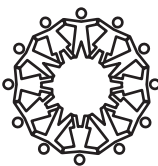
Mention that we can help others feel better when they are sad. Ask children to decorate a label with crosses and hearts and to place a label on the front of a tissue pack. Tell children to give their pack to someone who looks sad and tell that person, "Jesus loves you!"



☐ Happy News

Gather everyone in a circle. Have everyone join hands and walk around the room as you sing the song below to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star."

I have happy news to share; I will tell it ev'ry where. Jesus died and rose for me. From my sins I am set free! I will tell both big and small: Jesus died and rose for all!



☐ Movie Moments

Build a playlist from a few brief video clips online.

They can be famous parts of children's movies or silly clips of animals. Some of these may be happy (a puppy does a trick), and some may be mildly sad (a kitten loses a toy). Ask children to identify the different clips as happy or sad.

Talk about how our world has happy and sad things that happen. It was sad that Jesus had to die, but it was happy that He saved us from sin.



☐ "Stained Glass" Cross

Cover work area. Give each child a large cross outline on white paper to color. Rub the back of each cross with oil to make it translucent. Attach yarn to hang in window.



☐ Cross Snack

Serve cups of water and small pretzel sticks on dark paper plates. Offer a dip such as soft cheese. Let children arrange the pretzel sticks as a cross on the dark plate before dipping the pretzels and eating them. Say, **Let's say a thank-You prayer to Jesus for dying on the cross for us. And let's thank God for this snack too.** Pray, or invite a child to say the prayer.



☐ Bible Verse

Read the Bible Verse from 1 Corinthians 15:3 in your Bible: **Christ died for our sins.** Ask the children to say the verse with you. Say, **Jesus died for our sins because He loves us. What are other ways that Jesus shows His love for us?** Discuss ways Jesus shows His love, such as caring for us, listening to our prayers, and so forth.



☐ Cross Scavenger Hunt

Ask the children to join you on a scavenger hunt. Lead them in a line, and see how many crosses you can find. Look in your room and perhaps even throughout the building. Some children may notice crosses in architecture and the like.



LEAVE

SAY

Jesus loves us so much, He died for our sins. Now we don't have to be afraid of death anymore. But that's not the end of what Jesus does for us. He gives us eternal life!

PRAY

Dear Jesus, thank You for loving us. Thank You for dying on the cross for our sins. We don't have to be afraid of death because You give us life forever with You. In Your name we pray, Jesus. Amen.

A LIVING TRUTH

Jesus Rises
Matthew 28:1–15
AD 33

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

Jesus rose from the dead.

BIBLE VERSE

The Lord has risen! Luke 24:34

LEARNER GOAL

I understand that Jesus conquered death and rose from the dead, giving me eternal life in Him.

LAW & GOSPEL

Sin separated us from God, and we are filled with fear.
Jesus died for us and rose again, conquering sin and death and giving us the joy of eternal life.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

The women who witness Christ's burial are the first to witness His resurrection. With great joy, they run to tell His disciples that Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read Matthew 28:1–15 and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read the leader devotion, found in the digital resource center.

IN DEPTH Read the article “Which Tomb?” in *TLSB*, page 1651.

This lesson can be used for Easter.

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- ☐ Clothespins
- ☐ Strip magnets
- ☐ White coffee filters
- ☐ Hula-Hoops
- ☐ Arch Book *The Easter Surprise*, Easter books
- ☐ Mini bagels, cream cheese, pretzel sticks
- ☐ Cardstock

FOR EVERY LESSON

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Device with prepped music
- ☐ Copies of downloadable activity page
- ☐ Copies of Enduring Faith Page
- ☐ Supply Box

LAUNCH

Plan your lesson by reading through the options in each section. Choose the activities that will best fit your learners, and mark those boxes to guide you as you teach the lesson.

BEGIN

- ☐ Follow the Order of Opening Worship, use the Lesson Opening, or do both (part of the planning resources in the digital resource center).
- ☐ Sing songs using music found in the digital resource center, or sing your own favorite songs.

PRAY

Dear Lord Jesus, help us learn more about the great news of Easter and the resurrection. Bless our time together. In Your name we pray. Amen.

LEARN

Show your Bible, and remind the children that all the stories in God's Word are true.

TELL THE BIBLE NARRATIVE

Choose one of the options on the next page to tell the Bible narrative.

DO THIS!

Use one or both of the following activities to talk about the Bible narrative after you've read it.

- ☐ **FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE YOUNGER** This is a Scripture narrative that is easy for students to act out. The first scene would include students to portray both Marys, some soldiers, and an angel. The second scene would include the two Marys, the angel, and Jesus. Help students figure out when and how to portray the extreme emotions of sadness, fear, and joy exhibited here.
- ☐ **FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE OLDER** If you have mostly older students who are good readers and know this account very well, look at the parallel accounts of the resurrection in **Mark 16:1–13**, **Luke 24:1–12**, and **John 20:1–18**. Make a timeline or story map and work together to include all the details from all four accounts. If you have enough students, divide into four groups, giving each group one of the gospel readings, then have each group add details (in words or pictures) to the timeline from their Gospel reading. If you have time, you can even talk about why the different accounts include different details.

SAY

- ☐ **Jesus is risen! He's risen indeed! Alleluia!** Invite children to say, "He's risen indeed!" after you say, "Jesus is risen!"
- ☐ **Can you think of a time when you were really, really sad? Did you ever think you could be happy again? Now think of a time when you got a wonderful surprise. Imagine how you would feel if you got the best surprise ever on the saddest day of your life. What would that feel like? What would you do?**

TALK ABOUT IT

Choose the questions that best fit the learning level of your group.

- ☐ Where were the women going on Easter morning?
- ☐ What were some of the surprises that morning?
- ☐ Mary and Mary ran to tell of the empty tomb. How can we "go and tell"?

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

Guide discussion using these key points.

- Christ's resurrection terrifies His enemies (such as the guards at the tomb and the chief priests) but brings great joy to those who follow Him.
- This story is most certainly true. The resurrection stands at the center of the salvation story and the foundation of our faith. It is the fulfillment of God's prophetic word and is the crowning moment in all of human history—Jesus' victory over death for us all!
- We have new life in Jesus. We are no longer dead in our sin because of what Jesus did for us.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Christ rose from the dead to offer us the promise of our resurrection from the dead at His glorious return.

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

STORYTELLING DIRECTIONS: As you tell the story, emphasize the opposites *sad* and *glad*. Have children show *sad* and *glad* on their faces.

On Good Friday, Jesus died on the cross to take away our sins. What a *sad* day! His friends put Jesus in a tomb. The tomb was different from the graves where we bury dead people today. The grave was not underground. It was a little cave with an opening. Jesus' friends rolled a big stone in front of the opening. Guards stood watch in front of it. But Jesus' friends went home. They were so *sad*.

On Easter Sunday morning, some women were walking to Jesus' tomb to put spices on His body. They wondered who would roll the stone away. Surprise! All of a sudden, the ground began to shake. It was an earthquake! An angel came from heaven and rolled away the stone! But that was not the only surprise!

The soldiers guarding Jesus' tomb felt the earthquake. Surprise! They saw the angel, bright as lightning, roll the stone away! The soldiers were so afraid that they fell to the ground. Then they got up and ran away! The angel just sat on the big stone he'd rolled away from Jesus' tomb.

When the women got to the tomb, they saw the angel too. He told them, "Jesus is not here. He's risen, as He

said." Then he told them to go into the tomb and look. Surprise! Jesus' body was not there. The tomb was empty! Jesus was alive! What a *glad* day!

The angel told them to go and tell Jesus' friends, the disciples, that He was alive. So the women ran to tell Jesus' friends that Jesus was alive! They were amazed at what they'd seen. All of a sudden, they saw something even more amazing! Surprise! There was Jesus, right in front of them! They ran to Jesus and fell down in front of Him to worship Him.

Jesus said, "Do not be afraid. Go tell My friends that I will meet them soon." So the women ran to where the disciples were staying. They couldn't wait to tell them the Good News: Jesus was alive!

It was a *sad* day when Jesus died on the cross for us. But He did that to pay for our sins so that we can be forgiven. On Easter, Jesus came alive again. Easter is a *glad* day! Because Jesus rose from the dead, we can be sure that someday we will live with Him in heaven.

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Early Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary started off for the tomb. As they walked along, they remembered the huge stone that had been rolled in front of it. They weren't strong enough to roll it back, so they wondered how they were going to get inside.

Suddenly there was an earthquake, and an angel came down from heaven, rolled the stone back, and sat on it. When the guards saw the angel, they were terrified. They shook and fell down like they were dead. The angel waited for the women.

When the women came, the angel told them, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, as He said. Come, see the place where He lay."

They looked in and saw that Jesus' body was missing. There was only the cloth and few spices lying where His body had been. The angel told them, "Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead, and behold, He is going before you to Galilee; there you will see Him."

The women turned and rushed back toward the city to tell Jesus' disciples. But while they were on the way, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" They came close, grabbed hold of His feet, and worshiped Him. Jesus told them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell My brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."

While the women were going to find the disciples, the guards woke up and went to tell the chief priests what had happened. They knew they would be in big trouble if the governor thought that they had fallen asleep on the job. The chief priests and the elders got together and gave the guards money to lie about what they saw. They told the guards to tell people that Jesus' disciples came at night and stole His body. The guards took the money and did as they were told. The false story was spread among the Jews for a long time.

LIVE

Choose from the following activities and crafts to help connect Bible learning to life.

☐ Sing the Bible Verse

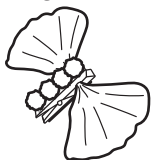
Read the Bible Verse from Luke 24:34: **The Lord has risen!** Have children repeat it, then sing it to the tune of “The Farmer in the Dell.” Add actions, if you wish.



The Lord has risen! *Crouch low and jump up.*
The Lord has risen! *Crouch low and jump up.*
Let’s sing and shout
“Hooray!” *Say “Hooray.”*
The Lord has risen! *Crouch low and jump up.*

☐ Butterfly Craft

Glue four small colorful pom-poms to a pinch-type clothespin to make a butterfly body. Glue a strip magnet to the other side. Color white coffee filters using washable markers. Spritz filters with water to make the colors spread. When dry, gather wings together in the middle and hold in place with the clothespin.



☐ Roll Away the Stone

Say, **The stone in front of Jesus’ tomb was very heavy. It took strong men to roll it in place on Good Friday. It took one of God’s angels to roll it away on Easter.** Have children pretend to roll the stone away, using Hula-Hoops. Give them a plastic hoop to roll back and forth to a partner. Have them stand 8 to 10 feet apart and increase distance as they get better. Practice, then have first child say, **On Good Friday, Jesus died for us** as she rolls hoop. Second child rolls hoop and says, **On Easter, Jesus came alive again.** Option: Use large balls.



☐ Easter Books

Read aloud the Arch Book *The Easter Surprise* or read about Holy Week and Easter from another illustrated Bible story book. If you have a collection of Easter books, bring them in and let children look through them.



☐ Butterfly Snack

Cut mini bagel halves in half. Put rounded edges of bagels back-to-back to look like wings. Give one to each child on a small paper plate. Let children spread halves with cream cheese and add a stick pretzel for a body. Butterflies remind us of new life. Talk about how we are happy Jesus is alive.



☐ Opposites

Do an action and have children do the opposite:
 Sit—stand (act out)
 Up—down (point)
 Loud—soft (use voice)
 Happy—sad (show on face)
 Say, **On Good Friday, Jesus died for us. On Easter, Jesus did the opposite. He became alive again!**



☐ Easter Poster

Have children make posters of the Bible Verse. Hand out cardstock, markers, and glitter glue. Have children write the Bible Verse and add symbols of Easter to their posters. Talk about the meaning of each symbol. Enlist older students to be your class helpers.



LEAVE

SAY

Jesus conquered death and rose from the dead. Wow! That’s big news, the very best news ever! Thanks to Jesus, we don’t have to be afraid of death. Because Jesus rose from the dead, we, too, will rise one day and be with Jesus forever.

PRAY

Dear Jesus, thank You for Your resurrection. It changes everything! Help us to go and tell everyone about this amazing event and the new life we have in You. In Your name we pray, Jesus. Amen.

A REVEALING TRUTH

The Emmaus Road
Luke 24:13–35
AD 33

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

Jesus shows He is alive.

BIBLE VERSE

Their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him. Luke 24:31

LEARNER GOAL

I understand that Jesus uses His Word and Sacraments to help me believe and trust in Him.

LAW & GOSPEL

Our sinful nature blinds us to the truth of the Gospel.

Jesus opens our eyes through His Word and Sacraments so that we can believe and trust in Him.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

Easter afternoon, Jesus joins two disciples discussing the events of the past week in Jerusalem while on their way to Emmaus. Along the way, Jesus interprets the Old Testament prophecies concerning Himself. Arriving at Emmaus, the disciples suddenly recognize Jesus, who then disappears from sight. The disciples quickly return to Jerusalem to share their amazing account.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read Luke 24:13–35 and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read the leader devotion, found in the digital resource center.

IN DEPTH Read the section “The Nature of the Sacrament of the Altar” in *Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation* (2017).

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- ☐ Blue and yellow paper footprints
- ☐ Paper towel tubes
- ☐ Decorative paper
- ☐ Rope or masking tape
- ☐ Magnifying glasses, sunglasses
- ☐ Soft rolls and red jam
- ☐ Puppet
- ☐ Index cards

FOR EVERY LESSON

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Device with prepped music
- ☐ Copies of downloadable activity page
- ☐ Copies of Enduring Faith Page
- ☐ Supply Box

LAUNCH

Plan your lesson by reading through the options in each section. Choose the activities that will best fit your learners, and mark those boxes to guide you as you teach the lesson.

BEGIN

- ☐ Follow the Order of Opening Worship, use the Lesson Opening, or do both (part of the planning resources in the digital resource center).
- ☐ Sing songs using music found in the digital resource center, or sing your own favorite songs.

SAY

- ☐ **Jesus is risen! He's risen indeed! Alleluia!** Invite children to say, "He's risen indeed!" after you say, "Jesus is risen!"
- ☐ **Have you ever tried to learn something new, but it didn't make sense to you? Then after you worked for a while and someone explained it a little differently, all of a sudden it just made sense? How did that feel? Think about that feeling as we read today's Bible account.**

PRAY

Dear Jesus, thank You for dying on the cross for us. We're glad You came alive again on Easter. Help us listen and learn more about You and Your love for us. Amen.

LEARN

Show your Bible, and remind the children that all the stories in God's Word are true.

TELL THE BIBLE NARRATIVE

Choose one of the options on the next page to tell the Bible narrative.

DO THIS!

Use one or both of the following activities to talk about the Bible narrative after you've read it.

- ☐ **FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE YOUNGER** Cut two sets of footprints from blue paper and one set from yellow. Put the blue footprints where children can see them. Tell the story using the Bible Narrative for Younger Children on the following page. When Jesus enters the story, add yellow footprints.
- ☐ **FOR ACTIVE LEARNERS** Take a walk outside or somewhere besides your classroom while you tell this Bible narrative. Use one of the Bible narratives on the next page to guide your telling. As you are telling and walking, help students act out the different sections of the event.

TALK ABOUT IT

Choose the questions that best fit the learning level of your group.

- ☐ How did the men feel at the beginning of the story?
- ☐ What did Jesus tell them?
- ☐ How did they recognize Jesus?
- ☐ Even though we don't see Jesus in person like the disciples did, what are some ways that we still see Jesus today?

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

Guide discussion using these key points.

- Students may have heard the more familiar accounts of the resurrection but may not know of this event that also happens on Easter Day. Help students understand the chronology of this event and why it was important.
- These men weren't blind, but they couldn't see. They needed Jesus to help them understand.
- The Spirit works through pastors, teachers, and others as they share God's Word, to help us see how all Scripture points to Jesus and is written to help us understand Jesus' redeeming love for us.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Christ, who died for our sins, has risen again to give us the gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation by His Means of Grace.

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

STORYTELLING DIRECTIONS: After you tell the story, say and do the poem with children.

Do you like to go outside on walks? Maybe you play in the grass or walk to the playground. Years ago, there were no cars or buses or airplanes. People had to walk outside to get from place to place.

On the first Easter Sunday, two friends were walking home from Jerusalem. They were going to a little town called Emmaus. The friends were very sad. They were talking about their friend Jesus. They were sad that He had died on Good Friday. They didn't understand why Jesus had to suffer and die. One man said, "Some women said Jesus is alive again. But that can't be true!"

Soon, someone came and walked with them. Who do you think it was?

It was Jesus! He came and walked with the two friends. He listened to what they were saying. But the men did not know that the man walking with them was Jesus.

Jesus asked, "What are you talking about? Why are you so sad?"

So the men told Him the news about Jesus. They said, "Jesus was so good and kind. He taught people about God and made sick people better. But some soldiers put Jesus on the cross. When He died, some friends put Him in a tomb. Jesus has been dead three days now. Some women said He's alive. But that can't be true."

Then Jesus said, "You shouldn't be so sad. God's book, the Bible, tells us that the one God sent to save His people must die. He must also come alive again to save His people from their sins." Jesus told them many other things from God's Word.

Soon they came to the house where they were staying. But Jesus kept on walking. "Stop," the men said. "It's almost dark. Stay at our house." So Jesus did.

At supper, Jesus took some bread. He thanked God for the food. When the men saw Jesus pray and break the bread, they knew who He was. "Jesus!" they said. "You really are alive!" They were so happy. Then Jesus was not there anymore.

The two men were so glad that they ran back to Jerusalem to tell their friends. "We've seen Jesus!" they said. "He is alive!" What happy news!

Do this action poem together:

Two men were walking. *Walk in place.*

Two men were talking. *Open and shut fingers.*

Two men were sad, as sad as could be. *Look sad.*

Jesus was walking. *Walk in place.*

Jesus was talking. *Open and shut fingers.*

"Do not be sad! Be glad you're with Me!" *Smile.*

How does Jesus make you happy?

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR OLDER CHILDREN

The same day as Jesus' resurrection, two men were so sad and upset, they left Jerusalem. They didn't believe what they had heard from the women who had seen the open tomb. These men were not part of Jesus' twelve apostles. They were part of a larger group of disciples, or believers. One was named Cleopas, but we don't know the name of the other.

They walked along a road that passed through a village called Emmaus. As they walked along, they talked about all the things that had happened. Jesus came near and started walking along with them, but they didn't recognize Him. He asked them, "What are you talking about?"

They stopped walking and looked at Him with sad faces. Cleopas asked Him, "Are You the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there?" Jesus answered, "What things?"

The two started telling Jesus about Himself. They said He was a prophet who was mighty in what He said and did. They told how the chief priests and rulers had handed Him over to Pilate and that He had been crucified. They talked about how they had thought Jesus was going to save Israel.

Then they said, "Some women from our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they didn't find His body, they came back saying they had seen angels, who said He was alive."

Jesus said, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!" He told them the Messiah had to suffer like this first and then enter His glory by rising from the dead. Then He went through the Old Testament and taught them what God had written about His suffering, death, and resurrection.

By now it was late in the day. The two disciples were stopping in Emmaus for the night, but Jesus acted like He was going to go farther. The two begged Him to stay with them, so He went inside. They sat down for supper, and Jesus took the bread, broke it, said a prayer of thanks, and handed it to them. Suddenly, they recognized Jesus—and then He vanished from their sight.

They talked about the wonderful burning feeling they had felt inside when Jesus was walking and talking with them. They were so excited that they ran back to Jerusalem, found Jesus' disciples, and told them how Jesus had walked and talked with them along the road.

LIVE

Choose from the following activities and crafts to help connect Bible learning to life.

☐ Sing a Song

Sing to the tune “Are You Sleeping?”

Where is Jesus? Where is Jesus? *Hand over eyes.*

Everywhere, everywhere. *Arm to right, then left.*

What is Jesus doing? (Repeat) *Finger to temple.*

Taking care, taking care. *Hug self.*

Tell children that Jesus is everywhere! We hear Him talk to us in His Word, where we learn about His love for us.



☐ Emmaus Road

Have children line up behind a rope or masking-tape line. Tell them to pretend they are walking to Emmaus (a wall or other designated spot). Give suggestions (e.g., take two giant steps, hop four times, hold hands with a friend, take four baby steps). Once the children reach the wall, say, **Jesus is alive! Run (or walk quickly) back to Jerusalem.**



☐ “I Spy” Binocular Craft

Give children two 4-inch paper towel tubes, decorative paper or tissue paper, yarn, stickers, and other decorations (e.g., buttons, stick-on gems, sequins). Cut and glue paper to cover each tube. Staple tubes side by side. Punch a hole in one side of each tube and tie on yarn to make a strap. Add stickers and other decorations. Say, **Binoculars help us see things. Jesus gives us eyes of faith through His Word to see and believe in Him as our Savior.**



☐ I Spy . . .

Set out magnifying glasses, binoculars (see above), and sunglasses along with objects to look at (I Spy books, leaves, flowers, etc.). Talk about which things help us see and which things make it harder to see (sunglasses).



☐ Breaking Bread Snack

Serve soft rolls with red jam. As children break their rolls apart and add jam, say, **Jesus died and rose for us. He showed the men who He was when He broke bread and gave it to them. Jesus opens our eyes to see who He is when we hear His Word from the Bible. Pray, Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest, and let these Thy gifts to us be blessed. Amen.**



☐ Go and Tell!

After the disciples realized they had been talking with Jesus, they ran back to Jerusalem to tell everyone. Hand out index cards, and ask students to write phrases such as “Jesus is alive!”

Take the students on a walking trip to deliver these messages to other classes, perhaps even the adult class.

Jesus is alive!

☐ Puppet Talk

Puppet asks the children where they learn about Jesus. He asks if they can learn while sitting at the table to eat the way the men did. How? (Talk about family devotions.)

Say, **We can talk about Jesus wherever we are. We can also tell others He died and rose for us. Sing “I Can Tell”** (digital resource center).



LEAVE

SAY

These disciples really got to see that Jesus was alive. We, too, know that Jesus is alive. He rose from the dead and still lives today.

PRAY

Dear Jesus, help us to understand Your Word in our lives, to know the truth of Your resurrection. Help us to go and tell this wonderful Good News to everyone. In Your name we pray, Jesus. Amen.

AN ASCENDING TRUTH

Jesus
Ascends
Acts 1:1–11;
Luke 24:44–53
AD 33

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

Jesus ascended to heaven.

BIBLE VERSE

[Jesus says,] “I am with you always.” Matthew 28:20

LEARNER GOAL

I understand that Jesus’ earthly body rose into heaven, where He prepares a place for me to be with Him forever.

LAW & GOSPEL

We live as though Jesus is not active in our lives and the world.

Jesus bodily ascended into heaven to prepare a place for us, promising always to be with us.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

During His last days on earth, Jesus instructs His disciples, preparing them for the challenges that lie ahead. Gathering His disciples on the Mount of Olives one last time, Jesus physically ascends to heaven. Two angels repeat Christ’s promise to return in the same way He ascended into heaven.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read Acts 1:1–11; Luke 24:44–53 and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read the leader devotion, found in the digital resource center.

IN DEPTH Read the section “The Second Article (Part 3)” in *Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation* (2017).

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- ☐ Helium balloon (optional)
- ☐ Printed and cut small pictures of Jesus
- ☐ Cotton balls
- ☐ Pinwheels and paper fans
- ☐ Digital device
- ☐ Globe or map
- ☐ Pudding cups and whipped topping
- ☐ Bowl for water and towels
- ☐ Inflated balloons and large sheet

FOR EVERY LESSON

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Device with prepped music
- ☐ Copies of downloadable activity page
- ☐ Copies of Enduring Faith Page
- ☐ Supply Box

LAUNCH

Plan your lesson by reading through the options in each section. Choose the activities that will best fit your learners, and mark those boxes to guide you as you teach the lesson.

BEGIN

- ☐ Follow the Order of Opening Worship, use the Lesson Opening, or do both (part of the planning resources in the digital resource center).
- ☐ Sing songs using music found in the digital resource center, or sing your own favorite songs.

SAY

- ☐ **Jesus is our special friend. Today, we will hear how Jesus went back to His home in heaven and the special promise He gave before He left.**
- ☐ **What are things that you know that float up into the sky? (If you brought a helium balloon, let it float up to the ceiling now.) In our Bible narrative today, we're going to learn about Jesus' ascension, or going up, into heaven.**

PRAY

Dear Lord Jesus, help us remember that You are with us always. In Your name we pray. Amen.

LEARN

Show your Bible, and remind the children that all the stories in God's Word are true.

TELL THE BIBLE NARRATIVE

Choose one of the options on the next page to tell the Bible narrative.

DO THIS!

Use one or both of the following activities to talk about the Bible narrative after you've read it.

- ☐ **FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE YOUNGER** On a whiteboard or large sheet of paper, make a chart with three columns: Who, What (are they doing), and Where. After you have read the story, as a group (or in small groups), fill in the columns with the details of this account. Older students could do a similar activity but do it independently.
- ☐ **FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE OLDER** Play a witnessing game by choosing a couple of Bible verses for students to share. Play the first round by having one student share the first verse with two individuals by whispering the verse to them. Those two people should each tell the verse to two more people. Keep going till everyone has heard the verse. Ask the last people to hear the message to share what they heard. How well did the message get communicated? Then play a second round, but this time have the first student show their first two witnesses the verse in the Bible. Then have those two students each show two more until everyone has seen the verse. Why is it important for people to both hear God's Word and also have it available to them in writing?

TALK ABOUT IT

Choose the questions that best fit the learning level of your group.

- ☐ Where did Jesus go?
- ☐ Is He still with us?
- ☐ What does Jesus want us to do?
- ☐ How does He help us?
- ☐ Will Jesus come back again?

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

Guide discussion using these key points.

- Jesus' time on earth in His physical body had come to an end. Jesus went to be with His Father in heaven, but He didn't get there the way we do, by dying—He conquered death! Jesus was just lifted up into heaven.
- Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to His disciples and to us, giving us faith, forgiveness, and new life in Him. He helps us tell others about Him.
- Jesus is preparing a place for us with Him in heaven. He will one day return and take all believers to heaven.
- Even though we can't physically see Jesus anymore, He is very much present in His Word, in Baptism, and in the Lord's Supper.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Christ ascended to the Father in heaven. He continues to work through the Holy Spirit, giving us faith, forgiveness, and eternal life.

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

STORYTELLING DIRECTIONS: Sing the song at the end of the story. Sing it again and have children join in.

God sent His Son, Jesus, from heaven to be our friend and helper. He came as a little baby. He grew up and helped many people. He taught them about God and His love. Then Jesus suffered and died on the cross to pay for our sins. He came alive again on Easter. Jesus showed Himself to His friends many times so they would know He was alive. Now His work on earth was finished, and He was ready to go back home to heaven.

One day, Jesus and His helpers walked up a hill. He told his friends to sit down while He talked to them. He had some important things to tell them.

Jesus said, “I am going to send you the Holy Spirit. He will help you tell others about Me.” Then Jesus said, “Go everywhere and tell people about Me. Tell them I died on the cross to take away their sins. Tell them I became alive again. Tell them My Father and I love them very much. Baptize people in the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. And remember, I am with You always.”

While Jesus talked to His friends, He began to go up into the sky. Up, up, up He went. Soon His friends couldn’t see Jesus anymore. Some clouds came and covered Him up.

Jesus’ friends kept looking up to try to see Him. Two angels came and said, “Why are you looking up into the sky? Someday Jesus will come back again.”

Then the friends remembered Jesus wasn’t really gone. He was still with them, even though they couldn’t see Him. That made Jesus’ friends happy. They knew Jesus would be with them when they told people about God’s love.

Jesus is with us too. He helps us show love for others. Let’s sing a song about that. Sing these words to the tune of “Jesus Loves Me.”

**Jesus loves me! Hip hooray! He is with me every day.
He’s at school, at play, at home. I am never all alone.
Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus
loves me. The Bible tells me so.**

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR OLDER CHILDREN

After Jesus’ resurrection, He appeared to His disciples many times. He spoke to them about the kingdom of God. Jesus wanted the disciples to know that His work of salvation was finished.

Jesus told them that everything that had been written about Him in the Old Testament Scriptures had been fulfilled. He opened their minds to understand Scripture. When Jesus returned to heaven, He would prepare a place for those who believe in Him.

Forty days after the resurrection, Jesus led His disciples to a hill outside of Bethany called the Mount of Olives. Jesus told the disciples that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit would come upon them. The disciples would be His witnesses. They would tell about the forgiveness of sins and life everlasting to people in Jerusalem and many other places.

When Jesus had said these things, He suddenly started to rise up, up, up, off the ground. While they watched, He rose

higher and higher into the air until He went up through the clouds and left them. A cloud took Him out of sight.

Now Jesus sits at the right hand of God the Father in heaven. He prays for us and rules everything that happens in the whole world for the good of His Church.

While the disciples were gazing into heaven, two men stood by them. They were angels in white robes. The angels said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come again in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven.”

Then, the disciples returned to Jerusalem and went to the temple to worship God. They were joyful that they were not alone. They waited eagerly for the gift of the Holy Spirit, which Jesus had promised to them.

LIVE

Choose from the following activities and crafts to help connect Bible learning to life.

☐ Who Is Missing, Who Is Here?

Ask a child to hide in the room. Sing this song to the tune of “Are You Sleeping?”

Who is missing? Who is missing? Can you tell? Can you tell? Look around the circle. Look around the circle. Who is gone? Who is gone? Let children guess, then call the hiding child to join you. Say, **[Amy] was here all the time. We just didn’t see her. Jesus is also here. We can’t see Him, but He is with us wherever we go.**



☐ Jesus Ascends Craft

Find a small picture of Jesus online and print and cut out one for each child. Glue pulled-apart cotton balls to a paper cup for clouds. Punch a hole in the top of the Jesus picture. Tie yarn to it. Poke a hole in the base of the cup and insert yarn through it so Jesus shows at the bottom. Tie a bead to the end of the yarn. Pull up to make Jesus disappear in the clouds. Talk about how Jesus went back to heaven, but He promised to still be with us always.



☐ Where the Wind Blows

Set out pinwheels, paper fans, and inflated balloons. Let children blow on the items or fan them. Say, **We can’t see the air moving, but we know it is there because we can see what it does. Jesus is with us here, too, even though we can’t see Him.**



☐ End of the Earth

The “end of the earth” (Acts 1:8) covers a lot of territory. Visit lcms.org/missionaries to see where some of our missionaries share the Gospel today. Find places on a globe or map. Are any of them in places that seem like the “end of the earth”?



☐ Pudding Cloud Snack

Serve snack-size cups of pudding with a dollop of whipped topping. Say, **Today, we’re having pudding under a cloud. When Jesus went back to heaven, clouds covered Jesus so His friends couldn’t see Him anymore.**



☐ Science Fun

Take a bowl of water and towels and go outside. Have children take off socks and shoes, dip feet in the water, then walk on the concrete. Watch the footprints disappear. Ask, **Where did they go?** Talk about evaporation. Say, **Jesus will never go away. Though we can’t see Him, He promises to be with us always.**



☐ Up, Up, Up

Put balloons in a large sheet. Children hold edges of sheet and move it up and down. How high can they go? Say, **At Jesus’ ascension, He was lifted up into heaven. Jesus will come back again one day to take us to be with Him in heaven. He promises to be with us now, even though we can’t see Him.**



LEAVE

SAY

Jesus ascended to heaven to prepare a place for us, but He also promises to be with us always. Amazing! Wonderful! Like the disciples, we have big reasons to be joyful and praise God.

PRAY

Dear Jesus, You came as a human to fulfill Scripture and be our Savior. Then You ascended to heaven to sit on the right hand of God the Father and prepare a place for us. Give us the boldness to tell everyone about Your death and resurrection and the joy of worshipping You. In Your name we pray, Jesus. Amen.

A TELLING TRUTH

Pentecost
Acts 2:1–24
AD 33

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

God gives us the Holy Spirit.

BIBLE VERSE

You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38

LEARNER GOAL

I understand that God gives me the Holy Spirit to work faith in my heart.

LAW & GOSPEL

We think we can come to understand and trust in God by our own power.

The Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts as we hear His Word proclaimed.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

With the sound of a rushing wind and tongues of fire, the promised Holy Spirit descends on the disciples. As they speak “in other tongues” (v. 4), their hearers, from a multitude of nations, hear about “the mighty works of God” (v. 11) in their own languages. Beginning with Old Testament prophecies, Peter’s sermon proclaims Jesus, the promised Messiah.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read Acts 2:1–24 and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read the leader devotion, found in the digital resource center.

IN DEPTH Read through “The Third Article (Part 1)” in *Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation* (2017).

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- ☐ Wrapped gift box
- ☐ Cardstock
- ☐ Red crepe paper
- ☐ Variety of birthday candles
- ☐ Mini cupcakes with red sprinkles
- ☐ Red and blue ribbon
- ☐ Dry pasta in a variety of shapes and sizes
- ☐ Muffin tins

FOR EVERY LESSON

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Device with prepped music
- ☐ Copies of downloadable activity page
- ☐ Copies of Enduring Faith Page
- ☐ Supply Box

LAUNCH

Plan your lesson by reading through the options in each section. Choose the activities that will best fit your learners, and mark those boxes to guide you as you teach the lesson.

BEGIN

- ☐ Follow the Order of Opening Worship, use the Lesson Opening, or do both (part of the planning resources in the digital resource center).
- ☐ Sing songs using music found in the digital resource center, or sing your own favorite songs.

SAY

- ☐ **Jesus loves us. Today, you'll hear about a special gift He gives us.**
- ☐ Show a wrapped gift box. (If desired, put small items such as "Jesus Loves Me" pencils in it to give to children at the end of class.) Ask, **Do you like to get gifts? What are some times when you get gifts? Today, you will hear about a special gift Jesus gave His friends.**

PRAY

Dear Jesus, You give all good gifts. Thank You for the gift of the Holy Spirit. In Your name we pray. Amen.

LEARN

Show your Bible, and remind the children that all the stories in God's Word are true.

TELL THE BIBLE NARRATIVE

Choose one of the options on the next page to tell the Bible narrative.

DO THIS!

Use one or both of the following activities to talk about the Bible narrative after you've read it.

- ☐ **FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE YOUNGER** Help students reenact the story. Using an online translator, look up the words "Jesus Loves You" in several languages, and have different students say them as they portray the disciples.
- ☐ **FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE OLDER** Once students have the details of this Bible narrative down, talk more about the context of the story. Talk about the bookend events of the Tower of Babel in the Old Testament and Pentecost in the New Testament. What happened to language at the Tower of Babel? How did the Holy Spirit at Pentecost allow people who spoke different languages to hear the Gospel? How do people who speak different languages hear the Gospel today?

TALK ABOUT IT

Choose the questions that best fit the learning level of your group.

- ☐ What did the people see and hear on Pentecost?
- ☐ Who sent the Holy Spirit to help them?
- ☐ What news did Peter tell the people?
- ☐ How do you think the lives of the people who heard the Gospel on Pentecost were changed? How are our lives changed because we know the Gospel and have the gift of the Holy Spirit?

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

Guide discussion using these key points.

- This event is the reversal of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1–9), where God confused the languages of rebellious people. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit made people of many languages hear the Gospel. Some older students will "get" it and others may not—that's okay. They may understand it the next time they hear this Bible narrative.
- The events of Pentecost were a miracle, showing us God includes all nations and people in the new covenant.
- Because we have received the gift of the Holy Spirit and life and salvation through Jesus, we want to share it with others.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus sends the Holy Spirit, creating faith in the hearts of those who receive Him.

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

STORYTELLING DIRECTIONS: Ask children to make the sound of the wind and wiggle fingers over their heads for the fire. Have children pretend to be part of the crowd of people and ask, “What shall we do?”

Before Jesus went back to heaven, He promised, “I will be with you always.” Then He said, “God will send you a helper.” This helper is the Holy Spirit.

Jesus’ friends went back to Jerusalem. They met with one another and prayed together as they waited for the helper to come. Then one day, on the day we call Pentecost, God the Holy Spirit came just as Jesus promised. He came in a mighty way.

Jesus’ friends were praying together. All of a sudden, they heard a big noise that filled the whole house! “It sounds like a mighty rushing wind!” they said. Whooooosh. Then they saw something that looked like little flames of fire resting on them. (*Wiggle fingers over head.*) When Jesus’ friends started talking, they could speak in different languages! This was the way the Holy Spirit showed that He had come to live inside them and make them brave. He would help them go tell others about Jesus.

A lot of people were in the city of Jerusalem that day. They heard the big noise too. They hurried to the house where Jesus’ friends were filled with the Holy Spirit. Then Peter, one of Jesus’ friends, stood and talked to the people. God the Holy Spirit helped Peter speak bravely so everyone would hear.

“I have a friend named Jesus,” Peter said. “Jesus helped many people. He made sick people well. He made sad people happy. Jesus was good to you, but you were not good to Him. You put Him on a cross where He died. But Jesus did not stay dead! He is alive! Now He is with God the Father in heaven. We know He loved us. He loved us so much He died to save us all!”

When the people heard this, they were afraid. They thought God would punish them. They cried out, “What shall we do?”

Peter told them, “Be sorry for your sins and be baptized. God will forgive you!” That day many people told God they were sorry for their sins and were baptized. The Holy Spirit came to live inside them and made them God’s children. They believed in Jesus as their Savior.

The Holy Spirit gives us faith to believe in Jesus as our Savior too. He makes us God’s children through Baptism and God’s Word. He comes to live inside us and changes our hearts. He helps us show love for others and tell them about Jesus. He helps us be sorry and forgives us when we sin.

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Ten days after Jesus ascended into heaven, Jews from all over the world had come to Jerusalem for the harvest festival of Pentecost. In God’s perfect timing, He would use Jesus’ disciples all gathered together in one place, along with all these people in Jerusalem at the same time.

On Sunday morning, suddenly, a loud sound like a fast-blowing wind came from heaven and filled the house where the disciples were. They saw what looked like tongues of fire spread out and rest on everyone. All the people there began speaking in languages they had never studied or learned before. The Holy Spirit gave them power to understand and speak different languages!

Many of the Jews who were gathered in Jerusalem for Pentecost heard the sound and rushed over to see what was going on. Suddenly, they heard the disciples speaking the Good News about Jesus in their own languages, the languages they had spoken since they were children.

But some of the Jews who lived in Jerusalem made fun of the disciples and said they were drunk.

When Peter heard this, he stood and raised his voice to speak to them. He explained that the disciples were not drunk, but that God had poured out the Holy Spirit, who

gave them the ability to speak in the different languages of the people gathered together in Jerusalem.

Peter told them this is exactly what the Old Testament prophet Joel had said would happen in the last days when God poured out His Spirit. Then, Peter explained why it had happened: because God had sent Jesus Christ, His Son, the promised Savior to them. Instead of believing in Him, however, they had rejected Him and killed Him on the cross, but God had raised Him from the dead. The disciples had seen Jesus many times after He had risen from the dead, and now they were urging everyone who heard them to be baptized. That day, three thousand people were baptized and became disciples of Jesus and members of the Church.

Today, the Bible has been written down in many different languages so people all around the world can know how Jesus came to save them.

LIVE

Choose from the following activities and crafts to help connect Bible learning to life.

☐ Pentecost Tag

Children scatter around the room. Ask one child to be “Peter.” When “Peter” touches a child, he says “Pentecost.” The tagged child joins Peter in tagging others until everyone has been tagged. Say, **On Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came to Jesus’ friends and gave them power to tell people about Jesus. The Holy Spirit helps us tell about Jesus too.**



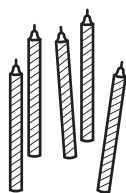
☐ Pentecost Wind Sock

Give each child a sheet of cardstock to decorate with crayons or markers, then tape it into a ring. Give children strips of red crepe paper to tape to the bottom edge. Punch two holes in the top of the wind sock. String with yarn for hanging. Say, **When the wind blows through your windsock, you can remember how God the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost to be our helper.**



☐ Candle Counting

Set out a variety of colored birthday candles. Let children sort them by color or pattern. Say, **When we light candles on a birthday cake, it shows we are celebrating someone’s birthday. God used fire in a special way at Pentecost—to show that He was sending the Holy Spirit to be our helper. Pentecost is the birthday of the Church!**



☐ Sanctuary Visit

Take children into the church to look at the baptismal font. Talk about baptizing babies and grown-ups too. God gives us the Holy Spirit when we are baptized. Also look at the altar Bible. The Holy Spirit works through God’s Word to teach us about Jesus.



☐ Happy Birthday, Church! Snacks

Serve mini cupcakes with red sprinkles. Talk about how Pentecost is often called the birthday of the Church. As children snack, talk about the color red that they see in church on Pentecost. What things are red? What does the red remind them of?



☐ Wind and Fire Wands

Attach lengths of blue or red ribbon to craft sticks. Give to children to wave for wind or fire. Say, **On Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came in wind and fire to help people hear and believe in Jesus.** Tell the main points of the story as the children wave their wands.



☐ Sorting Shapes

Set out various sizes and shapes of dry pasta to sort into muffin tins. Talk about how pasta comes in different shapes and sizes. People come in different sizes, shapes, and colors too! We don’t all look the same. But Jesus loves us all. God wants all of us to be His children.



LEAVE

SAY

God gives us the Holy Spirit. It may not be in a big dramatic-looking event like Pentecost, but it is just as real and just as important in our lives.

PRAY

Dear Jesus, thank You for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Thank You for the gift of faith. Thank You that the Holy Spirit helps us hear and understand Your Word every day in our lives. Help us to share Your precious Word with others. In Your name we pray, Jesus. Amen.

A SERVANT SPEAKS

Stephen
Acts 6–7
AD 34–36

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

The Holy Spirit helps us serve God.

BIBLE VERSE

Be kind to one another. Ephesians 4:32

LEARNER GOAL

I understand that the Holy Spirit helps me believe and moves me to serve others.

LAW & GOSPEL

We don't want to hear about our sin, selfishness, or unbelief.

Through God's Word, we hear that we are forgiven, and the Spirit moves us to believe and serve others.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

The Twelve select Stephen as one of the first seven deacons in the Early Church. Synagogue leaders twist Stephen's words, falsely accusing him of blasphemy. Stephen's testimony before the high priest recalls Israel's rejection of God's promise and their rejection of Jesus, the promised Savior. When Stephen says he sees a vision of Jesus standing at the right hand of God, the enraged officials cast Stephen out of the city and stone him.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read Acts 6–7 and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read the leader devotion, found in the digital resource center.

IN DEPTH Read the article "The Work of the Spirit" in *TLSE*, page 1876.

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- ☐ Teddy grahams, mini twist pretzels, and mini marshmallows
- ☐ Three bowls and small cups
- ☐ Puppets
- ☐ Poster board

FOR EVERY LESSON

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Device with prepped music
- ☐ Copies of downloadable activity page
- ☐ Copies of Enduring Faith Page
- ☐ Supply Box

LAUNCH

Plan your lesson by reading through the options in each section. Choose the activities that will best fit your learners, and mark those boxes to guide you as you teach the lesson.

BEGIN

- ☐ Follow the Order of Opening Worship, use the Lesson Opening, or do both (part of the planning resources in the digital resource center).
- ☐ Sing songs using music found in the digital resource center, or sing your own favorite songs.

SAY

- ☐ I'm glad to see you all here again today. Who was a helper this week? What did you do? Today, we're going to hear about a helper named Stephen who showed love for others and told them about Jesus.
- ☐ Who takes care of you when you're hungry? In our Bible story today, some people don't have enough food to eat. Let's find out how God takes care of them.

PRAY

Dear Jesus, help us listen and learn more about You and Your love for us. Amen.

LEARN

Show your Bible, and remind the children that all the stories in God's Word are true.

TELL THE BIBLE NARRATIVE

Choose one of the options on the next page to tell the Bible narrative.

DO THIS!

Use one or both of the following activities to talk about the Bible narrative after you've read it.

- ☐ **FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE YOUNGER** To help children learn the details of the events of these two chapters, ask children to work together to draw an emoji, a face showing an emotion, to describe each of the elements of this story on a piece of white paper. Use the text in bold to help you identify key points. Then reread the narrative to the class and have them hold up the emojis in proper order, reviewing the key points as you go.
- ☐ **FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE OLDER** Acts 6–7 may be too long and complex a passage for most elementary students to read aloud directly from the Bible. If you want students to read from their Bibles, have them find passages such as **Acts 6:2–5**; **Acts 7:51–54**; and **Acts 7:55–56** to review the narrative.

TALK ABOUT IT

Choose the questions that best fit the learning level of your group.

- ☐ How did the Early Church help care for people who were hungry?
- ☐ Who was Stephen?
- ☐ What did some angry men do to Stephen?
- ☐ We may not be threatened with death like Stephen, but it can still be hard sometimes to tell others about Jesus. How does the Holy Spirit help you stand up for your faith when people challenge your beliefs?

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

Guide discussion using these key points.

- The Early Church was growing and needed people to help the needy. Stephen was chosen to be a helper. He was full of the Holy Spirit. Stephen also preached well and did miracles.
- This narrative is a great opportunity to talk about the many ways God's people can serve others and witness.
- The Holy Spirit gives us kind hearts as well as the strength to tell the truth of Jesus even to those who don't want to hear it and who may not like us.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Though Satan still attacks the Church, nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

STORYTELLING DIRECTIONS: Draw faces on two plates, and use them to show happy and sad moments in the story.

After Jesus went back to heaven, His friends told others how Jesus came to be our Savior. The new believers got together every day to sing and pray and learn more about God's love. They shared their food and clothes. They cared for one another. And do you know what? More and more people came to believe in Jesus. **God's family, the Church, was growing!** Each day, food was given out. **But after a while, there were so many people that some women and little children were not getting any.**

When Jesus' friends, the disciples, heard about the people who were hungry, they called a meeting.

They said, "Jesus told us to share His Good News with all people. He told us to love and care for one another." Let's choose helpers. The helpers can share our bread and figs and fish with everyone. They can make sure the poor people in our church get enough to eat."

"Yes," said the others. "Let's choose seven helpers to take care of everyone in our church. **Stephen should be one of the helpers. He's wise and he loves Jesus.**"

"Stephen is a good choice," agreed the others.

So the people chose seven helpers to make sure all the poor people had food. The people brought the helpers to

Jesus' disciple friends. They prayed for Stephen and the other helpers.

Stephen and the other helpers did a good job. They made sure all the children and their mothers had food to eat.

God helped Stephen show love for others by giving them food to eat. **Stephen liked helping and showing God's love to others.** He liked to tell how Jesus came to be our Savior too. He told them, "God sent Jesus to die on the cross to pay for your sins." People listened to Stephen. Many more people believed in Jesus and became part of God's family, the Church.

Some men did not believe in Jesus. They did not want Stephen to talk about Him. One day, Stephen tried to tell them about Jesus. This made them angry, so **they started to throw stones at Stephen.** God was with Stephen, though. When Stephen looked up, he saw Jesus in heaven. Stephen knew that soon he would be with Jesus. Stephen knew that Jesus forgave his sins. He wanted God to forgive these mean men who were hurting him too. **He prayed, "Dear God, please forgive these men for hurting me."** **God helped Stephen show kindness and love for others. He helped him tell about Jesus and forgive those who were mean to him.**

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR OLDER CHILDREN

As the twelve apostles taught about Jesus in the temple, many Jews believed and were baptized. **The Early Church started to grow very quickly.** Among the Christians, **there were many widows**, women whose husbands had died and who didn't have money to take care of themselves. The Christians took up offerings to buy food for them. This helped some of the widows, but not all of them.

When the apostles learned about it, they were concerned. **They wanted to make sure everyone who needed help got it, but Jesus had sent them to preach the Good News, not to serve food.** They said, "Brothers, pick out seven men who are full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty." These men would make sure every person got help. One of those seven men was named Stephen.

Stephen was full of grace and power from the Holy Spirit. He did great miracles, just like the apostles were doing. When some Jews who didn't believe in Jesus started arguing with him, the Holy Spirit made Stephen so wise he proved they were wrong. **Sadly, they didn't believe Stephen. They just got more angry with him.**

They took Stephen to the high priest, Caiaphas, and also to the same Jewish court that had decided to put Jesus to death. The Jewish court looked at Stephen and noticed that

his face was glowing, which showed that he had talked with God.

The Holy Spirit made Stephen very wise. Stephen told the Jewish leaders about all the times in the Old Testament when God had raised up a leader for His people Israel but the Israelites had refused to follow him. He talked about leaders like Joseph, Moses, and King David—and how the Israelites had grumbled against them and refused to obey them. **And now, when God had sent His own promised Son, they had done even worse to Him—they had betrayed and murdered Jesus.**

When the priests and other leaders heard this, they got so mad they put their fingers in their ears, rushed together at Stephen, dragged him outside, and picked up big stones and rocks to throw at him and kill him.

As Stephen was being stoned, he prayed to Jesus, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." He said, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." Then Stephen died, and his spirit went to heaven.

LIVE

Choose from the following activities and crafts to help connect Bible learning to life.

☐ Action Rhyme

Do this action rhyme together: **I have little ears** (*point to ears*) **that hear of Jesus' love** (*hug self*). **I have little lips** (*point to mouth*) **to tell about His love** (*cup mouth*). **I have little feet** (*point to feet*) **to follow Jesus' way** (*walk in place*). **I have little hands** (*hold out hands*) **to serve Him ev'ry day** (*fling arms wide*). Act out ways to serve others.



☐ Bible Verse Actions

Say, **The Bible tells us** (read from Ephesians 4:32): **"Be kind to one another." Stephen showed love for others and told about Jesus. Let's think about ways we can be kind to one another.** Act out situations for the children to guess, or whisper the situation to a child to act out (e.g., cold, hungry, thirsty, hurt, lonely/scared). How can they help? Say, **We show our love for Jesus when we do kind things for others.**



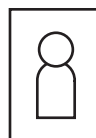
☐ Old Testament Review

Stephen's recounting of the Old Testament story of God's people includes Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, and Solomon. Review the Old Testament narrative. Mix up the names and see if students can put them back in order. Or ask students to tell all they know about each of these people.



☐ Portrait of a Servant

Guide students to make a portrait of Stephen on a piece of white paper using both words and pictures together. Brainstorm words that describe Stephen and write those where students can see and copy them. Encourage students to make their portrait in their own way. Let students share their art by explaining it to the group.



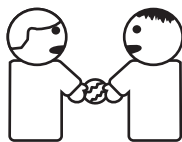
☐ Serve a Snack

Set out teddy grahams, mini twist pretzels, and mini marshmallows in separate bowls. Have children portion the ingredients into small cups for one another. Talk about how Stephen showed love for hungry people by giving them food.



☐ Help Us Forgive

Use two puppets to tell a story about fighting over a toy. Ask, **What did Stephen do when people were mean to him? Jesus helps us forgive others.** Say, **Think about Jesus dying on the cross to forgive us. When we say the Lord's Prayer, we think about the people who have hurt us and ask God to forgive them and help us to forgive them too.**



☐ Helping Others

Ask children to think about how we can show love for others. Ideas: Set out a basket to collect baby items for disadvantaged mothers. Collect canned food for the food pantry, and have children use markers to draw crosses on the cans. Have children choose a project and make a poster, asking church members to donate to the cause.



LEAVE

SAY

The Holy Spirit helps us serve God. What are some of the ways you can serve God?

PRAY

Dear Jesus, thank You for sending the Holy Spirit to help all the people throughout history and today who speak your Word even though people hate them for it. Help us to have the courage to share Your Word with others, especially when people don't like us for being Your child. In Your name we pray, Jesus. Amen.

A DEACON DELIVERS

Philip and an
Ethiopian
Acts 8:26–40
AD 36–37

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

The Holy Spirit works through the Word and Baptism to give faith.

BIBLE VERSE

Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. Romans 10:17

LEARNER GOAL

I understand that God places His name on me in Baptism.

LAW & GOSPEL

Without faith, we cannot understand the Word of Christ.

The Holy Spirit works through Word and water to bring us to faith in Jesus as our Savior.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

Directed by an angel, Philip encounters an Ethiopian official reading from the Book of Isaiah while riding in his chariot. Realizing the Ethiopian needs help to understand the Scriptures, Philip steps in. After instructing the Ethiopian, Philip baptizes the man and then is carried away by the Spirit to Azotus.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read Acts 8:26–40 and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read the leader devotion, found in the digital resource center.

IN DEPTH Read more about the previous evangelistic work of Philip, and others, in Acts 8:4–25.

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- ☐ Brass paper fasteners
- ☐ Tub of water
- ☐ Toy dishes
- ☐ Bible story books
- ☐ Pretzel sticks, roll-up fruit leather snacks
- ☐ Brown paper bags
- ☐ Arch Book *Philip and the Ethiopian*

FOR EVERY LESSON

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Device with prepped music
- ☐ Copies of downloadable activity page
- ☐ Copies of Enduring Faith Page
- ☐ Supply Box

LAUNCH

Plan your lesson by reading through the options in each section. Choose the activities that will best fit your learners, and mark those boxes to guide you as you teach the lesson.

BEGIN

- ☐ Follow the Order of Opening Worship, use the Lesson Opening, or do both (part of the planning resources in the digital resource center).
- ☐ Sing songs using music found in the digital resource center, or sing your own favorite songs.

SAY

- ☐ **How did you come to church today—in a car or van? Who likes to look at books when you ride in your car or van? Today, we'll hear about a man who lived in Bible times. He was reading a book of the Bible as he rode in his chariot—a cart pulled by horses!**
- ☐ **Who are some people who help you? Sometimes you get to be the helper. How do you help people? The Holy Spirit helps us too. Let's see how the Holy Spirit helps a man named Philip talk about Jesus.**

PRAY

Dear Jesus, thank You for bringing us to church and Sunday School to learn more about Your love for us. Amen.

LEARN

Show your Bible, and remind the children that all the stories in God's Word are true.

TELL THE BIBLE NARRATIVE

Choose one of the options on the next page to tell the Bible narrative.

DO THIS!

Use one or both of the following activities to talk about the Bible narrative after you've read it.

- ☐ **FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE YOUNGER** Divide your class into two groups for review of this Bible narrative. Have one group act out Philip's part and the other group act out the Ethiopian's part, using sets of two chairs together for as many chariots as you need.
- ☐ **FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE OLDER** Read the entire narrative from Scripture. Then have students look up **Isaiah 53:7–8**, the passage that Philip and the Ethiopian man studied together. Talk about how awesome it is that the prophet Isaiah prophesied about what would happen to Jesus hundreds of years before Jesus was even born, and how the Holy Spirit helped Philip explain to the Ethiopian that it was all about Jesus. The whole Bible points to Jesus and shows us God's plan of salvation fulfilled in Jesus.

TALK ABOUT IT

Choose the questions that best fit the learning level of your group.

- ☐ What was the man from Africa reading in his chariot?
- ☐ Who does Philip tell the man from Africa about?
- ☐ What does the man ask Philip to do when he sees the water?
- ☐ The Ethiopian needed someone to help him understand the scriptures. Who helps you understand the Bible?

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

Guide discussion using these key points.

- The African man was part of the government of Ethiopia. This event was the beginning of the spread of the Gospel throughout Africa.
- Help students see how the baptizing of one person spread the Gospel to so many people. The same is true for us. We can make a difference by telling just one person about Jesus, and they tell someone, and they tell someone, and the pattern repeats until many people hear the message.
- Hearing God's Word is a wonderful gift that the Lord has given us. It brings us faith and life.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Christ, through the Holy Spirit, has called us by the Word and Baptism to be His own and still speaks to us through His Word.

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

STORYTELLING DIRECTIONS: Do the action rhyme at the end of the story with children.

Philip believed in Jesus. He loved Jesus and liked to tell people about Him. One day, God sent an angel to Philip. The angel told him, “Go and walk along the road that goes through the desert.”

Philip did what the angel said. When he came to the desert road, he saw a chariot—a large cart with two wheels that is pulled by horses. Inside the cart, he saw a man from Ethiopia, a country in Africa. This man was important. He worked for the queen in his country. He took care of her money. He had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and now he was on his way home. He was sitting in his chariot and reading from a big Bible scroll.

God the Holy Spirit told Philip, “Go over to the chariot.” When Philip got closer, he heard the man reading out loud from the Bible. Philip went over and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?”

The man from Africa told Philip, “No, I don’t understand this story. I need someone to explain it to me.” Then he invited Peter to come sit with him in his chariot.

The man from Africa was reading the part in the Bible that says that Jesus would die for us. Philip told the man that the words were talking about God’s promise to send a Savior to take away our sins. Then Philip said, “God has already kept His promise! God, our heavenly Father, sent His Son, Jesus, to be born as a baby. Jesus grew up to be a man. He helped many people and taught them about God’s love. Then Jesus died on the cross and rose again at Easter

to save us from sin and to win the victory over the devil so we can go to heaven someday. Everyone who believes in Jesus and is baptized will be saved.”

The Holy Spirit worked faith in the man’s heart. Soon, they came to some water. The man said, “Look! Here is some water. I want to be baptized.” So Philip and the man got out of the chariot. They went into the water, and Philip baptized the man from Africa. Then the man got back in his chariot and went home to Africa. After that, God made Philip disappear. But the man from Africa was happy as he rode home. He was a child of God now.

God makes us His children through His Word and Baptism too. He helps us share the Good News about Jesus, our Savior.

Let’s do this action rhyme together.

The Bible is God’s Word. And every word is true. *Open hands like book.*

It tells us of God’s love. How He cares for me and you. *Point to self and child.*

It tells about God’s plan. How He sent His only Son. *Point up.*

How Jesus came to save us. How He died and rose for everyone. *Make a finger cross.*

So, let’s learn what the Bible says, each and every day. *Open hands like a book.*

Then we can tell about Jesus. We’ll know just what to say. *Point to mouth.*

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR OLDER CHILDREN

An angel of the Lord told Philip the deacon to get up and go south on a road through the desert that goes from Jerusalem to Gaza. Philip went right away.

A rich man from Ethiopia was riding in a chariot. The rich man worked for Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians. He was in charge of all of her treasure. He had gone to Jerusalem to worship and was on his way home. He was reading the Holy Scriptures from a scroll.

Then along came Philip, and the Spirit said, “Go!” So Philip ran to catch up to the chariot. Philip heard the man reading a passage from Isaiah 53 and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?”

The man said, “No. I can’t understand unless someone helps me. Please help me. Come and sit with me.”

The Ethiopian read a passage of Scripture and said, “Tell me, who is the lamb?”

Philip said, “Jesus is the lamb.” Then Philip told him more of God’s Good News—that Jesus died and rose.

“Now I understand,” said the man from Ethiopia.

As they went along, the man saw water. “Look! Here is water! Philip, can you baptize me?” He stopped the chariot, and they both went down to the water.

Philip baptized the man from Ethiopia. What a joyful day!

When they came out of the water, the Spirit carried Philip away.

The man from Ethiopia could not see Philip anymore but rejoiced and went on his way.

Philip found himself at Azotus, and he kept preaching the Gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

LIVE

Choose from the following activities and crafts to help connect Bible learning to life.

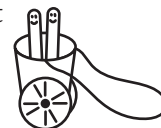
☐ Horse and Chariot Fun

Have children pair up and stand one in front of the other, pretending to be the horse and Ethiopian in the chariot. The first child reaches behind him to hold the hands of the second child, making “reins” with their arms. Say, **Pretend you are in a chariot going to Africa.** Play music, and have the pairs move to the music and stand still when it stops. Switch so children get to be both horse and Ethiopian.



☐ Chariot Craft

Cut two “wheels” out of construction paper, poke holes in the center, and use brass paper fasteners to attach to the sides of a paper cup for a chariot. (The opening on cup should be at top to hold figures.) Add yarn to the front of your chariot for reins. Draw people on two craft sticks. Use stick people and chariot to retell the story.



☐ Water Play

Set out a tub with water and toy dishes. Have children “wash” the dishes. Ask about other things we wash (e.g., cars, hands, clothes) and how water helps us get things clean. Say, **In church, Pastor uses water and**



God’s Word to wash away our sin in Baptism. When you are baptized, God makes you His child.

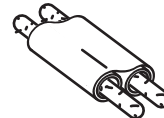
☐ Hide and Seek

Before class, hide Bibles and Bible story books around your room. Say, I hid some Bible books in our room. Let’s go on a treasure hunt to find them. When they are found, ask, **How is the Bible a treasure to us? It tells us that Jesus loves us, forgives us, and has made us His children forever.**



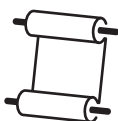
☐ Scroll Snack

Make scrolls by attaching a stick pretzel to each end of a piece of roll-up fruit leather snack. Roll together to serve, and have children “open” their scrolls. Ask, **How does our snack remind you of the Bible story?** Talk about how Jesus loves us and gives us pastors and teachers to teach us what the Bible says about Him.



☐ Bible Verse Scroll

Use brown paper bags cut into long strips as scrolls. Write today’s Bible Verse on the paper. If the children are good at copying, consider having them write Romans 10:17 themselves. Glue craft sticks to the narrow edges of the paper and then roll together like a scroll.



☐ Arch Book

Use the Arch Book *Philip and the Ethiopian* as a read-aloud to tell this Bible narrative. For classes with a large age difference in children, encourage the older children to read aloud to the younger children.



LEAVE

SAY

Just like He did with the Ethiopian, God places His name on us in our Baptism. That’s a pretty big deal.

PRAY

Dear Jesus, thank You for giving us people to help us understand the Bible and teach us about Your Word. Thank You for the gift of the Holy Spirit and Baptism. Help us to share the Gospel like Philip and the Ethiopian. In Your name we pray, Jesus. Amen.

AN ENEMY CONVERTS

Saul
Acts 9:1–31
AD 36

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

Jesus chooses us, even when we are enemies of God.

BIBLE VERSE

If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. 2 Corinthians 5:17

LEARNER GOAL

I understand that God chooses me to be His own child and makes me a new creation in Jesus through my Baptism.

LAW & GOSPEL

Born in sin, we are enemies of God.

God chooses us to be His own in Baptism and makes us a new creation in Christ Jesus, our Savior.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

On the road to Damascus, Saul encounters the risen Lord, who converts him from a persecutor of the Church to its greatest missionary—Paul. God sends Ananias to lay hands upon the temporarily blinded Saul, baptizing him in the name of the Living God. Despite the disciples' distrust of Saul's motives, Barnabas speaks boldly on Saul's behalf.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read Acts 9:1–31 and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read the leader devotion, found in the digital resource center.

IN DEPTH Read through the Third Article of the Creed in Luther's Small Catechism.

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- ☐ Digital device
- ☐ Old and new items
- ☐ Baptism picture
- ☐ Play dough
- ☐ Pudding mix, milk, bowl, whisk, cups, spoons
- ☐ Fun foam or cardstock
- ☐ Coins
- ☐ Pin the Tail on the Donkey game or the like

FOR EVERY LESSON

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Device with prepped music
- ☐ Copies of downloadable activity page
- ☐ Copies of Enduring Faith Page
- ☐ Supply Box

LAUNCH

Plan your lesson by reading through the options in each section. Choose the activities that will best fit your learners, and mark those boxes to guide you as you teach the lesson.

BEGIN

- ☐ Follow the Order of Opening Worship, use the Lesson Opening, or do both (part of the planning resources in the digital resource center).
- ☐ Sing songs using music found in the digital resource center, or sing your own favorite songs.

SAY

- ☐ Today, we'll hear how Jesus called someone to believe in Him. He wanted him to tell others about His love and forgiveness. Jesus loves you and made you His children too.
- ☐ Don't tell me names, but have you ever known someone who was mean? What if that person stopped being mean? Would you believe them? Today, we'll learn how Saul went from being mean to telling people about Jesus!

PRAY

Heavenly Father, it is such a blessing to be able to gather together and study Your Word. Guide us to know how much You love us and help us to learn how to love one another. In Your name we pray. Amen.

LEARN

Show your Bible, and remind the children that all the stories in God's Word are true.

TELL THE BIBLE NARRATIVE

Choose one of the options on the next page to tell the Bible narrative.

DO THIS!

Use one or both of the following activities to talk about the Bible narrative after you've read it.

- ☐ **FOR ALL AGES** As you are reading the story to your group, every time you read a sentence that is in bold type, pause and lead children in saying, "God was at work here!" To add physical action, have students give a big thumbs up as well.
- ☐ **FOR ACTIVE LEARNERS** This narrative is full of action, so it lends itself well to acting out. Depending on the size and age of your group, assign pairs of children to act out the different events as listed in the Bible narrative.

TALK ABOUT IT

Choose the questions that best fit the learning level of your group.

- ☐ What was Saul like at the beginning of the story?
- ☐ How did God change Saul?
- ☐ What did Jesus want Saul to do?
- ☐ God was at work in Saul (who became Paul), one of the greatest missionaries of all time. How is God at work in your life?

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

Guide discussion using these key points.

- Saul had been persecuting Christians for at least a year, jailing people for following Jesus. He was the last person one would expect for Jesus to choose. So his proclamation that Jesus is Lord was shocking—so shocking that some of the Jews wanted to kill him.
- We are no more deserving of Christ's love than Saul. We may not openly persecute God's people like Saul did, but we are still sinners who break God's Law every day. It is only through the redeeming work of Jesus on the cross and with the help of the Holy Spirit that we can share the love of Jesus with our neighbor.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Christ has called us to faith because of His great mercy and grace to us.

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

STORYTELLING DIRECTIONS: Do the action rhyme at the end of the story with children.

Jesus had gone back to heaven. But He kept on helping His friends. He helped them show love to one another. They shared their homes and their money. They gave food and clothing to poor people. They told many people that Jesus loved them and died on the cross to pay for their sins. Many people came to believe in Jesus as their Savior and love Him too.

But there were some people who didn't love Jesus. One of these was a man named Saul. Saul was mean! He grabbed Jesus' friends and put them in jail. Jesus' friends were afraid of him!

One day, Saul left Jerusalem with some of his friends. He was going on the road to Damascus. He wanted to catch more of Jesus' friends and throw them in jail. All of a sudden, Saul saw and heard something to surprise him.

First, Saul saw a bright light coming down from heaven. The light was so bright that Saul was afraid. He fell down to the ground. Then he heard a voice calling his name. It said, "Saul, Saul, why are you trying to hurt Me?"

Saul asked, "Who are You?"

Who do you think it was?

The voice answered, "I am Jesus!"

Saul was surprised and afraid. He asked, "What do You want me to do?"

Jesus said, "Go into the city of Damascus and wait. You will find out what I want you to do."

Saul opened his eyes, but he could not see! He was blind. So Saul's friends led him by the hand to the city. Saul waited and waited. For three days he didn't eat or drink. He thought and prayed, asking God to forgive him.

After three days, Jesus sent His helper Ananias to talk to Saul. Ananias told Saul, "The Holy Spirit is with you. Jesus wants you to be His special helper. He wants you to travel to many places around the world and tell people how He is their Savior who takes away our sins." Ananias touched Saul and right away he could see again. Saul was so happy Jesus forgave him. He got up and was baptized right away.

Later, people called Saul by his other name, Paul. Paul loved Jesus and told many people about Jesus' love and forgiveness. He was not mean anymore but happy because Jesus was his friend, his helper, and most of all his Savior!

Do this action rhyme together.

I can tell, I can tell. *Point to mouth.*

Listen closely; I can tell. *Cup ears. Point to mouth.*

Jesus loves you and me. *Hug self; point.*

Can you hear me? I can tell. *Cup ears. Point to mouth.*

Jesus died, rose again. *Make finger cross.*

What good news! I can tell. *Point to mouth.*

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Saul believed Jesus was a false teacher who taught lies about God and pretended to be God's Son. He wanted to stop the Christians from telling other people about Jesus, so he went from house to house through Jerusalem, dragging off the people who believed in Jesus and putting them in prison.

Saul wanted to attack the Christians in Damascus, so the high priest wrote letters for him so that if he found any believers in Jesus, he could tie them up and bring them back to Jerusalem.

When Saul came near Damascus, **suddenly a light from heaven shone around him.** He fell to the ground and heard a voice calling, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" Saul asked, "Who are You, Lord?" **The voice answered, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do."**

The men traveling with Saul heard the voice, but they didn't see anyone. **Saul got up off the ground, but when he opened his eyes he couldn't see anything.** The men

took his hand and led him into Damascus. For three days, Saul was unable to see. He didn't eat or drink anything during this time.

Then, **Jesus told a Christian in Damascus named Ananias to go and lay his hands on Saul so he could see again.** Ananias was scared of Saul, but he obeyed Jesus. He went and laid his hands on Saul, and **Jesus gave Saul back his sight. Ananias baptized him.**

Right there in Damascus, Saul began teaching that Jesus was the Christ, the Savior of the world. Some Jews got angry and made plans to kill Saul. **But Saul found out and had his disciples lower him down in a basket through an opening in the wall.**

Saul returned to Jerusalem, but the Christians there were afraid of him. A devout Christian named Barnabas took Saul to the apostles and described how Jesus had appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus. **The apostles welcomed Saul, and he became known as Paul.**

LIVE

Choose from the following activities and crafts to help connect Bible learning to life.

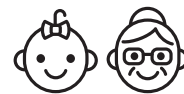
☐ Go and Tell

Say, **God called Saul to tell people far away about Jesus. God calls people today to be missionaries too.** Have children pretend to travel far away to tell about Jesus. Pretend to fly in airplanes and ride in boats to go to different countries. Act out being hot walking in Uganda, riding over bumpy roads in the Philippines, or being cold in Alaska. Use a digital device to show pictures of the places you pretend to go.



☐ Old and New

Show items depicting old and new (e.g., old and new shoes, dead and fresh flowers, withered and fresh carrots, pictures of old person and baby). Ask if we can make the old/dead item into a new/alive one? No. Say, **Jesus is the only one who can make things new again. Jesus changed Saul from an enemy into a friend.** Show a Bible and Baptism picture. Jesus calls us through Baptism and His Word. He changes us, too, and gives us new life as His forgiven children, His new creation.



☐ Something New

Give children a lump of play dough. Show them how to make a pinch pot by pressing a thumb in dough, then pinching the edges to make the sides. Talk about how they changed the dough into something new. God changed Saul's heart, and He changes ours too.



☐ Learn the Bible Verse

Read the Bible Verse, 2 Corinthians 5:17: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation." God changed Saul from an enemy to a friend. He made Saul a new creation. Divide children into two groups. Each group says half the verse. Then switch.



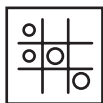
☐ A Changing Snack

Make pudding using instant pudding, milk, a bowl, a whisk, and small disposable cups and spoons. Tell children you are going to change the powder into something good to eat. Add milk according to directions, and have them help stir it. Pour into small cups to eat. Say, **God changed Saul from an enemy into someone who believed in Jesus.**



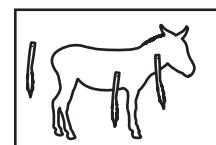
☐ Tic-Tac-Tell

Cut 4 x 4-inch game boards from fun foam or cardstock. Make a grid of nine squares on the board, leaving a border around the edge. (Each square will be about one inch.) Use two sets of coins (e.g., dimes and nickels) for markers to play tic-tac-tell. The first child to get three in a row tells how they would show Jesus' love or tell about Him.



☐ Pin the Tail on the Donkey

Play Pin the Tail on the Donkey. Point out it is hard to know where to put the tail when you can't see. Discuss how Saul couldn't see Jesus was his Savior. He hurt Christians. But Jesus gave Saul eyes of faith to see Him as his Savior. Now Saul wanted to tell others about Jesus. The Holy Spirit changes us on the inside so we can live as His children.



LEAVE

SAY

Jesus chose Saul in a very dramatic way. Jesus chooses us to be His children and His witnesses too.

PRAY

Dear Jesus, thank You for calling Saul to spread Your Gospel message to the world. Thank You for calling me to be Your child in Baptism. Help me to share Your Gospel message to all the people in my world. In Your name we pray, Jesus. Amen.

A SOLDIER BELIEVES

A Philippian Jailer
Acts 16:16–40
AD 49

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

God rescues us from fear and gives us new life through His Word.

BIBLE VERSE

Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved. Acts 16:31

LEARNER GOAL

I understand that Jesus pours out His blessings on me in His Word and through Baptism.

LAW & GOSPEL

Without faith in Christ, we live in fear of punishment and death.

Our fear turns to joy when salvation in Jesus is proclaimed to us and we receive the blessings of Baptism by faith.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

In Philippi, Paul and Silas cast the spirit of divination from a slave girl, but her angered owner has the two thrown into prison. Around midnight, Paul and Silas are praying and singing to God when suddenly an earthquake shakes the prison. The jailer, thinking his prisoners have escaped, prepares to take his own life. Paul and Silas interrupt his plan as they share the Gospel with him and his whole family, whom Paul then baptizes.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read Acts 16:16–40 and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read the leader devotion, found in the digital resource center.

IN DEPTH Read the introduction to the Book of Philippians in *TLSB*, pages 2029–30, for more historical background on the city of Philippi.

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- ☐ Cardstock
- ☐ Colorful strips of paper
- ☐ Round crackers and raisins
- ☐ Bowl of water

FOR EVERY LESSON

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Device with prepped music
- ☐ Copies of downloadable activity page
- ☐ Copies of Enduring Faith Page
- ☐ Supply Box

LAUNCH

Plan your lesson by reading through the options in each section. Choose the activities that will best fit your learners, and mark those boxes to guide you as you teach the lesson.

BEGIN

- ☐ Follow the Order of Opening Worship, use the Lesson Opening, or do both (part of the planning resources in the digital resource center).
- ☐ Sing songs using music found in the digital resource center, or sing your own favorite songs.

SAY

- ☐ **Today, we'll hear how we can be joyful even when we have troubles, because we know Jesus forgives our sins and makes us God's children. When things are good or not so good, we can thank God that He loves us and is with us.**
- ☐ **Do you ever sing a song when you're feeling anxious or afraid? What songs do you sing when you are afraid?** Listen to responses. If time allows, tell students of a time when you were scared and used a song of God's love to calm yourself.

PRAY

Dear Jesus, thank You for bringing us together to study Your Word. Guide our discussion today that we may learn more about Your love for us in Jesus. Bless our time together. In Your name we pray. Amen.

LEARN

Show your Bible, and remind the children that all the stories in God's Word are true.

TELL THE BIBLE NARRATIVE

Choose one of the options on the next page to tell the Bible narrative.

DO THIS!

Use one or both of the following activities to talk about the Bible narrative after you've read it.

- ☐ **FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE YOUNGER** The Book of Acts is action-packed, and this narrative is no different. Divide students into pairs and have each pair act out a different event from this narrative, using the italic type in the student page to guide you. When students are ready, have each pair act out their part and the rest of the group guess what they are doing, similar to playing charades.
- ☐ **FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE OLDER** Divide your group into pairs and have each pair draw pictures of the events of this narrative. Use the bold type from the student narrative to make sure they have all the events. Once they are finished, mix up the pictures and have students put them back in order correctly. When you are all finished, collect all the pages and staple them together to make a book that students can refer to later.

TALK ABOUT IT

Choose the questions that best fit the learning level of your group.

- ☐ What happened when Paul and Silas were in jail?
- ☐ What did Paul tell the jailer?
- ☐ What did they do for the jailer and his household?
- ☐ How do you think the jailer's life was different after his life was spared and he and his family were baptized? How is our life different because we are Christians?

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

Guide discussion using these key points.

- God can take bad situations and work good through them. Paul and Silas shared the love of God through their singing and praising Him, even in jail. In the end, the Philippian jailer came to faith and was baptized.
- Paul and Silas were falsely accused and imprisoned, just as Jesus was. Following Jesus is not always easy, but we know that by following Jesus, no matter how hard the path, at our journey's end we will live with Him in heaven.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus won the victory over sin for us on the cross. We are free to live a new life in Him by His Word and Baptism.

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

STORYTELLING DIRECTIONS: Emphasize the story actions in italic and have children repeat the words or do the actions with you.

Do you remember Saul? He was Jesus' enemy, but Jesus changed Saul's heart and Saul became Jesus' friend. Jesus wanted Saul to tell people everywhere about Him. So that's what Saul did. Saul had another name too. It was Paul.

One time, Paul took a helper named Silas to a country far away. They went to tell people about Jesus. At first, the people were nice to them. But then some bad men grabbed Paul and Silas and took them to the city officials. They said, "These men are troublemakers." The officials tore Paul's and Silas's clothes. *Rip!* They had them beaten. *Slap!* Then Paul and Silas were thrown in jail. *Bang* went the cell door. Their feet were chained to big blocks of wood. Poor Paul and Silas!

Paul and Silas didn't cry. They weren't afraid or worried. They knew Jesus still loved them! Instead, they prayed (*fold hands*) and sang songs to God while the other prisoners listened. Paul and Silas knew that Jesus was with them and would take care of them.

Then, in the darkness of the night, they heard a rumbling sound that got louder and louder. *Rumble, RUMBLE.* What was happening? God had sent a big earthquake to shake the jail. *Shake.* All of a sudden the doors of the jail flew open. *Clang, clang.* The chains and wooden blocks fell off Paul and Silas and the other prisoners. *Click, clack, bang.*

The big noise woke the guard at the jail. He saw all the

doors open and thought the prisoners had run away. "Oh no! I'll be punished for letting them get out," he thought. But Paul called out to him, "Guard! Don't be afraid! We're still here."

The jail guard got a torch and ran to the cells. He was thankful to see Paul and Silas were still there! He said, "Come with me. I'll take you to a safe place." The jail guard must have been listening to them sing and pray earlier in the night. When they were safe, he asked the two men, "Please tell me. What must I do to be saved?"

Paul and Silas told him, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved." That answer is for you too! Let's say the words together: "*Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.*"

The jail guard took Paul and Silas to his home. Paul and Silas told the guard and his family about Jesus, our Savior, who loves everyone. They told how Jesus died and came alive again to save all people from their sins.

Splish, splash went the water. The jail guard washed Paul's and Silas's cuts and put bandages on them. *Splish, splash* went the water. Paul baptized the jail guard and his whole family! Now the jail guard and his family believed in Jesus as their Savior. Their hearts were filled with joy because Jesus had taken their sins away! Now they were God's children too. *Hooray!*

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Saul, also known as Paul, was sent by the Church to be a missionary in faraway cities. He brought some missionary friends to help him tell people about Jesus.

Paul and his friend Silas came to a city in Greece called Philippi. As Paul and Silas shared the Gospel in the city, a slave girl who had a demon followed them around, saying, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." **Paul turned and said to the demon, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her."** And the demon immediately left her.

The people who owned the slave girl were mad that Paul did this. When she had the demon, they had earned a lot of money from others who wanted her to tell their future. **Now with the demon gone, they couldn't make money from her. They grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them before the judges.**

The judges ordered that they be beaten with rods and put in prison for the night. **But Paul and Silas didn't sit around feeling sorry for themselves. Around midnight, they were praying and singing in their prison cell,** and all the other prisoners were listening. Suddenly, **a strong earthquake struck, and all the prison doors opened up**

and the chains fell off of every prisoner.

The jailer woke up and got really scared. He saw the jail doors standing open and thought all the prisoners had escaped. Since he thought that he had failed to keep them in jail, he pulled out his sword to kill himself. But Paul shouted that he should not hurt himself, because all the prisoners were still there. The jailer asked for a torch and ran inside to see. **He fell down in front of Paul and Silas and asked what he had to do to be saved.** Paul told him, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." Then, Paul and Silas told the jailer, his family, and his servants all about Jesus. **They baptized his whole household.**

The next day, the judges sent the police to the jail to let Paul and Silas go. But Paul told them that he and Silas had been wrongly beaten and thrown in jail even though they were Roman citizens. He wanted an apology.

The judges were afraid because they had thrown a Roman citizen in jail when they shouldn't have. They came and apologized to Paul and Silas and asked them to leave. Paul and Silas stopped to visit their friend Lydia and to encourage the other Christians there, and then went on their way.

LIVE

Choose from the following activities and crafts to help connect Bible learning to life.

☐ Forward and Back

Have children stand in a circle. Say, **Paul and Silas thanked and praised God, even in jail. When we have troubles, we can thank and praise God too.** You will say things that show thanks and things that show complaining. Have children jump forward for thanks and backwards for complaining. For example, say, **I whine when I don't get my way.** (*Jump backward.*) **I am thankful for my friends.** (*Jump forward.*) Continue with more examples. Ask children to suggest some too.



☐ Church Craft

Cut one 8-inch equilateral triangle from cardstock for each child. Fold bottom edge back so the “church” can stand up. Have children draw the outside of the church (a door, windows, cross at the top point). On the other side, have children draw a pastor and people. Say, **Paul and Silas sang hymns and prayed while they were in jail. The jailer heard the Word of God from them when they told him about Jesus.** Let's make a picture of the place where we go to sing, pray, and hear God's Word—our church!



☐ Pray for Church Workers

If your church sponsors a missionary family, write them letters of encouragement. Talk about where and how these missionaries are working. Or write letters to your district's prison chaplains to encourage them. Ask for specific ways that you might help them in their ministry to prisoners.



☐ Prayer Chain

Cut colorful strips of paper. Have children write someone or something to pray for on each strip. For example, “We pray for . . . Grandma.” Hang the prayer chain in your classroom, and pray for one or two of the things listed each class time.



☐ Joyful Snack

Hand out round crackers and raisins. Have children make smiley faces on the crackers with the raisins. Talk about how Paul and Silas had joy, even though they were in jail, because they knew Jesus loved them.



☐ Baptism Connection

Have a clear bowl of water. Ask, **How did the jailer use water?** (He washed dirt from cuts on Paul and Silas.) **How did Paul use water?** (He baptized the jailer and his family.) Say, **Baptism washes away something more than dirt. It washes away sin. It isn't the water but God's Word connected to the water that does this. Baptism is a gift from God.**



☐ Deliver Us from Evil

Talk about troubles that make the children afraid or sad. Say, **When we are afraid, we can do what Paul and Silas did. We can pray. In the Lord's Prayer, we pray, “Deliver us from evil.” Deliver means to rescue and protect us. Evil is something bad. Jesus delivers us from evil!**



LEAVE

SAY

The Philippian jailer was saved by God's Word and Baptism. God also saves us by His Word and in Baptism.

PRAY

Dear Jesus, thank You for the missionary work of Paul and Silas. Thank You for all the missionaries that have shared the love of Jesus over the years. Help us to share the message of the Gospel wherever we are. In Your name we pray, Jesus. Amen.

A RETURNING TRUTH

Christ Returns
Revelation
21:1–22:5
AD 95

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

Jesus promises to take us to heaven.

BIBLE VERSE

God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Revelation 7:17

LEARNER GOAL

I understand that Jesus promises to take me and all believers to live with Him in heaven forever.

LAW & GOSPEL

We suffer from the effects of sin in this world.

Jesus promises all believers that we will one day be with Him in heaven, where we will live joyfully in His presence forever.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

Banished to the island of Patmos, John receives a revelation of the new heaven and new earth. In this climax to the Book of Revelation, John describes the indescribable—the Lamb of God in His glory with His people in their eternal home.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read Revelation 21:1–22:5 and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read the leader devotion, found in the digital resource center.

IN DEPTH Read the articles “Christ in Revelation” and “Jesus’ Human Nature” in *TLSB*, page 2237.

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- ☐ Gold or silver pipe cleaners
- ☐ Paper doilies
- ☐ Watercolors
- ☐ Salt shakers
- ☐ Fancy paper and ribbon
- ☐ Angel sugar cookies, frosting, crystal sugar sprinkles, plastic knives
- ☐ Shaving cream and cookie sheets
- ☐ Water and towels
- ☐ Crepe-paper streamers or colorful scarves

FOR EVERY LESSON

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Device with prepped music
- ☐ Copies of downloadable activity page
- ☐ Copies of Enduring Faith Page
- ☐ Supply Box

LAUNCH

Plan your lesson by reading through the options in each section. Choose the activities that will best fit your learners, and mark those boxes to guide you as you teach the lesson.

BEGIN

- ☐ Follow the Order of Opening Worship, use the Lesson Opening, or do both (part of the planning resources in the digital resource center).
- ☐ Sing songs using music found in the digital resource center, or sing your own favorite songs.

SAY

- ☐ **When Jesus' work on earth was done, He went back to His home in heaven. He promised to get a place ready for us so we can live there with Him someday. Today, we're going to learn about heaven and some things that are there.**
- ☐ **Have you ever had to wait for something to happen? Maybe it was your birthday or a special vacation. How long did you have to wait? How did it feel? In today's lesson, we will learn about how we will one day live with God in the new heaven and earth.**

PRAY

Dear Lord Jesus, as we study our lesson this week, help us understand the promises You made to one day take us to be with You forever. Bless our time together. In Your name we pray. Amen.

LEARN

Show your Bible, and remind the children that all the stories in God's Word are true.

TELL THE BIBLE NARRATIVE

Choose one of the options on the next page to tell the Bible narrative.

DO THIS!

Use one or both of the following activities to talk about the Bible narrative after you've read it.

- ☐ **FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE YOUNGER** After you tell the story, hand out paper and crayons and ask children to draw a picture of what they think heaven will be like. Build on children's happiness and security now so that through it they will eventually begin to understand Jesus' promise of a heavenly home and find comfort in knowing we will live with Him forever.
- ☐ **FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE OLDER** Have volunteers read aloud from the Bible: **Revelation 21:4, 8** and **22:3-5**. Talk about why the new heaven and new earth are described in terms of what it is not and who is not there. Turn to **Revelation 22:1-5**. Ask a volunteer to read these verses. Ask students to make connections between the tree described here and the tree in **Genesis 3:22-24**.

TALK ABOUT IT

Choose the questions that best fit the learning level of your group.

- ☐ What did John see?
- ☐ How will people feel and live in heaven?
- ☐ Who will be in heaven?

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

Guide discussion using these key points.

- In the new heaven and earth, there will be no fear, sorrow, tears, mourning, or pain. We will live in perfect joy and peace with God forever!
- Our eternal home is almost beyond our understanding, filled with joy instead of sorrow.
- Because God's presence gives light, there is no need for sun or moon.
- Because Jesus died and rose again to wipe away our sin, God promises to take all who believe in Him as their Savior to be with Himself for all eternity.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus, our Messiah, won victory over sin, death, and the devil for us on the cross. He will return one day to make all things new.

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

STORYTELLING DIRECTIONS: When you read an emotion, such as happy or sad, ask children to act out that emotion with you.

One of Jesus' helpers was named John. God loved John and everyone who believed in Jesus. God wanted them to know that even though they had troubles, He was with them. He was making a home for them in heaven. So God sent an angel to John in a special way. The angel showed John what heaven would be like.

What do you think heaven will be like? *Pause for answer.*

John saw Jesus sitting on a throne. There was bright light around Him. John saw that everything bad had ended. There was a new heaven and a new earth. No one was sick. No one was *sad* or crying. No one died. Then John saw a beautiful city with a high wall and gates. He saw some of God's angels. He saw a flowing river and the tree of life with many kinds of fruit. People were *happy* and praising God. John wrote down what he saw. It is written in the last book of the Bible called the Book of Revelation. No one really knows what heaven looks like for sure. But we know it will be a beautiful, *happy* place, because that's what God's angel showed John.

Before Jesus went back to heaven, He told His helper friends about heaven too. These words are for us too. He says, "I know you have had some *happy* days. But I'm get-

ting a place ready for you where you'll be *happier* than ever before! That place is My Father's house. His house is called heaven. My Father's house is prettier than anything you've ever seen. It has lots of room and it's very beautiful! The streets are gold and the gates have jewels. You will love the special place I have ready for you.

"In My house, no one will ever be *sad*. Everyone will be *happy* all the time! No one will ever get sick. No one will get hurt or cut or bruised. No one will ever make you cry or tease you. No one will say or do anything wrong. And best of all, you'll get to see Me! We'll talk with each other. You'll get to see the angels and God's friends that you've been learning about—Paul, Philip, Stephen, David, Moses, and all the rest! You'll see the people you love who believe in Me too! You can sing and be *happy* together.

"I'm getting this beautiful home ready for you because I love you so much! You are special to Me. I died on the cross to pay for your sins and rose again so you can live in heaven with Me forever. I promise to take you there someday."

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR OLDER CHILDREN

All but one of Jesus' twelve apostles were put to death for their faith in Jesus. The last of the Twelve was John, the brother of James, who took care of Mary after Jesus died.

John wasn't put to death, but he was exiled. He was forced to leave his people and live on an island called Patmos. For an apostle, being away from Christians was one of the hardest things.

But something very important happened while John was in exile. Jesus showed him a revelation that God the Father had given Him. It showed John what was happening in heaven and on earth.

That is so important because sometimes really bad things happen. Sometimes, it feels like Jesus doesn't know what's happening to us or that He doesn't care about us. Jesus gave John this revelation to write down so we could remember that God is in control of everything. One day He will come again to take away all the bad things and make

His creation new, perfect, and wonderful forever. That includes each of us believers too.

In the revelation, John saw Jesus in the new Jerusalem, and he wrote about it. Jesus said, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end" (Revelation 21:6). The description of the city and the tree of life sounds amazing and unusual as John struggles to explain heavenly things in earthly language.

John wrote down everything he saw and experienced in what became the last book of the Bible, the Book of Revelation. It tells us that God supervises all things and orders events so unbelievers will repent and glorify Him.

John finished his Book of Revelation with a promise from Jesus: "Surely I am coming soon." John's answer is our prayer, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:20).

LIVE

Choose from the following activities and crafts to help connect Bible learning to life.

☐ Move and Sing

Make a bridge with a helper or another child by holding hands and raising arms high. Have children line up and walk underneath as you sing these words to the tune “London Bridge Is Falling Down” and do actions: **I am on my way to heav’n, way to heav’n, way to heav’n. I am on my way to heav’n. I’ll see Jesus.** Lower bridge to catch a child. **He’ll hug me and hold me tight. Hold me tight. Hold me tight. He’ll hug me and hold me tight. Jesus loves me.**



☐ Angel Craft

Make angels. Have children place a paper cup upside down and draw a smiling face. Twist one end of a gold or silver pipe cleaner into halo. Tape it to the back of the cup, so the halo extends over the cup. Fold a doily in half, center it over the pipe cleaner, and glue on the back of the cup for wings. Say, **There will be many angels in heaven praising Jesus. Who else will be there? What will you do?**



☐ Happy Art

Let children use watercolors to make a picture of what they think heaven will look like. Shake salt on pictures while still wet. When they dry, pictures will sparkle. Talk about how heaven will be a wonderful place where they will see Jesus and live with Him forever. Let children tell about things they might do.



☐ A Letter of Hope and Love

John wrote the Book of Revelation to share what he had learned about Jesus’ second coming. Ask students to write a letter to their friends and family, telling about what they learned from God’s Word today. Add to the fun: provide fancy paper and ribbon to tie it.



☐ Angel Snack

Set out angel sugar cookies, frosting, crystal sugar sprinkles, and plastic knives. Have children frost an angel and add the sugar sprinkles. Say, **Angels serve God and help us. In heaven, we will see God’s angels. Best of all, we will see Jesus!**



☐ Finger Painting

Finger-paint with shaving cream on cookie sheets or right on the table. Have the children make happy designs. Provide shirts for cover-ups and water and towels for clean up. Talk about some of the fun and happy things they like to do. One day we will be in heaven with Jesus. It will be the best place of all.



☐ Heaven Is a Happy Place

Play the song “He’s Coming” (digital resource center) or other happy music. Give children strips of crepe paper or colorful scarves, and have them move or dance to the music. Talk about how heaven is a happy place because we will be with Jesus. There won’t be hurts or tears anymore. We will sing and praise Jesus and be with those we love.



LEAVE

SAY

Jesus promises to take all believers to heaven to live with Him in perfect peace and happiness forever.

PRAY

Dear Jesus, thank You for giving up Your life to save me from my sin. Help me to live as Your child as I look forward to living forever with You. In Your name we pray, Jesus. Amen.