LESSON 72: TRUTHFULNESS

PARABLE OF THE SOIL

Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23

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PARABLE OF THE SOIL

- Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23
- Big Picture Q&A: Why did Jesus tell parables? Jesus told parables to teach people about God and His kingdom.
- Key Passage: Matthew 5:6 – Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

JESUS CONNECTION

Jesus is the Sower who shared the truth about God's kingdom. His followers continue to share the truth today, and those who understand and accept the gospel become more like Jesus.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

TRUTHFULNESS – Choosing not to lie or deceive others.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

The Gospels record dozens of Jesus' parables. A *parable* is a story Jesus told to help people understand the kingdom of God. Each parable taught a lesson and revealed secrets of God's kingdom for those who would understand (Mt. 13:10–13).

The parable of the soil would have resonated with those listening because they would have been familiar with the practice of sowing or planting seed. But the parable had a deeper meaning. It contained a lesson about God's Word and the responses of those who hear it.

In the parable, a sower's seeds fell in four different places. Some of the seeds fell along the path, where they were eaten by birds. Other seeds fell on rocky ground. Those seeds had no roots, so they withered in the sun. Other seeds fell among thorns, and they were choked out. Other seeds fell on good soil, and they produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was planted.

After Jesus told the parable, He explained it to His disciples. The soil represents people's hearts, and the seed is the word about God's kingdom. The person whose heart is like the hard soil hears the good news about God, but he does not understand it or he rejects it. The person whose heart is like the rocky soil is quick to receive the truth, but when life gets hard, he falls away. The person whose heart is like the thorny soil cares more about the things of the world than the good news about God, and the seed cannot grow. The person whose heart is like the good soil hears the good news about God and receives it. He bears more fruit than what was planted. In the life of a believer, the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22–23) is evident.

Still today, people respond to the gospel in various ways. As you prepare to teach the parable of the soil, pray for the students you lead. Pray that God will give them receptive hearts so that they will hear, understand and be changed by the good news about Jesus.

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BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Over the last few lessons, we learned about Jesus growing up and about the people He met during His ministry on Earth. Do you remember whom Jesus met? (*Nicodemus*, *John the Baptist*, *Samaritan woman.*) Jesus told Nicodemus he would have to be _____ to go to Heaven? (*Born again.*) He offered the Samaritan woman _____ so she would never be thirsty again. (*Living water.*)

Today, we will begin learning some of the stories Jesus told in order to teach people about God and His kingdom. These stories are called parables. Today, we will learn a story Jesus told about a sower, or farmer, who planted seeds by scattering them on the soil.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

What Does It Mean? (Older Students)

- Form groups of three or four students. Distribute pencils and the "What Does It Mean?" printable. Challenge the class to figure out what the letters stand for in each puzzle. Point out the example: 66 B of the B = 66 books of the Bible. After a few minutes, review the answers with the group.
- How many of the puzzles did you figure out? How many did you have trouble understanding? Today, we are going to hear about a story Jesus told. Not everyone understood the story, but Jesus explained to His disciples what it meant.

Grow, Growing, Grown (Older and Younger Students)

- Ask each student to show with their hands how tall, or long, they think they were when they were born. Using a tape measure, show the average length of a baby: 20 inches. Instruct each student to stand. Challenge them to guess about how many inches they have grown since they were born. Measure to see how close they are. Let volunteers indicate with their hands how tall they would like to be when they are fully grown (allow them to carefully stand on chairs).
- Just about everyone starts small and grows bigger. Seeds are no different. Today, we will learn about a kind of growth that is also like seeds, but it isn't about how our bodies grow.

What Do You Need? (Younger Students)

- Lead students in the following discussion: Have you ever planted a seed before? What kind did you plant? What do you need to help a seed grow into a beautiful plant? (*Water*, *sunlight*, *good soil*, *etc.*)
- People plant many kinds of seeds. There are seeds that produce vegetables, fruit, flowers and beautiful plants. Today, we will learn about a new kind of seed God plants.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Matthew 5:6

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

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Fill in the Blank (Older and Younger Students)

- Lead the class in reading the verse several times. Hide the key passage poster. Write the key passage on a chalkboard or dry erase board, drawing blanks for several keywords. Choose volunteers to write in the missing words as the class supplies them.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: Why did Jesus tell parables?

A: *Jesus told parables to teach people about God and His kingdom.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Parable of the Soil | Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23

Jesus traveled around from one town and village to another. In each place, He preached the good news about the kingdom of God. Crowds of people came to listen to Jesus' teaching. **One day, Jesus was sitting by the sea. So many people came to hear Him that Jesus got into a boat and sat down to teach.** The crowds stood on the shore to listen.

Jesus said, "A sower went out to plant seeds. As he was planting, some seeds fell along the path. Soon, the birds came and ate up the seeds from the path. Other seeds fell on rocky ground where there wasn't much soil. **The seeds sprouted quickly, but** they did not have any roots because the soil was shallow. **When the sun came up, the plants withered. Other seeds fell among thorns. The thorns grew, and they stopped the seeds from growing. But some of the seeds fell on good ground. Those seeds grew and produced a crop, more than what was planted!"**

Then, Jesus explained the parable to His disciples. He said, "Some people hear the truth about God's kingdom, but they don't understand it. The Evil One comes and takes away what was planted in their hearts. **Those people are like the seeds that fell on the path.**

"Some people hear the truth about God's kingdom, and they are happy to accept it. But when hard times come, they give up. Those people are like the seeds that fell on rocky ground.

"Some people hear the truth about God's kingdom, but they worry about this life and they love money too much. The truth cannot grow. **Those people are like the seeds that fell among thorns.**

"But some people hear the truth about God's kingdom, and they understand it. They accept the truth, and it grows in their lives. **Those people are like the seeds that fell on good ground.** Those seeds produce a crop, more than what was planted."

JESUS CONNECTION

Jesus is the Sower who shared the truth about God's kingdom. His followers continue to share the truth today, and those who understand and accept the gospel become more like Jesus.

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LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

TRUTHFULNESS – Choosing not to lie or deceive others.

Living LifeWise

God's Word is always true; it teaches us to recognize the truth from lies.

Character Connection

Sometimes we misunderstand people, and we can misunderstand God. In His story, Jesus was clear that not everyone who hears God's message gets it right. Some people ignore it. Others listen but don't understand. Most just don't believe God is telling the truth, so they reject Him.

It's important to get God's messages right because the Bible is the ultimate source of Truth. God tells us in His Word about who He is and how to live His way. We can trust everything God says because He never lies. He also gives us the Holy Spirit to help us understand what the Bible says so we don't misunderstand and to help us obey what God has said.

Knowing what is true is important in every area of life. But we can't just believe everything we hear. God's Word is always true, but the world is full of messages (in movies, songs, social media and news sites; from celebrities and advertising) that are often not true. Following those messages will not lead us to obeying God. It is important to compare those messages to what God says in the Bible and ask the Spirit to help us recognize what is true and what is a lie that would lead us away from God.

In each example, how would we know if what we're being told is true?

- Your sister tells you that a squirrel ate your missing chocolate bunny.
- In one episode, the character learns the lesson that "you should always follow your heart."
- The teacher tells you that the quiz will be on Friday.
- A friend says that God gets angry with you every time you sin, so you'd better be good all the time.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- **What is a parable?**

  A story that teaches people about God and His kingdom

- **How many kinds of soil did Jesus talk about seeds falling into?**

  Four—along the path, rocky soil, among thorns and good soil, Mt. 13:4–8; Mk. 4:4–7; Lk. 8:5–8

- **What happened to the seeds that did not land in good soil?**

  Eaten by birds, withered or were choked out, did not produce a harvest, Mt. 13:4–7; Mk. 4:4–6; Lk. 8:5–7

- **What did the good soil represent?**

  People who hear and believe the gospel, whose lives are changed by the truth, Mt. 13:23; Mk. 4:20; Lk. 8:15

- **What happened to the seeds that fell in good soil?**

  Grew and produced a large crop, Mt. 13:8; Mk. 4:8; Lk. 8:8

- **Why did Jesus tell parables?**

  Jesus told parables to teach people about God and His kingdom.

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REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Practice Sharing the Gospel (Older Students)

- If you are a believer, God wants you to tell others the good news about Jesus. You can be a sower too! Have you ever told someone about Jesus? Let's look at one way we can talk to our friends or family members about Jesus. Give each student a "Tell Me About It" printable. Briefly review the steps and encourage students to find a partner and practice sharing the gospel. Emphasize that not everyone who hears the gospel believes it, but we can pray and ask God to change the hearts of people who reject Him.

- When we understand and believe the gospel, God wants us to become sowers too. We can share the good news about Jesus with others. Remember, God asks us to share the good news. Only God can change people's hearts.

Four Corners (Older Students)

- Label four pieces of paper: *seeds on the path*, *seeds on rocky ground*, *seeds among thorns* and *seeds on good ground*. Tape one paper in each corner of the room. Distribute Bibles and instruct the class to find Matthew 13. Retell or review the Bible story in your own words, or use the bolded text of the Bible story script. Then, invite the class to play a game of "Four Corners." Direct students to stand in the center of the room. Read the following descriptions, one at a time. Students should move to the corner best described by the statement. After you reveal the answer, the class will return to the center of the room to hear the next description.

    1. These seeds sprouted quickly, but they did not have any roots. (*Seeds on rocky ground.*)
    2. Other plants kept these seeds from growing. (*Seeds among thorns.*)
    3. These seeds grew and produced a crop. (*Seeds on good ground.*)
    4. This is like people who don't understand the truth about God's kingdom. (*Seeds on the path.*)
    5. This is like people who give up when hard times come. (*Seeds on rocky ground.*)
    6. This is like people who worry too much. (*Seeds among thorns.*)
    7. This is like people who accept the truth, and it grows in their lives. (*Seeds on good ground.*)

- Jesus didn't tell this story to teach people about farming. Jesus told a parable to show that not everyone who hears the gospel believes it. Think about the four places the seeds fell. These places describe our hearts:

    - Do you have trouble understanding the gospel?
    - Do you want to give up on God when life is hard?
    - Do you worry about life and love money more than you love God?
    - Do you understand the gospel and love Jesus?

- Encourage students to talk to you if they have questions about the gospel.

Act It Out (Older and Younger Students)

- Assign students the parts of farmer, path seeds, birds, rocky soil seeds, thorns, thorny soil seeds, good soil seeds. Read the bolded part of the Bible story and encourage them to listen carefully and act it out as you read.

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- The four different soils all heard God's Word, but only one accepted the truth and grew from it. Which soil grew and produced a crop? Which soil do you think you are right now? Which soil do you want to be?

Four Soils (Younger Students)

- Before class, print the "Four Soils" printable, cut them apart and glue them individually to large popsicle sticks. Label four pots or clear containers with the following descriptions: *seeds on the path*, *seeds on rocky ground*, *seeds among thorns* and *seeds on good ground*. Invite the students to bring up their popsicle sticks during the story and place them in the correct pot so they can be seen. Retell or review the Bible story in your own words, or use the bolded text of the Bible story script, pausing when a stick needs to be placed in a pot. There are 16 total sticks to be "planted."
    - **Path:** eaten, hear the truth, don't understand the truth
    - **Rocky Ground:** hear the truth, sprouts quickly, no roots, withers, gives up when life is hard
    - **Thorns:** hear the truth, stopped from growing, worry too much
    - **Good Soil:** hear the truth, accept the truth, seed grow, produce a crop, God's word helps them grow
- Jesus didn't tell this story to teach people about farming. Jesus told a parable to show that not everyone who hears the gospel believes it. Think about the four places the seeds fell. These places describe our hearts:
    - Do you have trouble understanding the gospel?
    - Do you want to give up on God when life is hard?
    - Do you worry about life and love money more than you love God?
    - Do you understand the gospel and love Jesus?
- Encourage students to talk to you if they have questions about the gospel.

Protect the Seeds (Younger Students)

- Place a hula hoop or a masking tape circle in the center of the room. Place a small handful of sunflower seeds inside. Select a volunteer to be the "farmer." Her job will be to keep the seeds in the hula hoop; however, she cannot step inside the hoop. The rest of the class will try to remove seeds from the hula hoop. If the farmer tags another player before she captures a seed, that player must sit out. If a player removes a seed, he can give it to an adult leader and go back for another seed. The game ends when either all players are tagged out by the farmer or all the farmer's seeds have been taken. For an added challenge, help the class keep track of who has the most seeds at the end of the game.
- In the parable Jesus told, the seeds had no control over where they landed or what happened to them after they landed. In our lives, we can take actions to protect the seeds of truth God sows in our lives. We can pray, read our Bibles and go to church to help us remember the truth about God. Most importantly, Jesus sends us the Holy Spirit, who helps guide us to grow in our faith and live for God. Enemies of God don't want us to believe the truth, and they will try to attack us to keep us from believing God. We trust that God will protect us and give us the strength to obey Him and cling to His truth.

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Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Scattered Seeds (Older Students)
  - Answer: *A parable is a story Jesus told to help people understand the kingdom of God. Jesus told a parable about how people respond to the gospel.*
- Plant Power (Younger Students)
  - Answer: *1. seed, 2. sprout, 3. budding flower, 4. bloomed flower, 5. withered flower.*

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Lord God, thank You for sending Jesus to save people from sin. We love You and are so thankful that You sent people to plant the seeds of the gospel in our lives. Thank You for growing those seeds. Help us to be fruitful and share the gospel with everyone we know, like the seeds in the parable that grew into plants and produced even more seeds. We ask that You would change the hearts of people who reject You so that they would believe the truth about Jesus and love Him. Amen.

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Journal Page

Think about how you respond to the gospel. Do you believe the good news about Jesus? Do you doubt Jesus when life is hard? Do you have questions? Do you reject the gospel?



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Can we know who will believe the gospel?
- What could you do if someone you tell about Jesus doesn't believe the gospel?
- Think about how the sower scattered the seed. What does this show about how we should share the gospel?

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FOLD



PARABLE OF THE SOIL

MATTHEW 13:1–9, 18–23

MAIN POINT: JESUS TOLD A PARABLE ABOUT HOW PEOPLE RESPOND TO THE GOSPEL.

One day, Jesus was sitting by the sea. So many people came to hear Him that Jesus got into a boat and sat down to teach.

Jesus said, "A sower went out to plant seeds. As he was planting, some seeds fell along the path. Soon, the birds came and ate up the seeds from the path. Other seeds fell on rocky ground. The seeds sprouted quickly, but when the sun came up, the plants withered. Other seeds fell among thorns. The thorns grew, and they stopped the seeds from growing. But some of the seeds fell on good ground. Those seeds grew and produced a crop, more than what was planted!"

Then, Jesus explained the parable to His disciples. He said, "Some people hear the truth about God's kingdom, but they don't understand it. Those people are like the seeds that fell on the path.

"Some people hear the truth about God's kingdom, and they are happy to accept it. But when hard times come, they give up. Those people are like the seeds that fell on rocky ground.

"Some people hear the truth about God's kingdom, but they worry about this life and they love money too much. Those people are like the seeds that fell among thorns.

"But some people hear the truth about God's kingdom, and they understand it. Those people are like the seeds that fell on good ground."

Jesus Connection: *Jesus is the Sower who shared the truth about God's kingdom. His followers continue to share the truth today, and those who understand and accept the gospel become more like Jesus.*

Key Passage: *Matthew 5:6 – Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

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SCATTERED SEEDS

Unscramble the seeds to discover the message.

A _____ is a _____ that
(PBALERA) (SOYRT)

Jesus told to _____ people
(PLEH)

understand the _____ of
(NIGKMOD)

_____.
(OGD)

Jesus told a _____ about
(BLEPARA)

how people _____ to the
(PONDSER)

_____.
(PELSOG)

ACTION REACTION

Draw a face to show how each situation might make you feel. Then, compare your reactions with a friend.



1. The concert you hoped to attend is sold out.

2. Your cousin is coming to visit for a week.

3. You missed the bus that takes you to school.

4. Your parents announce your family is moving.

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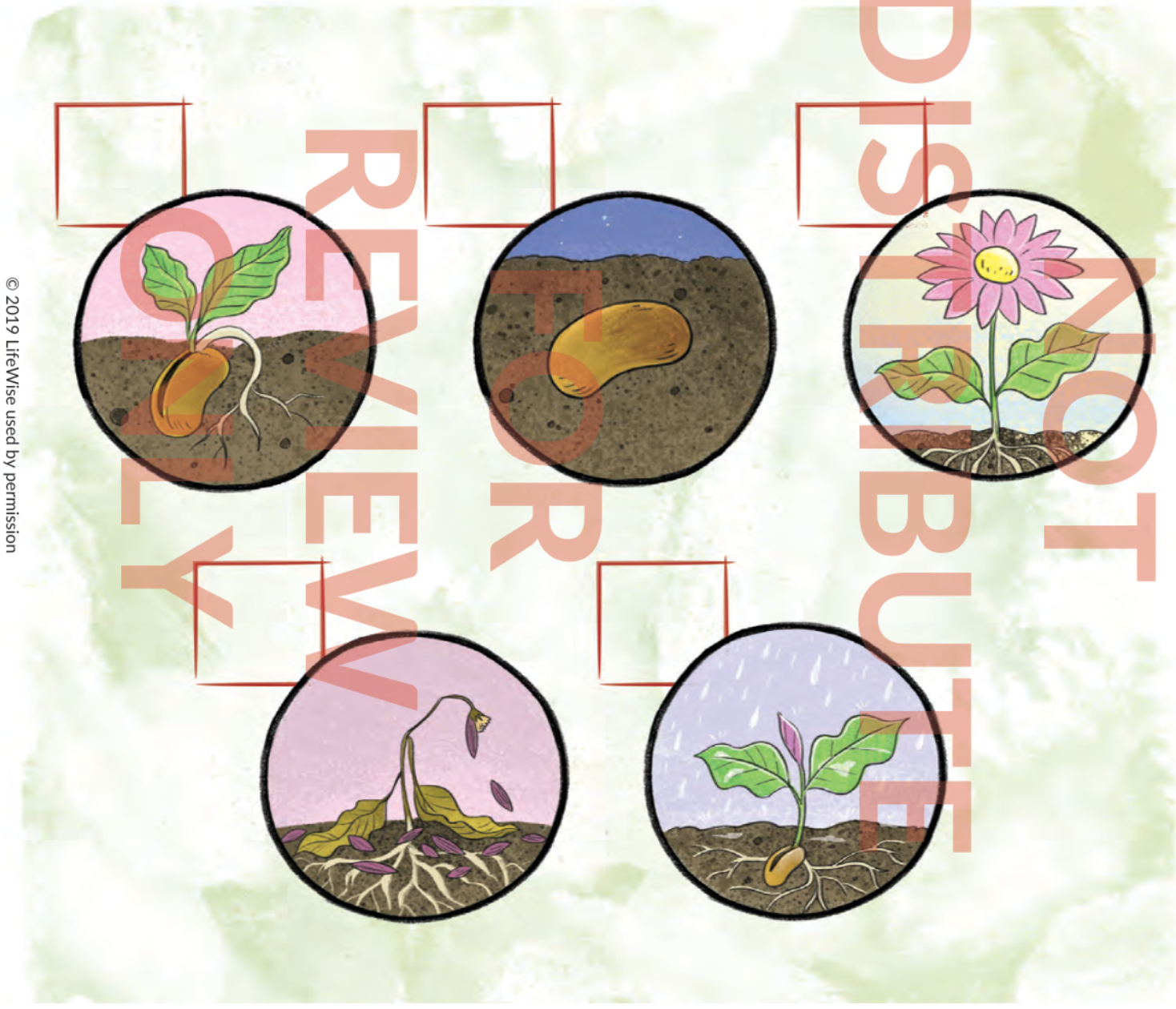
PLANT POWER

INSTRUCTIONS: Number each picture to show the order of a seed growing into a plant and then dying.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Matthew 5:6 – Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:
- Why did Jesus tell parables? Jesus told parables to teach people about God and His kingdom.

BIBLE STORY:
PARABLE OF THE SOIL
- Jesus taught a parable about a man who scattered seeds.
- Jesus told about four kinds of soil, but only one produced a crop.
- Each type of soil represented a way people respond to the gospel.
- Not everyone who hears the gospel believes it.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:
- How can we know who will believe the gospel?
- What could you do if someone you tell about Jesus doesn't believe the gospel?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:
- Plant a garden with your family. Check on the seeds daily to see how they are growing. Consider using different kinds of soil to see which grow the best plants.

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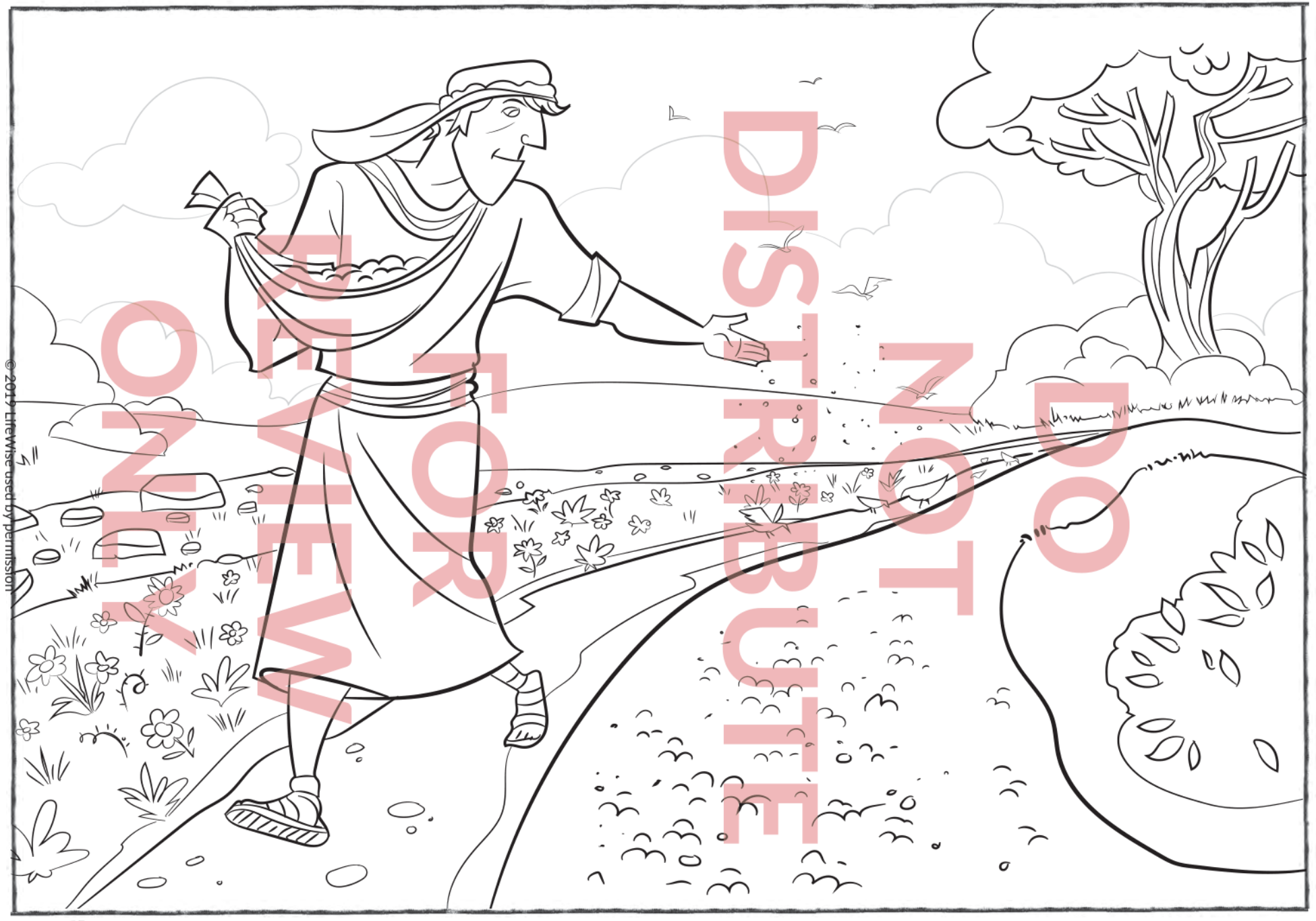

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NOT EVERYONE WHO HEARS THE GOSPEL BELIEVES IT.

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Tell Me About It

ASK

Ask your friend questions about what he or she believes. Consider one of these:

- What do you believe about God?
- What do you think happens after we die?
- How do you think someone gets into heaven?
- How can a person know for sure that he or she is going to heaven?
- Has anyone ever explained the gospel to you?

UNDERSTAND

Try not to argue with your friend.

Thank him or her for being honest.

Try to understand if anything is keeping your friend from trusting in Jesus.

ADMIT

Explain why you are a Christian. Tell what Jesus has done for you.

Admit that you are a sinner and cannot save yourself. You needed someone to rescue you, and Jesus came to save sinners.

SHARE

The word *gospel* means "good news." You can share the gospel in as little as one sentence:

Jesus died for our sins and rose again.

Open your Bible and read 1 Corinthians 15:3-4.

When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin and gives us eternal life.

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What Does It Mean?

Can you figure out what each letter stands for in these puzzles? Write your answers in the blanks.
(Hint: Answers can be found in the Bible.)

Example: 66 B of the B = 66 books of the Bible

1. 150 C in the B of P _____
2. 39 B in the OT _____
3. 27 B in the NT _____
4. 40 Y in the W _____
5. 10 P in E _____
6. 5 MP in the OT _____
7. 12 MP in the OT _____
8. 4 G in the NT _____

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5. 10 P in E _____
6. 5 MP in the OT _____
7. 12 MP in the OT _____
8. 4 G in the NT _____

Answer Key

Use this answer key as a reference to check kids' work.

1. 150 C in the B of P 150 chapters in the Book of Psalms
2. 39 B in the OT 39 books in the Old Testament
3. 27 B in the NT 27 books in the New Testament
4. 40 Y in the W 40 years in the wilderness
5. 10 P in E 10 plagues in Egypt
6. 5 MP in the OT 5 Major Prophets in the Old Testament
7. 12 MP in the OT 12 Minor Prophets in the Old Testament
8. 4 G in the NT 4 Gospels in the New Testament

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SPROUTED QUICKLY

DON'T UNDERSTAND THE TRUTH

NO ROOTS

GIVE UP WHEN LIFE GETS HARD

STOPPED FROM GROWING

WORRY TOO MUCH

SEEDS GROW

ACCEPT THE TRUTH

PRODUCE A CROP

GOD'S WORD HELPS THEM GROW

EATEN

WITHERS

HEAR THE TRUTH

HEAR THE TRUTH

HEAR THE TRUTH

HEAR THE TRUTH

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Four Soils

Instructions: Print and cut apart. Use as directed in the leader guide.

L 72 Parable of the Soil | TRUTHFULNESS

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LESSON 73: MERCY

THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT

Matthew 18:21–35

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THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT

- Matthew 18:21–35
- Big Picture Q&A: Why did Jesus tell parables? Jesus told parables to teach people about God and His kingdom.
- Key Passage: Matthew 5:6 – Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

JESUS CONNECTION

Nothing we do is enough to pay the debt we owe God and take away God's punishment for our sin. Jesus came and died on the cross to pay for our sin and take the punishment we deserve. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin completely. We can forgive others because God has greatly forgiven us.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

MERCY – Choosing not to punish someone who deserves to be punished.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Jesus had been teaching His disciples when Peter asked Jesus, "How many times should I forgive my brother when he sins against me?" Peter suggested seven times. Jews considered it standard to show forgiveness three times (see Job 33:29–30), so Peter probably thought he was going above and beyond. Jesus answered Peter's question by telling a story about an unmerciful servant.

In the parable, a servant owed his master ten thousand talents. A talent was equal to about 20 years of wages. Ten thousand talents represented a debt that could never be repaid. Faced with debtors' prison, the servant begged for more time to repay the master. Instead, the master released his servant and forgave the great debt.

The same servant went out and confronted a man who owed him a hundred denarii—about 100 days of wages. The man begged for more time, but the servant refused and put the man in prison. When the master heard what happened, he was angry that the servant who had been forgiven a great debt did not show mercy to the man who owed a small debt. So, the master put the man in prison until he could pay his debt. Jesus concluded the parable by explaining that God would react in the same way to anyone who does not forgive his brother.

We are like the servant, and God is like the master. Because of our sin, we owe a debt we cannot pay. We deserve to be punished for our sin, but God the Father showed His love by sending His Son, Jesus, to pay the debt we owe. Jesus lived the perfect life we fail to live and died the death we deserve to die. We come to Him with nothing to offer but empty hands of faith. Those who trust in Jesus are completely forgiven.

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As you teach, emphasize that God shows mercy to us so that we will show mercy to others—not just three times or seven times, but many times—not keeping count. We have been forgiven a great debt, so we can forgive others when they sin against us.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Last time, we heard about the parable of the soil. Does everyone who hears the gospel believe it and accept it? (*No.*) What kinds of things keep people from accepting God's Word? (*Worry, love of money and other things in the world, not understanding the gospel.*) Today, we are going to hear about the parable called "The Unmerciful Servant." It is found in the Gospel of Matthew in the New Testament.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

The Forgiver (Older Students)

- Instruct the class to form a single-file line. One volunteer will be the forgiver and sit in a chair at the front of the room. Students will approach the forgiver one at a time and issue an apology. For example: "I'm sorry I ate your candy bar." The forgiver should keep a straight face and reply, "I forgive you." Encourage students to give silly or outlandish apologies to make the forgiver laugh. If a player's apology causes the forgiver to smile or laugh, he becomes the forgiver.
- These were silly, made-up offenses to make each other laugh. Each time you apologized, [*name of the forgiver*] forgave you. How many times should someone forgive others? Three times? Five times? One hundred times? That's a question we will answer when we hear today's Bible story.

Money Challenge (Older Students)

- Announce that you will give the class a challenge. Any student who completes the challenge will earn $1 of play money. Challenge students to do 25 jumping jacks. Then, distribute play money to each student who completes the task. Explain that anyone who wants to earn another dollar of play money can do 25 more jumping jacks. Allow them to do the challenge. Give play money for each set of 25 jumping jacks a student completes.
- How many sets of jumping jacks would you need to do to earn $100? (*100 sets.*) How many sets would you need to do to earn $10,000? (*10,000 sets.*) That is a lot of jumping jacks! I'm not sure we could do it. Today, we are going to hear a Bible story about a servant who owed his master so much money that he could not repay it. To repay the debt, the man would have to work for 20,000 years! Let's find out what happened.

You Owe Me! (Younger Students)

- Instruct the class to stand in a circle. Give one student a few pieces of play money. Direct her to pass the play money clockwise around the circle one piece at a time while you play music. Stop the music and ask the first student for the play money back. If the students holding the play money offer it to you, remind them that they are not the ones who "owe" you money. Play again as time allows.
- If someone gives us money that they expect us to one day give back, we call it "owing" money. We may also call it *debt*. If you owe a debt that you cannot pay back, you could get in real trouble! But what would happen if the person you owe chose to forgive your debt? What would you do?

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If I Were a Rich Man (Younger Students)

- Ask the students to imagine each of them were given $1,000. Help students think through what they could afford to buy. [*Collect a number of toys, video games or other catalogs before class for visual aids to spark ideas.*] Then, ask them how they would feel if, instead of being given $1,000, they *owed* $1,000. What if they owed $1,000,000?
- Today, we will hear a story about a man who owed the king a lot of money. He owed the king more money than he could ever pay back. What would you do if someone owed you a lot of money?

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Matthew 5:6

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Key Passage Puzzle (Older Students)

- Before class, make several copies of the key passage poster. Cut each poster into several pieces like a puzzle, and put each puzzle in a separate bag. During class, split students into groups and challenge them to work together to solve the puzzle. When students finish, guide them to read Matthew 5:6 together.

Funny Voices (Younger Students)

- Display the key passage poster. Read the verse aloud together. Repeat the verse multiple times, using different voices. Encourage the class to do each voice with you. Then, use sticky notes to cover a few words and see if the class can still say the verse. Repeat, covering more words each time until the class can say the entire verse without looking.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: Why did Jesus tell parables?

A: *Jesus told parables to teach people about God and His kingdom.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

The Unmerciful Servant | Matthew 18:21–35

Peter asked Jesus, "How many times should I forgive someone who wrongs me? Is seven times enough?"

Jesus answered, "Not just seven times, but seventy times seven times!" Then, **Jesus told Peter a story to help him understand what forgiveness in the kingdom of Heaven is like.**

Jesus said, "One day, a king asked all his servants to tell him how much they each owed the king. One of the servants owed the king 50 million silver coins! The servant did not have any money to give the king, so the king ordered for the servant and his family to be sold as payment for the debt.

"But the servant fell on his knees and begged the king, 'Please give me more time. I will repay you everything I owe!' The king felt sorry for the man, so he let the man go and forgave the debt; the servant did not have to pay the king anything.

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"As the servant was leaving, he ran into a man who owed him one hundred silver coins. The servant grabbed the man by the throat and choked him. **'Give me the money you owe me!' he demanded.**

"The man fell to his knees and begged the servant, 'Please give me more time. I will repay you everything I owe!' But the servant refused, and he threw the man into jail.

"Some other servants told the king what happened. **The king called for the servant he had forgiven.** 'You are an evil man!' said the king. **'I forgave what you could never repay, and you did not forgive the small amount.' The king** was angry. He **punished the official and made him pay his debt."**

Jesus said, "This is what My Father in Heaven will do if you do not forgive each other."

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JESUS CONNECTION



Nothing we do is enough to pay the debt we owe God and take away God's punishment for our sin. Jesus came and died on the cross to pay for our sin and take the punishment we deserve. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin completely. We can forgive others because God has greatly forgiven us.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

MERCY – Choosing not to punish someone who deserves to be punished.

Living LifeWise

God is merciful, and He will help us show mercy to others.

Character Connection

Mercy always relates to suffering. God definitely wants us to help others who are hurting. But He doesn't stop there. He wants us to show mercy to people who don't deserve it, even those who have hurt us personally in some way, because that's how He's shown mercy to us.

Jesus told today's story in response to a question about forgiveness. He basically told Peter, "You want to know the rules about forgiveness, but God wants us to forgive without rules, without restrictions, without boundaries. Forgive like He does." But we can't do that on our own. Jesus' story was supposed to help us see that we need God to help us show mercy the way He shows mercy. Only He can change our hearts to treat others that way. Let's ask Him, right now, to do that. [*Say a quick prayer for the class.*]

Thinking about mercy is a good thing, but doing mercy is very practical. How could you show mercy in these situations:

- To the friend or sibling who ruined your favorite pair of shoes?
- To someone who sits in your seat at lunch or on the bus or at church?
- To an adult who yells at you for something little because they had a bad day?

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BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- How many times did Peter think he should forgive someone?

  Seven times, Mt. 18:21

- How many times did Jesus say to forgive someone?

  Seventy times seven times, Mt. 18:22

- What did the servant ask the king to do?

  Give him more time, Mt. 18:26

- What did the king do for the servant?

  Forgave him, Mt. 18:27

- What did the man ask the servant to do?

  Give him more time, Mt. 18:29

- What did the servant do to the man who owed him money?

  Put him into jail, Mt. 18:30

- Who paid the debt for our sin?

  Jesus, Rom. 4:25

- Why can we forgive others?

  God has greatly forgiven us, Eph. 4:32

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REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Knock Out (Older Students)

- Form three teams. On a chalkboard or dry erase board, draw a column for each team and put 10 *X*s in each column. Explain that you will ask a Bible review question to a player on Team 1. If she answers correctly, she may erase two *X*s from the board. She may take both from the same team or split them and take one from both opposing teams. The player can also shoot a ball at a basket to earn a chance to erase a third *X*. If she doesn't know the answer, she may ask her teammates. If her team is correct, she may erase only one *X*. Play will then pass to the next team. The goal is to "knock out" other teams by erasing all of their *X*s. If a team's *X*s are erased, allow them to continue to play.

- How did you feel when another team erased your team's *X*s? [*Prompt students to discuss.*] Can you forgive the other teams for erasing your *X*s? How many times should you forgive others who wrong you? (*We should forgive without counting.*) Why is it hard to forgive? How many times has God forgiven you?

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Practice Forgiveness (Older Students)

- Distribute slips of paper and pencils. Prompt students to write about a time they were wronged. What happened? How did that make them feel? Allow a few minutes for the class to write.

- Forgiving someone who wronged us isn't easy. Sometimes, the other person doesn't realize how much he hurt us, or he isn't even sorry! We learned today that God shows mercy to us so that we will show mercy to others. We can pray and ask God to help us forgive someone else and thank Him for forgiving our sins.

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- Invite the class to line up a few feet away from a trash can. Challenge students to crumple or tear up their papers and toss them into the trash can as a way to show they have chosen to forgive someone who wronged them.

Hot Potato (Older and Younger Students)

- Direct the class to sit in a circle. Provide two balls of different colors that students should pass in opposite directions as you play a song. Stop the music at random intervals and choose a color. Whoever is holding that ball must answer a question. If he doesn't know the answer, he must ask the person with the other ball and share the answer. Restart the music and continue playing the game.

Draw the Line (Older and Younger Students)

- One side of the room will represent "That's so easy!" and the other side, "That's too hard!" The middle of the room will mean "I'm not sure." You may choose to lay masking tape on the floor to help students visualize the spectrum. After you read each statement, students should decide how easy or hard it would be for them to show forgiveness or mercy in that situation and move to the corresponding place in the room.
  - Your classmate didn't invite you to a party.
  - Your friend spilled chocolate milk all over your shirt.
  - Your brother borrowed and lost your favorite game.
  - Your sister ripped your new jeans.
  - Your dad missed your soccer game.
  - Your grandpa broke his promise to take you to the movies.
- Believers cannot "draw the line" on how many times we will forgive someone who wrongs us. Through Jesus, God has forgiven all of our sin—past, present and future. God shows mercy to us so that we will show mercy to others.

Fill in the Blank (Younger Students)

- Draw blanks on the board for random letters in the Bible story's main point: *Why did Jesus tell parables? Jesus told parables to teach people about God and His kingdom.* Form two or three teams. Call on the first team to answer a Bible review question. If they answer correctly, they get to guess a letter. If the letter appears in the puzzle, fill in all the corresponding blanks. If they guess a letter correctly, they can guess another letter. Then, give the next team a turn. Teams will guess one letter at a time until they complete the puzzle.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Coin Counting (Older Students)
- Four Hundred Ninety (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Lord, You are good to us and show us mercy even though we deserve death. It is hard for us to show mercy to others, but we know that because of Jesus, it is possible. Help us to forgive others as You have forgiven us. Help us to show the world what Your great mercy looks like. Amen.

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Journal Page

How many times does Jesus want us to forgive others? Why? List names of people you need to forgive.



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Can we pay God the debt our sin owes? Why or why not?
- How has God shown mercy to sinners?
- How can you forgive others when their debt against you is great?

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THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT

MATTHEW 18:21–35

MAIN POINT: GOD SHOWS MERCY TO US SO THAT WE WILL SHOW MERCY TO OTHERS.

Jesus told Peter a story to help him understand what forgiveness in the kingdom of Heaven is like.

Jesus said, "One day, a king asked all his servants to tell him how much they each owed the king. One of the servants owed the king fifty million silver coins! The servant did not have any money to give the king, so the king ordered for the servant and his family to be sold as payment for the debt.

"But the servant fell on his knees and begged the king, 'Please give me more time. I will repay you everything I owe!' The king felt sorry for the man, so he let the man go and forgave the debt.

"As the servant was leaving, he ran into a man who owed him one hundred silver coins. 'Give me the money you owe me!' he demanded.

"The man fell to his knees and begged the servant, 'Please give me more time. I will repay you everything I owe!' But the servant refused, and he threw the man into jail.

"The king called for the servant he had forgiven. 'I forgave what you could never repay, and you did not forgive the small amount.' The king punished the official and made him pay his debt."

Jesus said, "This is what My Father in Heaven will do if you do not forgive each other."

Jesus Connection: *Nothing we do is enough to pay the debt we owe God and take away God's punishment for our sin. Jesus came and died on the cross to pay for our sin and take the punishment we deserve. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin completely. We can forgive others because God has greatly forgiven us.*

Key Passage: *Matthew 5:6 – Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

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SHOW IT

Circle which actions are examples of showing mercy.

- Letting your sister borrow your shoes even though she borrowed and ripped your favorite shirt.
- Talking back to your mom because she broke a promise to you.
- Ignoring your friend who spread a rumor about you.
- Visiting a classmate in the hospital who got hurt after he stole your bike.
- Reading a book with your little brother after he pushed you.
- Inviting a new classmate to sit with you at lunch even though she made fun of your outfit.
- Forgiving a friend who hurt you.



COIN COUNTING

Circle the bag in each row with the correct number of coins. Then, write the corresponding letter in the blank at the bottom to reveal a key word from today's Bible story.

____	____	____	____	____
10	8	12	15	4

is not getting the punishment you deserve, but being shown kindness instead.

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LIFEWISE ACADEMY
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FOUR HUNDRED NINETY

INSTRUCTIONS: Find a friend. Take turns connecting two dots with a line. If you complete a box, mark it as yours and go again.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Matthew 5:6 – Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:
- Why did Jesus tell parables? Jesus told parables to teach people about God and His kingdom.

BIBLE STORY:
THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT
- Peter asked Jesus about forgiveness.
- Jesus told a parable about an unmerciful servant.
- Even though the servant's enormous debt was forgiven, he was not willing to forgive a smaller debt owed to him.
- God shows mercy to us so that we will show mercy to others.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:
- How is our sin like a debt to God?
- How does God's mercy affect us?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:
- Obtain a few rolls of pennies. Use them to help your family visualize the difference in value between a penny and a larger bill. Talk about what it would be like to pay a large debt with pennies.

The Unmerciful Servant
L 73 | MERCY

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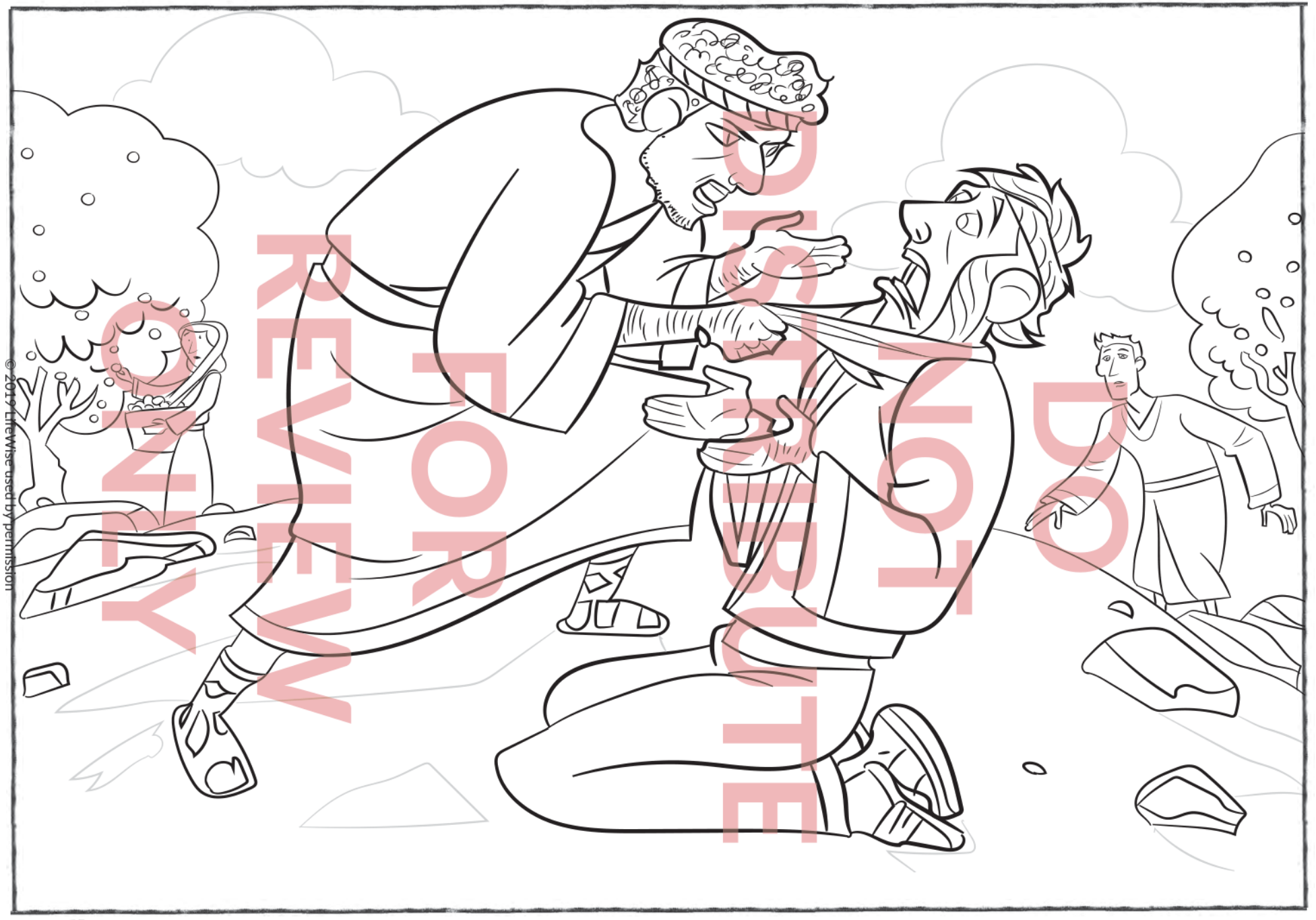

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GOD SHOWS MERCY TO US SO THAT WE WILL SHOW MERCY TO OTHERS.

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LESSON 74: LOVE

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Luke 10:25–37

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

- Luke 10:25–37
- Big Picture Q&A: Why did Jesus tell parables? Jesus told parables to teach people about God and His kingdom.
- Key Passage: Matthew 5:6 – Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

JESUS CONNECTION

Jesus' story about the good Samaritan surprised the people who heard it. Like the good Samaritan, God saw that we needed to be rescued. He sent His Son to save us from sin. Jesus died on the cross for our sin and rose again so we can have eternal life. God calls us to show His love for the world by helping people in need.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

LOVE – Choosing to support and care for others whether or not they deserve it.

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LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Jesus was meeting with His followers when an expert in the Law of Moses stood up and asked Him a question. "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus pointed Him to the Scriptures, which say, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself" (see Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18).

Then, the expert on the law asked, "Who is my neighbor?" Rather than give a list of whom the man should love, Jesus responded with a parable. Jesus' story about the Good Samaritan surprised the people who heard it. The priest and Levite—men dedicated to serving God—neglected to help the man in need. By showing mercy, the Samaritan (whom Jews considered a social outcast) proved to be a neighbor to the man in need. Jesus told the lawyer, "Go and do the same."

Jesus did not directly answer the question, "Who is my neighbor?" The expert on the law asked the wrong question; he was seeking to justify himself, to meet the minimum requirements of the Old Testament law with the hope of gaining eternal life. Rather, Jesus taught that the expert on the law should love without limits and demonstrate love with action.

In this parable, we see the beauty of the gospel. Point out to your students that like the good Samaritan, God saw that we needed to be rescued. We were dead in our sin and unable to help ourselves. God showed His love when He sent His Son, Jesus, to save us from sin.

Jesus came to us and provided salvation, forgiveness and everything we need. As we look to Him, He continues to take care of us. Emphasize that, as a result, God calls us to show His love for the world by loving others as He has loved us.

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BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Let's review the parables we've heard so far. Does anyone remember what a parable is? (*A story Jesus uses to teach us about God's kingdom.*) The parable of the soil was about how people respond to the gospel. Does everyone who hears the gospel believe and accept it? (*No.*) We also learned about the parable of the unmerciful servant. What did the man in the story do after his debt was canceled? (*Threw someone who owed him a small debt in jail.*) Why was the king angry? (*He had shown great mercy to the servant and thought it was right for the servant to give that same mercy to others.*) Jesus taught that God shows mercy to us so that we will show mercy to others.

Today, we are going to hear the parable of the good Samaritan. It is found in the Gospel of Luke in the New Testament. To understand this story better, we need to remember that when the Assyrians destroyed the kingdom of Israel and the city of Samaria, they took the people as exiles to Assyria. Only the poorest Jews were left in the land. Over time, other foreign people settled among God's people, and they began to marry each other. Their blood lines, their beliefs about God and their ways of living mixed together. These people became known as Samaritans. Even after the exile, most Jews wanted nothing to do with Samaritans because they felt the Samaritans had disobeyed God's laws.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Neighbors Logic Puzzle (Older Students)

- Give each student a "Logic Puzzle" printable and a pencil. Challenge the class to listen closely to the clues you give to figure out which friend lives at each house. Students should confirm or eliminate options by circling or crossing out the names at each house.

    1. Maddox lives in an even-numbered house.
    2. Hallie does not live at #2.
    3. Sarah and Hallie both have neighbors on each side of them.
    4. Jack and Hallie are not next-door neighbors.
    5. Maddox and Sarah are not next-door neighbors.
    6. Jack is a next-door neighbor to Sarah.

- That was challenging, but let's see if you figured out who lives at each house. [*Jack, #1; Sarah, #2; Hallie, #3; Maddox, #4.*] Today's Bible story is about neighbors, but not necessarily the people who live right next door to you. Let's get ready to hear more.

Bandage Relay (Older and Younger Students)

- Before class, separate enough sections of toilet paper so there is one for each student. Form two teams. Instruct each team to select a representative to stand at one end of the room while the rest of the team lines up at the opposite end. Their representative should be able to stand very still. One at a time, a player from each team will run to bandage one body part of his team's representative in toilet paper and then return to the line. Then, the next player will run to bandage another body part. The first team to wrap the hands, arms, legs, feet, torso and forehead of their teammate wins.

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- In our story today, we will hear about a man who was injured as he traveled. Thankfully, another man stopped to bandage his wounds and get him to safety. Who do you think would do something so kind? We'll learn more soon.

Who's My Neighbor? (Younger Student)

- Select one volunteer to be the *seeker*. She will close her eyes (or be blindfolded) and wander the room calling out, "Who's my neighbor?" The other students should respond, "I am." The blindfolded player will attempt to tag other players by following the sounds of their voices to determine where they are. When a student is tagged, he becomes the new *seeker*.

- Who do you think our neighbors are? In our story today, we will hear about a man who needed help from a neighbor, but the people he would have expected to help all avoided him! We will learn more about who helped the man soon.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Matthew 5:6

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Key Passage Scramble (Older Student)

- Write Matthew 5:6 as words or phrases on separate index cards. Prepare one card per student. Distribute the cards and challenge the class to arrange themselves in the correct order. Then, each student should read their word or phrase to say the key passage from beginning to end.

Hunt and Order (Younger Student)

- Write each word or phrase of the key passage on a separate index card. Tape the cards around the room. Invite students to journey around the room to find the cards and then arrange them in the correct order.

- Jesus had compassion on the crowds of people who came to Him. He showed His compassion by teaching them about God. He also showed His love and compassion for people by dying on the cross to make the way for us to return to God.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: **Why did Jesus tell parables?**

A: *Jesus told parables to teach people about God and His kingdom.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

The Good Samaritan | Luke 10:25–37

An expert on God's laws asked Jesus a question: "Teacher, what must I do to have eternal life?"

Jesus answered, "What do the Scriptures say? What do you think is the answer?**"**

The lawyer replied, "The Scriptures say, **'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind.' And 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"**

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Jesus said, "That's right. Do this, and you will have eternal life."

Then, the man asked, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus told a story to help the man understand.

"A man was traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho **when robbers attacked him**. The robbers took everything he had, beat him up **and left him for dead on the side of the road.**

"A priest was traveling down the road when he saw the man lying there. But instead of helping the man, the priest passed by on the other side of the road.

"Then, a Levite, or religious leader, came down the road. He saw the man lying there, but instead of helping the man, the Levite passed by on the other side of the road, too.

"Then, a man from Samaria came down the road. Samaritans and Jews did not get along, but **when he saw the man lying there, he helped him.** The Samaritan bandaged the man's wounds. **He put the man on his donkey and took him to an inn where he could rest.** The Samaritan took care of the man. Then, he paid the innkeeper to care for the man."

Jesus asked, "Which of these people was a real neighbor to the man who was attacked by robbers?"

The man replied, "The one who helped the man." Jesus said, "Go and do the same!"

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JESUS CONNECTION

Jesus' story about the good Samaritan surprised the people who heard it. Like the good Samaritan, God saw that we needed to be rescued. He sent His Son to save us from sin. Jesus died on the cross for our sin and rose again so we can have eternal life. God calls us to show His love for the world by helping people in need.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

LOVE – Choosing to support and care for others whether or not they deserve it.

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Living LifeWise

Because God loves us, we can show love for others.

Character Connection

Before class, write on separate pieces of cardstock or construction paper these descriptions: *a classmate dropped their bookbag and it spilled; a student sits alone at lunch; there's a girl crying in the bathroom.* On the back of each one, write a revised description: *your best friend drops their bookbag and it spills; the bus bully sits alone at lunch; your sports rival is crying in the bathroom.*

Say: For each example, tell me what we might do to show love in these situations. [*Show the front examples.*] Those are great ideas. Do you think you'd be willing to do those things? Now let me go through them again, but with some slight changes. [*Turn the cards over and show the revisions.*] Would you be willing to do those same things now? Would it be easier or harder? Why?

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We tend to want to show love only when we know or like the other person or when it's easy for us. But love isn't a feeling or a nice thing we do. It's a choice we make to do good for others, no matter what. And that isn't easy. Still, choosing to show love is easier when we remember two principles:

- God loves us this way, even though we don't deserve it.
- People are made in God's image, so we should treat them with kindness and respect.

It isn't easy to love God's way: everyone, all the time, for their good, even when it costs us. But when we remember how much He loves us and that all people are valuable because God made them, we will be more willing to show God's love to others. And we can ask God to help us show love, even to those who are hard to love or we don't like, knowing He will always enable us to live God's way.

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BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- **What question was Jesus asked at the start of the passage?**

  "What must I do to have eternal life?" Luke 10:25

- **How did Jesus respond at first?**

  Asked the man what the Scriptures said, Luke 10:26–28

- **What was the man's next question?**

  "Who is my neighbor?" Luke 10:29

- **What happened to the man in the parable?**

  He was attacked by robbers and left to die, Luke 10:30

- **Who did not stop to help the man?**

  A priest and a Levite, Luke 10:31–32

- **Who finally did help the man?**

  A Samaritan man, Luke 10:33

- **What did the Samaritan do for the man?**

  Bandaged him, took him to an inn to rest and recover and paid for his expenses, Luke 10:34–35

- **What book of the Bible is this parable found in?**

  Luke

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Draw It Out (Older Students)

- Choose two volunteers to be artists. As you retell the story, the artists should illustrate it on the chalkboard or dry erase board. For example, when you say, "A man came to Jesus and asked Him a question." Then, the artist might draw two stick figures, one for Jesus and one for the man. Allow students to retell and illustrate the story as they remember it. As you review the story, emphasize the following events:

  - A Jewish expert in the law asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?"
  - Jesus told a story to help the man understand.
  - A man was attacked by robbers and left for dead.
  - A priest passed by the man and did not help him.
  - A Levite, or religious leader, passed by the man and did not help him.

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- A Samaritan helped the man and took him to an inn.
- Who was a neighbor to the man attacked by robbers? (*The one who helped him.*) Jesus calls us to love others as He has loved us.
- We are like the man lying on the side of the road. Like the good Samaritan, God saw that we needed to be rescued. He sent His Son to save us from sin. God calls us to show His love for the world by helping people in need.

Helping Hands Collage (Older Students)

- Tape a large piece of paper to a table or focal wall. Give each student a crayon or marker. Make sure they use four colors: green, yellow, red and blue. Announce that the class will have three minutes to trace their hands onto the paper as many times as they can. After three minutes, call for them to stop drawing.

- Have you ever heard the phrase *lend a helping hand*? It means to help someone, especially with your hands. The Samaritan in today's Bible story helped the man who had been attacked and left to die. In a similar way, Jesus came to help us when our sin separated us from God. Because of our sin, we deserve to die. But Jesus came to live the perfect life we did not live and to die the death we don't want to die. This is how God showed His love for us! Jesus calls us to love others as He has loved us.

- Collect the crayons and distribute pencils. Challenge the class to write on the outlines of the hands ways they can help others. For an added challenge, suggest the class write helping ideas based on the colors of the hands:

  - Green—How can you help a friend or sibling?
  - Yellow—How can you help a parent?
  - Red—How can you help a stranger in your city?
  - Blue—How can you help people in another country?

- Allow students to work for a few minutes. Then, call them to stop and read each other's helping ideas. Encourage students to find a way this week to help someone in need.

Wheelbarrow Race (Older Students)

- Have pairs of students line up on one side of the room. One student in each pair will walk on his hands as his partner holds his ankles and follows behind him as if pushing a wheelbarrow. When you say "go," the pairs will race to the far side of the room in this position. When they get there, they must switch places and race back. The first pair back to the start wins.

- In our race, you were "stuck" with your partner, and it actually forced you to go slower than you could if you ran alone. However, the race was more interesting and more fun because of the twist. In life, we won't always want to be "slowed down" by the people around us who need help, but Jesus commanded us to love our neighbors. That means helping those in need. Jesus calls us to love others as He has loved us.

First Responder Gift Bags (Older and Younger Students)

- Invite the class to make gift bags for first responders as a way of showing love to a neighbor. Distribute markers for them to decorate paper sacks. Provide small gifts for students to put in the sacks. Consider pocket-sized Gospels of John, bottled water and individually wrapped snacks. As

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the class works, review the Bible story. Remind them that the Samaritan stopped to help the man who was hurt.

- In the parable of the good Samaritan, we are like the man who was lying on the side of the road. Our sin separates us from God, and we need someone to rescue us. The good news is that Jesus came to Earth to rescue us from sin. He lived a perfect life and died the death we deserve. When we trust in Him as Lord and Savior, God forgives our sin and gives us eternal life. Jesus calls us to love others as He has loved us. This week, pray for the first responders who will receive these gift bags. Pray for their safety as they go out into the community to help people in need. Arrange to deliver the gift bags to a local police station or fire department during the week.

Act It Out (Younger Students)

- Before class, gather any props needed to act out the story. Read the story using the bold words from the Bible story script. Assign students the parts of the injured man, robbers, priest, Levite, Samaritan and innkeeper. Have them listen as you read the story and act out their part. If time allows, change roles and act out the story again.

Three-Legged Race (Younger Students)

- Gather handkerchiefs, strips of an old t-shirt or pieces of rope before class. Have pairs of students line up on one side of the room. As they stand next to each other, tie their inside legs together. When you say "go," the pairs will race to the far side of the room and back in this position.

- In our race, you were "stuck" with your partner, and it actually forced you to go slower than you could if you ran alone. However, the race was more interesting and more fun because of the twist. In life, we won't always want to be "slowed down" by the people around us who need help, but Jesus commanded us to love our neighbors. That means helping those in need. Jesus calls us to love others as He has loved us.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Love Your Neighbor (Older Students)
- Neighborly World (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

God, we come to You with hearts of gratitude. Thank You for seeing us, helpless and dead in our sin, and coming to rescue us by sending Your Son. Help us to love others as You have so greatly loved us. You are a good and compassionate God. Amen.

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Journal Page

List some ways you can show love to others.



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- How has Jesus shown us love?
- How can we show love to others?
- How can you be a neighbor to others nearby and far away?

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THE GOOD SAMARITAN

LUKE 10:25–37

MAIN POINT: JESUS CALLS US TO LOVE OTHERS AS HE HAS LOVED US.

A Jewish lawyer asked Jesus a question: "Teacher, what must I do to have eternal life?"

Jesus answered, "What do the Scriptures say?"

The lawyer replied, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind.' And 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Jesus said, "That's right. Do this, and you will have eternal life."

Then, the man asked, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus told a story to help the man understand.

"A man was traveling when robbers attacked him and left him for dead on the side of the road.

"A priest was traveling down the road when he saw the man lying there. But instead of helping the man, the priest passed by on the other side of the road.

"Then, a Levite, or religious leader, came down the road. He saw the man lying there, but instead of helping the man, the Levite passed by on the other side of the road, too.

"Then, a man from Samaria came down the road. When he saw the man lying there, he helped him. He put the man on his donkey and took him to an inn where he could rest."

Jesus asked, "Which of these people was a real neighbor to the man who was attacked by robbers?"

The lawyer replied, "The one who helped the man."

Jesus said, "Go and do the same!"

Jesus Connection: *Jesus' story about the good Samaritan surprised the people who heard it. Like the good Samaritan, God saw that we needed to be rescued. He sent His Son to save us from sin. Jesus died on the cross for our sin and rose again so we can have eternal life. God calls us to show His love for the world by helping people in need.*

Key Passage: *Matthew 5:6 – Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

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LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

How can you show love to these neighbors? Check a response or write your own.



- ☐ Say hello.
- ☐ Ask to play too.
- ☐ _____



- ☐ Join her for a board game.
- ☐ Invite her to your house for dinner.
- ☐ _____



- ☐ Offer to help.
- ☐ Pray for the mom and her family.
- ☐ _____

PARABLE WORD SEARCH

Find and circle the key words found in the Bible story about the parable of the good Samaritan.

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

LAWYER
TEACHER
ETERNAL LIFE
LOVE
NEIGHBOR
SAMARITAN
ROBBERS
DONKEY
JESUS
HELPING

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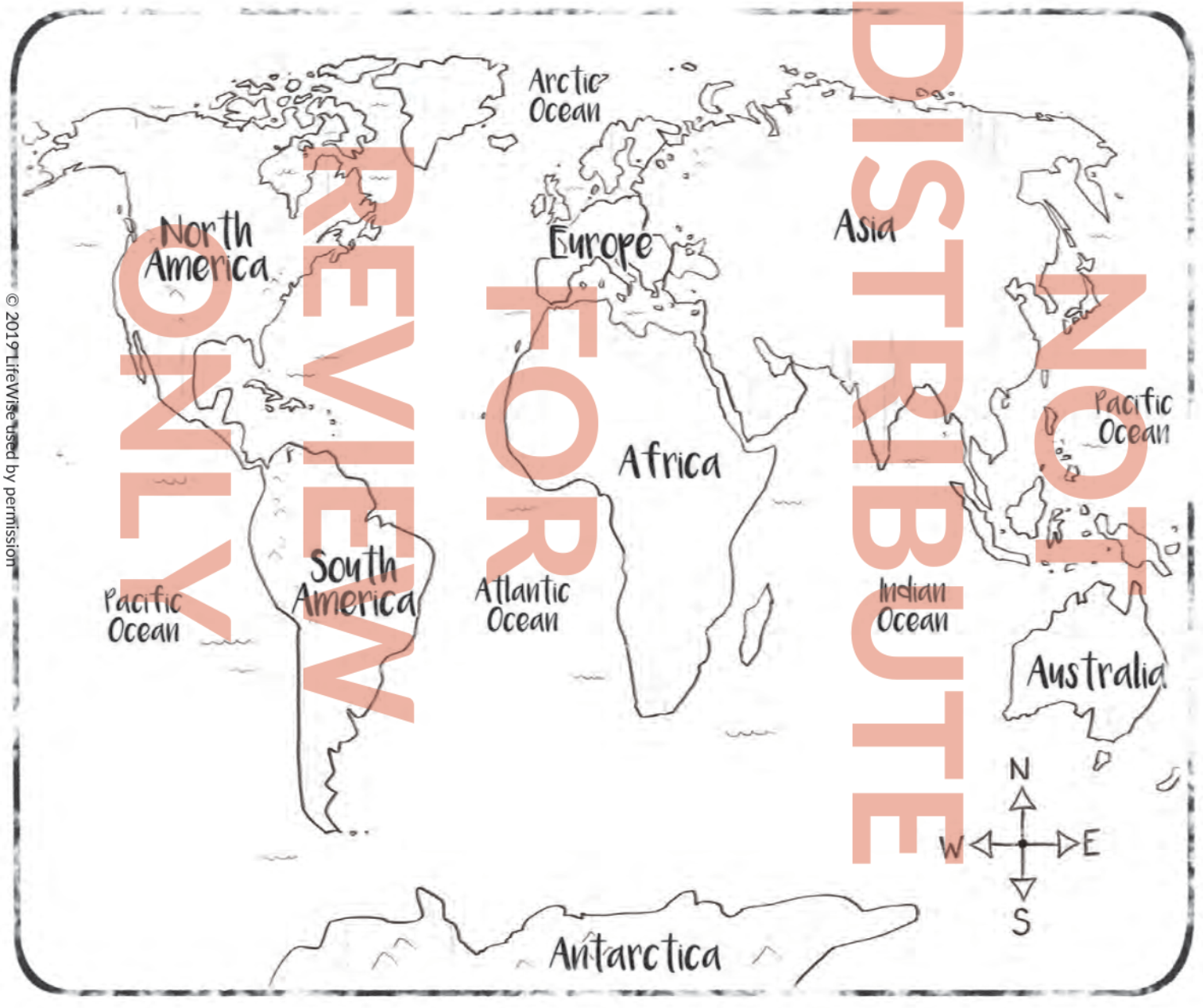
NEIGHBORLY WORLD

INSTRUCTIONS: Draw a star where you live. Draw hearts in places you have been, and circle places you would like to go.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Matthew 5:6 – Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

• BIG PICTURE QUESTION:
- Why did Jesus tell parables? Jesus told parables to teach people about God and His kingdom.

BIBLE STORY:
THE GOOD SAMARITAN
- Jesus told a parable about loving others.
- A man was attacked while traveling.
- Two religious leaders traveled by without helping, but a Samaritan stopped to help.
- Jesus calls us to love others as He has loved us.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:
- How has Jesus shown us love?
- How can we show love to others?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:
- As a family, choose a nation of the world that you do not live in. Research about the people living there. Pray together for them each week. Then, see if there are any local communities of people from that nation you could befriend and show love to.

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JESUS CALLS US TO LOVE OTHERS AS HE HAS LOVED US.

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House 1	House 2	House 3	House 4
Hallie	Hallie	Hallie	Hallie
Jack	Jack	Jack	Jack
Maddox	Maddox	Maddox	Maddox
Sarah	Sarah	Sarah	Sarah



House 1	House 2	House 3	House 4
Hallie	Hallie	Hallie	Hallie
Jack	Jack	Jack	Jack
Maddox	Maddox	Maddox	Maddox
Sarah	Sarah	Sarah	Sarah



House 1	House 2	House 3	House 4
Hallie	Hallie	Hallie	Hallie
Jack	Jack	Jack	Jack
Maddox	Maddox	Maddox	Maddox
Sarah	Sarah	Sarah	Sarah



House 1	House 2	House 3	House 4
Hallie	Hallie	Hallie	Hallie
Jack	Jack	Jack	Jack
Maddox	Maddox	Maddox	Maddox
Sarah	Sarah	Sarah	Sarah

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LIFEWISE ACADEMY
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Logic Puzzle

Instructions: Print and use as directed in the leader guide.

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LESSON 75: JOY

THREE PARABLES

Luke 15

THREE PARABLES

- Luke 15
- Big Picture Q&A: Why did Jesus tell parables? Jesus told parables to teach people about God and His kingdom.
- Key Passage: Matthew 5:6 – Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

JESUS CONNECTION

The religious leaders complained that Jesus welcomed sinners. Jesus told these parables to teach about God's forgiveness. God sent Jesus so sinners can be forgiven. As Savior, Jesus seeks sinners. He paid the ultimate price—His own life—to save people from sin.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

JOY – Having a cheerful response regardless of my circumstances.

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LEADER BIBLE STUDY

In Luke 19, Jesus went after Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector. Zacchaeus was not well-liked, but his interaction with Jesus led him to repent of his wrongdoing. Jesus said to him, "The Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10).

Who is "the lost"? What does it mean to be lost? In Luke 15, Jesus told three parables to the crowd of tax collectors, sinners, Pharisees and scribes. Jesus' teaching brought gospel truth to the tax collectors and sinners—those whose unrighteousness separated them from God—and to the Pharisees and scribes—those who relied on their own righteous efforts for salvation.

The first two parables are similar. In one, a man loses a sheep. He leaves his flock to find the missing sheep, and he rejoices when it is found. In the second, a woman loses a silver coin. The woman carefully searches her home until she finds it. Then, she calls her neighbors and friends to celebrate with her. Heaven rejoices when even one sinner repents. Finally, Jesus told a parable about two sons. The younger son asked for his inheritance, wasted his money on immoral living and decided to return to his father. Rather than rejecting his wayward son, the father embraced him. The older son, who had always been obedient to his father, reacted with anger.

As you read Luke 15, think about the crowd Jesus was speaking to. The focus is often placed on the younger son—the one with whom the tax collectors and sinners could identify—but Jesus also made a point about the older son. He was like the Pharisees and scribes, focused on his own morality and feeling entitled to his father's favor.

Jesus taught what God is like. He seeks sinners who have wandered far from Him, and He seeks sinners who try to earn salvation by their good works. As you teach, help your students understand that being lost

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means not knowing Jesus as Lord and Savior. God loves us, and He actively seeks to bring sinners to Himself.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

We have heard several parables that Jesus told: the sower, the unmerciful servant and the good Samaritan. What three people walked by the injured man in the story of the good Samaritan? (*Priest, Levite, Samaritan.*) How did the Samaritan help the injured man? (*Bound his wounds, helped him get to safety and paid the innkeeper to care for him.*) Jesus used the parable of the good Samaritan to teach who our neighbor is. Who is our neighbor? (*Anyone in need.)* Today's Bible story includes three parables that Jesus told. These parables are found in the Gospel of Luke, in the New Testament.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Classroom Scavenger Hunt (Older Students)

- Prepare a scavenger hunt using items already in your room, or position common objects throughout the room. List on a piece of paper 10 descriptions of items. Suggestions: *something that is round, something that is yellow, something you use every day, etc.* Make two copies of the list. Form two teams, and give each group a list. Challenge them to work together to find items in the room that match the description. Emphasize that students should not collect the items, but write the names of the items next to the descriptions on the list. After each group finishes, invite teams to share the items they found for each description. Lead the class to cheer and clap about each item.

- Great job searching for these items. Today's Bible story is about three parables that Jesus told. In these parables, people were looking for things that were lost. Let's find out if they were found.

Good and Bad (Older and Younger Students)

- Ask two adult volunteers to come to the front of the classroom. [*If volunteers are not available, use superhero or Lego figures, etc.*] Explain that the class will pretend these are two very different students and give them funny names.

- Sample dialogue: *The first student is named Ryan, and he never follows rules. Many people call him a bad student. The other is named Amy, and she always follows rules.* Let's make up different good and bad things these two different pretend students might do. [*After each suggestion, have the adult helpers act out that behavior or act it out with your figures.*] Examples:

    - Ryan throws fits, but Amy always uses good manners.
    - Ryan steals, but Amy always shares her things.
    - Ryan calls people bad words, but Amy always says nice things.
    - Ryan is lazy at school, but Amy always works very hard.
    - Ryan thinks church is dumb, but Amy loves going to church.

- Ask the class: *Whom do you want for a friend? Whom does God like more?* Jesus taught that God loves everyone no matter what. Sometimes, His people, the Jews, would get upset and think they were better than the "sinners," but today we'll hear three stories that Jesus told about God's love for people who are lost and don't know the way to Heaven. These stories will help us understand that God wants to save both people who break the rules and those who follow them.

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Lost and Found Run (Younger Students)

- Before class, hide several items that the class has to find. Call out an item. When the item is found, the class should call out, "Lost, but found!"
- Today, we will learn three parables, or stories, about something important that was lost and then found. What is the most important thing you've ever lost?

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Matthew 5:6

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Key Passage Loop (Older Students)

- Before class, write each word or phrase of the key passage on a separate craft stick. Place the craft sticks in a cup or jar. Instruct the class to sit in a circle. Have the students pass the craft stick jar around the circle while you turn away from them. Turn back suddenly. Have the student you catch holding the jar pull out a stick and begin the key passage, starting from that word or phrase. Each student after the first student should say the next word in the verse until the verse is back to where you began with the craft stick.

Pass the Bottle (Younger Students)

- Have the class sit in a circle. Hand a full water bottle to a student. He will say the first word of the key passage and pass the bottle. Each student will say the next word of the passage and pass the bottle. Challenge them to say the verse as fast as possible. [*Use a timer. Students will enjoy beating their record.*]

Big Picture Q&A

Q: Why did Jesus tell parables?

A: *Jesus told parables to teach people about God and His kingdom.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Three Parables | Luke 15

Tax collectors and sinners came to listen to Jesus teach. The religious leaders complained because Jesus welcomed sinners, so Jesus told them three parables to teach them about God.

Jesus said, "If a man has 100 sheep and loses one, what does he do? **He leaves the 99 sheep in the open field and searches for the lost sheep until he finds it. Then, he tells his friends, 'Let's celebrate! I found my lost sheep!'"**

Then, Jesus said, "This is what Heaven is like; there is more joy in Heaven when one sinner repents and turns back to God than for 99 people who did not wander off."

Jesus said, "If a woman has ten silver coins and loses one of them, what does she do? **She lights a lamp, sweeps the house and searches carefully until she finds it! Then, she tells her friends, 'Let's celebrate! I found my lost coin!' "**

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Then, Jesus said, "This is what Heaven is like. There is joy in Heaven when one sinner repents and turns back to God.**"**

Finally, Jesus said, "A man had two sons. The younger son said, 'Father, give me my inheritance today.' So, the father gave his son his share. **The younger son left home. He wasted his money and lived foolishly.** There was a famine, and the people there did not have enough food. The son got a job feeding pigs. He was so hungry, even the pigs' food looked tasty.

"The younger son made a plan. He would go back to his father and admit he was wrong. He would ask to work for his father like the servants. **So, the younger son headed home.** He was still a long way away when his father saw him coming. **His father ran to him, threw his arms around him and kissed him.** The son began to apologize. 'I have sinned against God and against you,' he said.

"But **the father told his servants, 'Let's celebrate** with a feast! Bring the best robe and put it on my son! Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. **This son of mine was lost, and now he is found!'**

"At this time, the older son came from the fields and heard music at the house. "What's going on?" he asked one of the servants.

"'Your brother is here,' the servant said. 'Your father is celebrating.'

"The older brother was angry! He refused to go to the feast. **The father asked him to come inside. 'Look!' the older brother said. 'I never disobeyed you! But you never threw a party for me.'**

"'Son,' the father said, 'everything I have is yours. We have to celebrate and be happy. Your brother was lost and is found.'"

JESUS CONNECTION

The religious leaders complained that Jesus welcomed sinners. Jesus told these parables to teach about God's forgiveness. God sent Jesus so sinners can be forgiven. As Savior, Jesus seeks sinners. He paid the ultimate price—His own life—to save people from sin.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

JOY – Having a cheerful response regardless of my circumstances.

Living LifeWise

Because we can see God at work, we can have joy in every situation.

Character Connection

What do you like to celebrate? What makes a celebration fun for you? [*Let students respond.*]

Jesus told about three celebrations for a lost sheep, lost coin and lost son. Unlike the older brother, Jesus taught that Heaven celebrates when a lost person (someone who doesn't know God and the good news of the gospel) is rescued. And what makes Heaven rejoice should make us rejoice, too.

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We're very good at celebrating birthdays, holidays, perfect scores or winning a big game. But God will help us notice and celebrate what makes Him happy. God is at work all around us every day, and we can notice and be happy about what He is doing. Whenever God rescues a person from sin, helps them in a difficult situation or helps them live His way (even in little ways), it's an opportunity to celebrate.

Let's celebrate when we see God at work this week. How could we celebrate what God is doing in each situation?

- You see a classmate helping another student who is easily distracted.
- A storm wakes you up at night. You pray that God will help you not be scared, and your worry fades so you can fall asleep.
- The student who stole your pencil last week brings you a new one and apologizes.

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BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- **Jesus taught people the religious leaders did not like. Who were they?**

  Sinners and tax collectors, Luke 15:2

- **How many sheep did the man from the first parable have in total?**

  One hundred, Luke 15:4

- **What did the man invite his friends and neighbors to do after he found the lost sheep?**

  Rejoice and celebrate, Luke 15:6

- **What did the woman do when she lost one of her coins?**

  Lit a lamp and searched the house carefully until she found it, Luke 15:8

- **What did the woman invite her friends and neighbors to do after she found her coin?**

  Rejoice and celebrate, Luke 15:9

- **What did the younger son in the third parable do with the money his father gave him?**

  He wasted it all on foolish things, Luke 15:13–14

- **How did the father greet the younger son when he returned home?**

  Warmly, joyfully, lovingly and with compassion, Luke 15:20

- **Why was the older brother upset?**

  He did not think his brother deserved a party, Luke 15:28–30

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Act It Out (Older and Younger Students)

- Form three groups of students to act out the three parables. The first group has two students (the man and the sheep), the second group has one student (the woman) and the third group has three students (the father and two sons). Any remaining students can be extras in the parables (sheep, neighbors, servants). Provide a Bible and choose a volunteer to read a selected passage for the parable. Allow the class to act out the scene as the volunteer reads. Ask the Bible review questions after each performance.

Lost Coin (Older and Younger Students)

- Instruct the class to sit in a circle. Choose a student to sit on a chair in the middle of the circle and close his eyes. Place a single coin under the chair. Silently select another student to sneak to the

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chair and take the coin. She should hide the coin and return to her spot in the circle. Ask the student in the middle to open his eyes and try to guess who has the coin. If he is right, that student becomes the next guesser. If he is wrong, he must remain in the middle. Play additional rounds as time allows.

- Today, our story includes a parable about a woman who lost a coin and spent lots of time and energy to find it. What do you think Jesus wanted the people to understand about God by telling this story?

Fair or Unfair? (Older and Younger Students)

- Before class, make two signs: *Fair* and *Unfair*. Tape the signs on opposite sides of the room. Read the following scenarios and ask the class to run to the wall that represents their feelings about each situation.
  - One student does his homework and another student copies his answers. They get the same grade.
  - The birthday girl at a party gets the biggest piece of cake.
  - Two athletes try out for a baseball team, but only one of them makes it.
  - One man breaks a law, but someone else goes to jail instead of him.
  - A student in your class forgot to study for a spelling test. He gets a bad grade.
  - You did not clean your room before a fun trip to a theme park. Your parents decide to let you go anyway.
- Life is not fair. Sometimes unfairness hurts us, and other times it seems to help us. Often, our ideas of what is fair do not match with God's ideas about fairness. God provided a way for us to live with Him forever even though we deserve death. Jesus died on the cross to make the way for us to experience life. We celebrate when lost people are saved because we know that we didn't deserve salvation and God still provided it to us.

Mystery Grab Bag (Older and Younger Students)

- Gather items from the story and place them in a large bag. Keep the bag closed so students cannot see the objects before choosing one. Have one student at a time pull a clue from the bag and explain how it relates to the story. For a competitive game, divide into two teams. Have a player from each team take turns drawing what they pulled from the bag. Teams will have 30 seconds to give an answer or the item goes back into the grab bag. Suggested items: *Coin*, *pig*, *mini robe*, *ring*, *lamp*, *mad face*, *instrument*, *sheep*, *stack of fake money*, *fake food*. If needed, print and laminate pictures of the items.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Seek and Celebrate (Older Students)
- Lost and Found (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

God, thank You for sending Jesus to rescue us from our sin. Without Jesus, we are lost, but Jesus is the One who seeks and saves the lost. Help us be lights in a dark world full of people who do not know and love You. Give us courage to tell others the good news about Jesus. Amen.

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Journal Page

Write what you might say to someone who is lost—someone who doesn't know Jesus. If you haven't trusted Jesus as Lord, list questions you have.



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- How does Jesus feel about the lost—people who don't know Him?
- How do you feel about people who don't know Jesus?
- How can you show love to people who are lost?

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THREE PARABLES

LUKE 15

MAIN POINT: JESUS IS THE ONE WHO SEEKS AND SAVES THE LOST.

Tax collectors and sinners came to listen to Jesus teach. The religious leaders complained because Jesus welcomed sinners, so Jesus told them three parables to teach them about God.

Jesus said, "If a man has 100 sheep and loses one, what does he do? He leaves the 99 sheep in the open field and searches for the lost sheep until he finds it. Then, he tells his friends, 'Let's celebrate! I found my lost sheep!'"

Then, Jesus said, "This is what Heaven is like."

Jesus said, "If a woman has 10 silver coins and loses one of them, she lights a lamp, sweeps the house and searches carefully until she finds it! Then, she tells her friends, 'Let's celebrate! I found my lost coin!'"

Then, Jesus said, "This is what Heaven is like."

Finally, Jesus said, "A man had two sons. The younger son said, 'Father, give me my inheritance today.' The younger son left home. He wasted his money and lived foolishly.

"The younger son made a plan. He would go back to his father and admit he was wrong. So, the younger son headed home. His father ran to him, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

"The father told his servants, 'Let's celebrate! This son of mine was lost, and now he is found!'

"At this time, the older son came from the fields and heard music at the house. The older brother was angry! The father asked him to come inside. 'Look!' the older brother said. 'I never disobeyed you! But you never threw a party for me.'

"'Son,' the father said, 'everything I have is yours. We have to celebrate and be happy. Your brother was lost and is found.'"

Jesus Connection: *The religious leaders complained that Jesus welcomed sinners. Jesus told these parables to teach about God's forgiveness. God sent Jesus so sinners can be forgiven. As Savior, Jesus seeks sinners. He paid the ultimate price—His own life—to save people from sin.*

Key Passage: *Matthew 5:6 – Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

DISCUSSION GUIDE

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SEEK AND CELEBRATE

Find and circle 5 sheep, 10 silver coins and 2 sons.



MIXED FEELINGS

Write a short description of how each person felt at the end of the parable of the lost son.



Younger brother:



Older brother:



Father:

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LOST AND FOUND

INSTRUCTIONS: Search the picture to find the lost son, the sheep and the 10 coins.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Matthew 5:6 – Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:
- Why did Jesus tell parables? Jesus told parables to teach people about God and His kingdom.

BIBLE STORY:
THREE PARABLES
- Jesus taught parables about people finding lost things.
- People celebrated when they found what was lost.
- Jesus is the One who seeks and saves the lost.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:
- How does Jesus feel about people who don't know Him?
- How do we feel about people who don't know Jesus?
- How can we show love to lost people?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:
- Play a game of hide and seek with your family in a local park or in your home. See who can find the "lost" people fastest!
- Help your kids look around your home for lost change. Can they find enough for a candy bar or other treat?

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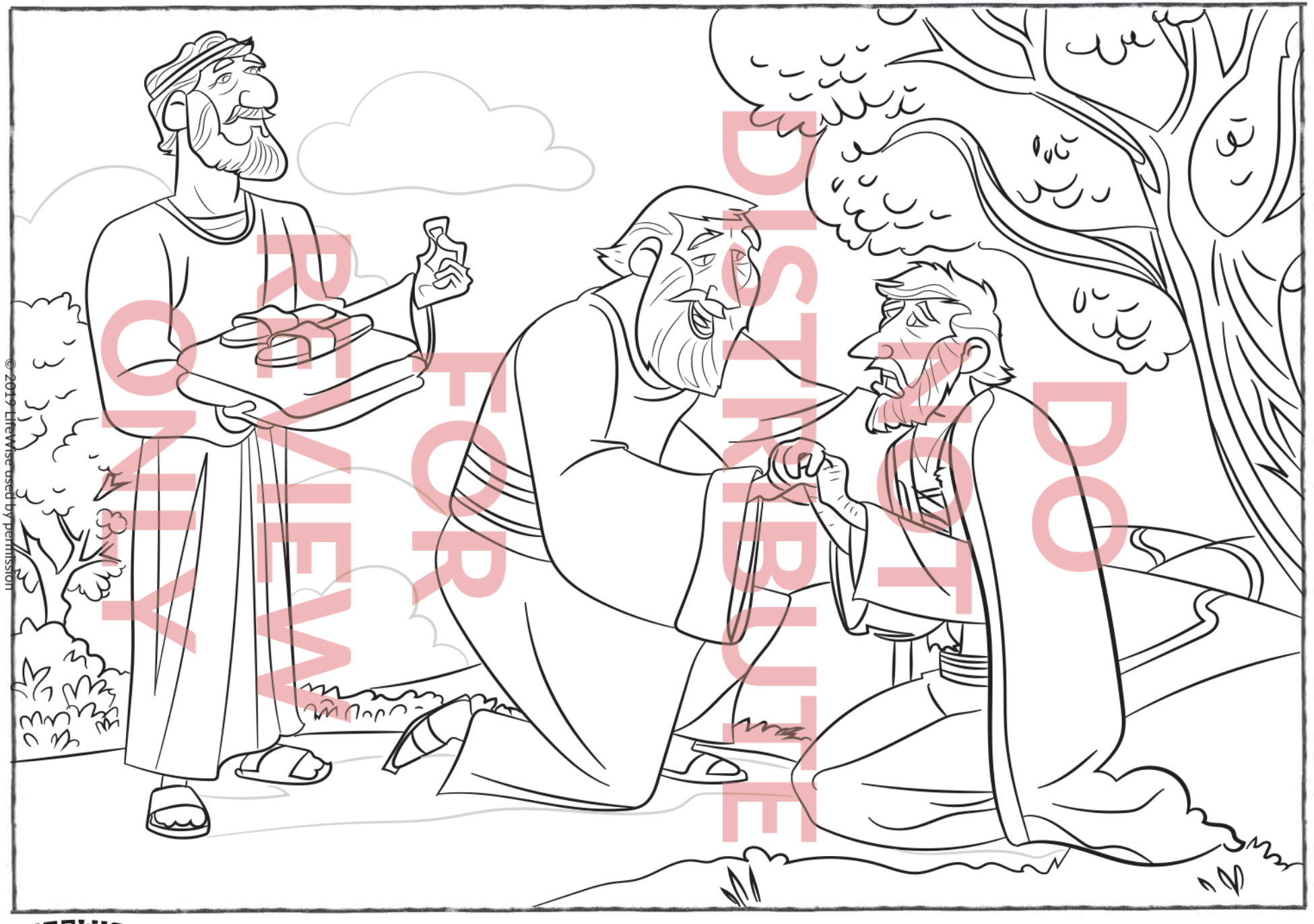

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JESUS IS THE ONE WHO SEEKS AND SAVES THE LOST.

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LESSON 76: OBEDIENCE

THE WICKED TENANTS

Matthew 21:33–45

THE WICKED TENANTS

- Matthew 21:33–45
- Big Picture Q&A: Why did Jesus tell parables? Jesus told parables to teach people about God and His kingdom.
- Key Passage: Matthew 5:6 – Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

JESUS CONNECTION

Jesus told this story to teach the religious leaders about Himself. God sent His own Son, Jesus, to Earth, but the religious leaders rejected Him. Jesus is the cornerstone—the most important One of all. Only He can save us from our sin.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

OBEDIENCE – Listening to and following through with instructions from those in authority.

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LEADER BIBLE STUDY

A couple of days after Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem and the day after He cleansed the temple, Jesus returned to the temple complex and began teaching. The chief priests and elders questioned Jesus. "Who gave You this authority?" they asked. These religious leaders did not want to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. So, Jesus told them parables to get them thinking and to teach them about Himself.

The parable of the wicked tenants illustrates the story of Israel's history. As you teach kids, help them connect the story to what happened in Israel's history. First, the landowner is God the Father. He chose to bless the world through Abraham's family, the people of Israel. The vineyard is Israel.

The tenants are the leaders of Israel. Throughout history, God sent the Old Testament prophets to speak to God's people. But they did not listen to the prophets. Like the tenants of the vineyard, Israel's leaders persecuted the prophets. So, God the Father sent His Son, Jesus. Jesus knew that the people were going to kill Him like the tenants killed the landowner's son.

Jesus led the leaders to conclude themselves what would be fair: that the landowner would punish the tenants and find workers who respect Him. God too is just. God will judge those who reject Jesus. He planned to choose a people who respect and trust Him—those who have faith—and form a community of believers from every nation to live under His righteous leadership.

Those who encounter Jesus can either accept and trust Him or walk away and reject Him. No one who meets Jesus will walk away unchanged. Pray that God would change the hearts of your students so that

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they would come to trust in Jesus, the Son of the loving and just Master, who wants everyone to come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9).

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Let's review the four parables we have heard so far. Can you name any of the stories Jesus told? (*Sower, unmerciful servant, good Samaritan, lost sheep/lost coin/lost son.*) During our last class, we learned three parables about something precious that was lost. What does Jesus do for people who are lost and don't know the way to Heaven? (*He seeks out the lost and saves them from sin.*)

Today's Bible story is called "The Wicked Tenants." A *tenant* is someone who lives on another person's property, like a renter. This story is found in the Gospel of Matthew in the New Testament. Now, even though Jesus told a story about some people who worked on a farm, you know that—like all of Jesus' parables—the story is actually about much more.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Tower Game (Older Students)

- Use rectangular wooden blocks (or a Jenga set) to create a tower. Position three blocks side-by-side horizontally. Add three blocks side-by-side in the opposite direction to create the next level. Alternate the direction of the blocks for each story until the tower is 18 stories tall. Invite students to play a construction game. Explain the rules:
  - On a player's turn, he will remove any block from the tower below the top story. The player must then add the block to the top of the tower.
  - Players may only touch the tower with one hand at a time. A player's turn ends when ten seconds have passed or the next player touches the tower, whichever happens first.
  - The game ends when the tower falls.
- How did you decide which blocks to move? What made you decide if a block should not be moved? In today's Bible story, Jesus talked about Himself as the cornerstone. In a building, the cornerstone is the most important stone. It is laid first as part of the foundation of a building and shows where all other stones should be placed.

Rejected (Older Students)

- Form two teams. Give each team a piece of paper and a pencil. Assign one player in each group to write. Call for the class to shout out something they really like. Write one of the responses on the board. Then, give groups 30 seconds to list why someone might reject that item. [*Example: chocolate ice cream (1. doesn't like chocolate; 2. is lactose intolerant; 3. sensitive to cold; 4. prefers vanilla).*] Call on groups to share their answers. Award one point for each unique answer. Play several rounds, allowing students to name different places, activities or things.
- Today, we are going to hear a story Jesus told about people who reject Him. If Jesus is God's Son, why would anyone reject Him? Let's find out.

Follow the Vine (Younger Students)

- Use yarn to mark a path around the room. Wind it around chairs, under tables and over any other obstacles in your space. Use tape to secure the path. Challenge students to follow the "vine" from one end to the other.

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- Our story today is about men who worked at a vineyard. A vineyard is like a farm for growing grapes. We call it a vineyard because grapes grow on vines. What do you think men who work at a vineyard should do if the man who owns the vineyard asked them for the grapes they had grown?

Grape Gathering (Younger Students)

- Scatter a large number of small rubber balls or paper wads around the room. Form two teams, and designate one basket for each team. Instruct teams to gather as many grapes as they can in 30 seconds, starting when you say "go." Any grapes not returned to the basket when time is up do not count toward the team total. The team with the most grapes wins.

- In our Bible story today, we will learn about a parable Jesus told. In the parable, a man planted grapes in a vineyard and hired other men to take care of the grapes. Would it be fair for the owner of the vineyard to take the grapes?

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Matthew 5:6

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Pass the Ball (Older Students)

- Have students sit in a circle. Practice saying the key passage together. Give one student the ball. She will say the first word of the key passage and pass the ball to the right. The next student will say the next word and pass the ball, and so on. Challenge them to say the verse as fast as possible. [*Use a timer. Students will enjoy beating their record.*]

Funny Words (Younger Students)

- Write out each word of the verse on individual index cards before class. Practice saying Matthew 5:6 together. Then, assign each student a word from the verse by handing them a card and saying it to them. Challenge the class to see how fast the group can say the entire verse, with each kid saying only his own word in the proper order using a funny voice.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: Why did Jesus tell parables?
A: *Jesus told parables to teach people about God and His kingdom.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

The Wicked Tenants | Matthew 21:33–45

Jesus was teaching in the temple. He told the religious leaders to listen to this story: "A landowner planted a vineyard. He built a wall around the vineyard and dug a pit for crushing grapes. He also built a tower. The landowner **rented the vineyard to some tenants and left the country.**

"When it was time for the harvest, the owner sent some servants to get his grapes. But the tenants grabbed the servants. They **beat up one servant, killed another and threw stones at a third.**

"So, the owner sent more servants to his vineyard, but the tenants attacked them, too.

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"Finally, the owner sent his son. He expected the tenants to respect him. But the tenants threw the son out of the vineyard and killed him."

Jesus asked, "When the owner comes back to the vineyard, what do you think he should do to those tenants?"

The religious leaders answered, "They deserve to die! The owner should rent the vineyard to people who respect him."

Jesus replied, "Don't you know what the Scriptures say? 'The stone that the builders tossed aside is now the cornerstone—the most important stone of all. God did this, and it is amazing to us.'"

Then, Jesus said, "So I tell you, God's kingdom will be taken away from you and given to people who do what He commands. Anyone who trips over this stone will be broken to pieces, and this stone will crush anyone it falls on.**"**

When the religious leaders heard Jesus' story, they knew that Jesus was talking about them.

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JESUS CONNECTION

Jesus told this story to teach the religious leaders about Himself. God sent His own Son, Jesus, to Earth, but the religious leaders rejected Him. Jesus is the cornerstone—the most important One of all. Only He can save us from our sin.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

OBEDIENCE – Listening to and following through with instructions from those in authority.

Living LifeWise

God is our ultimate authority, so we should obey Him in everything we do.

Character Connection

To have *authority* means someone has "the right to control, command, or determine." It's the person who makes and enforces the rules, who tells us how something should be done. Authority is a big deal.

We have lots of authority figures (teachers, the principal, the police, etc.), but God is the ultimate authority. He made everything, so He has the right to determine what we do with it. He's the only One who is perfect, good and holy, so He is the right One to make rules for how to live our best life. Because God is the ultimate authority, it is also right for us to obey Him.

Of course, obeying God isn't always easy. Because of sin, we sometimes want *our way* instead of His. We often want to control our own lives, instead of submitting to God's authority and obeying what He's told us to do. We don't always want to obey the other good authorities that God has placed in our lives. But we can ask Him to help us live in obedience to Him and those He's given to watch over us.

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Which option in each scenario shows what it means to obey?

- The teacher tells you to come back later to the worksheet you're doing so the class can move to the next lesson
  - You keep working because you only have three more sentences to do.
  - You put the paper in your homework folder to finish later.
- The Bible says we should tell the truth.
  - You let your little brother take the blame for something you did.
  - You confess to making a poor choice at school and accept the consequence.
- The Bible says we need to ask for forgiveness from God (when we sin) and others (when we hurt them).
  - You let someone else take the blame for doing a prank you suggested.
  - You pray to God and tell Him you're sorry for hurting someone else and confess to the teacher that you were part of what happened.

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BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- **Whom did Jesus tell this parable to?**
  The religious leaders in the temple, Mt. 21:23
- **Name one of the three things the landowner created in the vineyard.**
  A wall, pit and tower, Mt. 21:33
- **Who farmed the land and was supposed to take care of the grapes?**
  Tenants, Mt. 21:33
- **What did the landowner send his servant to get from the tenants?**
  His share of the grapes, Mt. 21:34
- **How did the tenants treat the landowner's servants?**
  Attacked them, Mt. 21:35–36
- **Whom did the landowner eventually send to get the grapes?**
  His own son, Mt. 21:37
- **How did the landowner think the tenants would treat his son?**
  With respect because he was the owner's son, Mt. 21:37
- **Why did the tenants kill the landowner's son?**
  So they could take the land, Mt. 21:38
- **What did the religious leaders think should happen to the tenants?**
  They deserved to die, Mt. 21:41

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Mastermind (Older Students)

- Invite a volunteer to sit in a chair at the front of the room. Point out that the volunteer is competing against the rest of the class. Explain that you will ask a review question. Students who think they know the answer should raise their hands. The volunteer should choose someone with

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a hand raised to answer the question. Then, the volunteer should state whether or not she thinks the player's answer is correct. If the volunteer thinks the player is correct and he is, the volunteer earns one point. If he is not correct, the rest of the students earn a point. If the volunteer thinks the player is incorrect and he is, the volunteer earns one point. If the player's answer is correct, the rest of the students earn a point. Announce the answer and award points appropriately.

Prayer Grapes (Older Students)

- Provide each student with a green chenille stem and purple construction paper. Instruct students to tear off bits of construction paper, each about an inch or two in diameter. Ask them to write down the names of friends, family members or other people they know who may be rejecting Jesus on the different bits, crumple them into small balls and glue them in clusters to a sheet of white paper. Then, they can use their green chenille stems to make a bit of grapevine and glue it to the paper near the top of the grape cluster. Help kids write the Scripture reference for the parable at the top of their papers.

- In the parable, the landowner wanted to collect the grapes that were his. The wicked tenants killed the son in hopes of keeping the vineyard and its grapes for themselves. In a way, people are like the grapes in the parable. God wants to gather people to Himself. We know that God will judge those who reject Jesus, so we can pray for people who do not yet believe in Jesus to put their faith in Him and be saved. Take your grape clusters home and pray for the people you wrote down. Ask God to gather those people into His kingdom.

Cornerstone Demonstration (Older and Younger Students)

- Provide rectangular blocks or shoe boxes and guide the class to arrange them to form two walls that meet at a corner. Point out the box at the bottom of the corner. Explain that it is called the cornerstone. Remove the box and show how the wall falls. Step on the box to crumple it, and challenge the class to rebuild the walls with the damaged cornerstone. Point out how the wall tilts without a strong cornerstone.

- Jesus talked about Himself as the cornerstone. In a building, the cornerstone is the most important stone. It is laid first as part of the foundation of a building and shows where all other stones should be placed. Like the cornerstone of a building, Jesus is the most important One of all. To reject Him would be a big mistake! God will reject those who reject Jesus.

Pray for Christians in Indonesia (Older and Younger Students)

- Display a map of the world. Point out the location of Indonesia in Southeast Asia. Show some pictures of people from Indonesia. Provide index cards for each student. Suggest they draw an outline of Indonesia on one side of the card and take notes as you share facts about the country on the other.

    - Indonesia is home to the world's largest Muslim population.
    - Indonesia is made up of thousands of islands.
    - Some Muslims in Indonesia have declared war against Christians living there.
    - Less than 9 percent of the population is Christian.
    - Pray for new believers who are pressured to give up their faith.

- Men and women risk their lives to tell others about Jesus. We know that God will reject those who reject Jesus. And if people reject Jesus, they will reject His followers. Let's pray for

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missionaries who face persecution for their faith around the world. Pray that those fighting against believers would come to know and love Jesus too.

True or False (Younger Students)

- Instruct the class to stand in an open spot of the classroom. You will read the following statements, one at a time. If students think a statement is false, they should kneel on the floor. If they think it is true, they should jump up and down.
  - Jesus told the parable of the wicked tenant to the religious leaders in the temple. *(True, Mt. 21:23)*
  - The tenants built the vineyard. (*False; the man who owned the land, Mt. 21:33*)
  - The landowner created a wall, a pit and a tower in the vineyard. *(True, Mt. 21:33)*
  - Pomegranates were grown in the vineyard. (*False; grapes, Mt. 21:34*)
  - The landowner farmed the land and was supposed to take care of the grapes. (*False; the tenants, Mt. 21:33*)
  - The tenants killed the landowner's servants. (*True, Mt. 21:35–36*)
  - The landowner eventually sent his son to get the grapes. (*True, Mt. 21:37*)
  - The landowner knew the tenants would kill his son. (*False; he thought they would respect his son, Mt. 21:37*)
  - The religious leaders thought the tenants in the story deserved to die. (*True, Mt. 21:41*)

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Accept and Reject (Older Students)
  - Answers: *vineyard, people of Israel; son, Jesus; tenants, Israel's leaders.*
- Vine Words (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

God, thank You for Your Word. You are good, and You love us. Long ago, You sent prophets to tell us about Your plan to save sinners. And then, You sent Your Son. Forgive us for resisting Jesus. He is not a threat nor an enemy; He is our Friend. Change our hearts to welcome Him with joy. We need You and love You. Amen.

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Journal Page

Do you feel any hesitation to trust in Jesus? Why or why not? What do you know to be true about Jesus that makes you want to trust in or reject Him?



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why did the tenants kill the owner's son? Whom did the son represent?
- How did the religious leaders treat God's Son when He came to Earth?
- Do you think it's fair that God judges those who reject Jesus? Why or why not?

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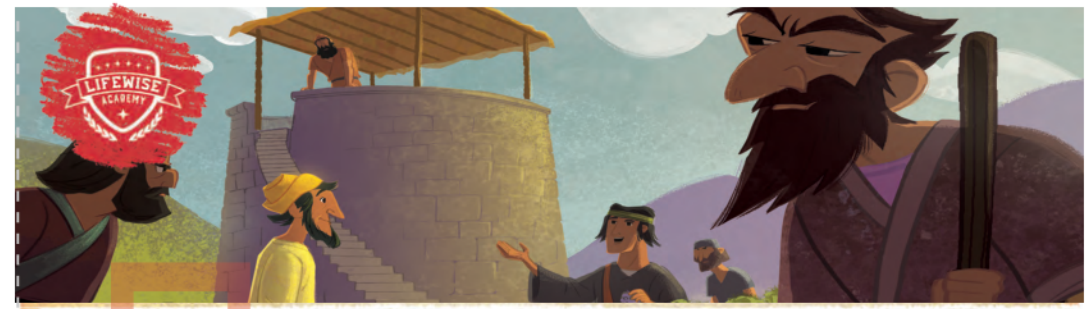

THE WICKED TENANTS

MATTHEW 21:33–45

MAIN POINT: GOD WILL JUDGE THOSE WHO REJECT JESUS.

Jesus was teaching in the temple. He told the religious leaders to listen to this story: "A landowner planted a vineyard. He rented the vineyard to some tenants and left the country.

"When it was time for the harvest, the owner sent some servants to get his grapes. But the tenants beat up one servant, killed another and threw stones at a third.

"So, the owner sent more servants to his vineyard, but the tenants attacked them, too.

"Finally, the owner sent his son. He expected the tenants to respect him. But the tenants threw the son out of the vineyard and killed him."

Jesus asked, "When the owner comes back to the vineyard, what do you think he should do to those tenants?"

The religious leaders answered, "They deserve to die!"

Then, Jesus said, "So I tell you, God's kingdom will be taken away from you and given to people who do what He commands."

When the religious leaders heard Jesus' story, they knew that Jesus was talking about them.

Jesus Connection: *Jesus told this story to teach the religious leaders about Himself. God sent His own Son, Jesus, to Earth, but the religious leaders rejected Him. Jesus is the cornerstone—the most important One of all. Only He can save us from our sin.*

Key Passage: *Matthew 5:6 – Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

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ACCEPT OR REJECT

Unscramble the names of books of the Bible. Then, fill in the numbered boxes to decode the Bible story main point.

NEGSEIS (1 2 3 4)

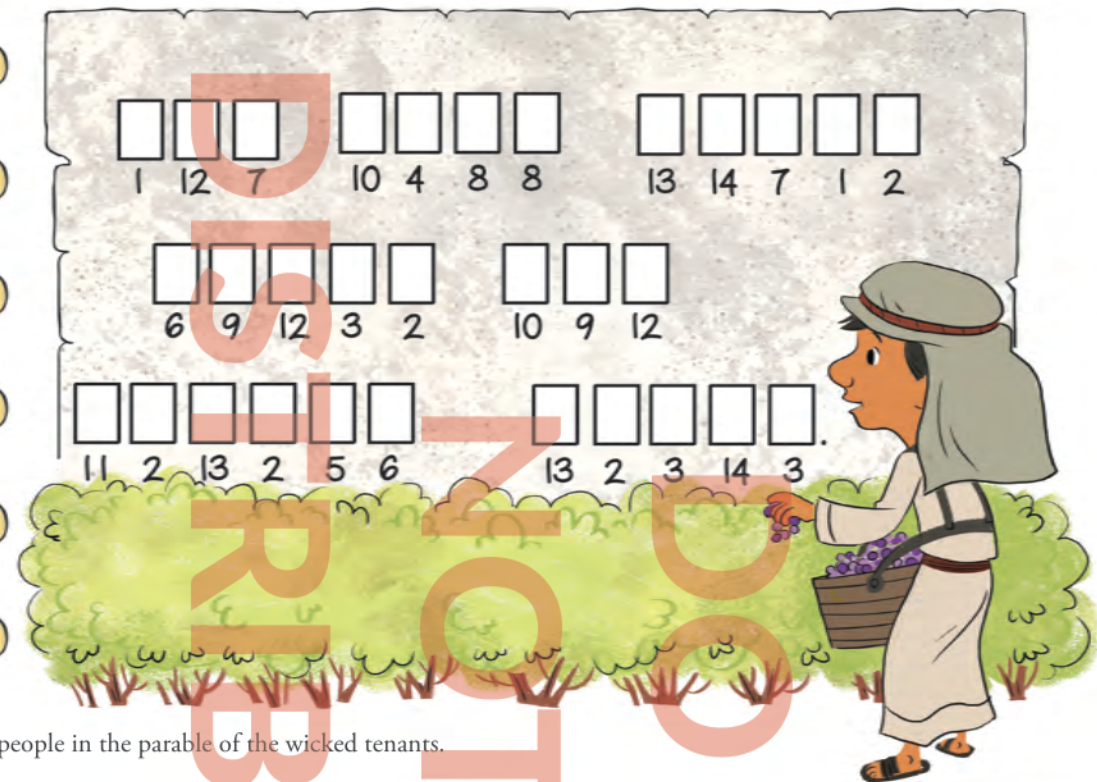
TACS (5 6)

LANDIE (7 8)

WATTHEM (9 10)

MANSRO (11 12)

SEGDUJ (13 14)



PARABLE PEOPLE

Match each group from Israel's history to the people in the parable of the wicked tenants.



people of Israel



Israel's leaders



Jesus



son



vineyard



tenants

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VINE WORDS

INSTRUCTIONS: Find and circle the words from the word bank. Words can be vertical, horizontal or diagonal.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Matthew 5:6 – Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:
- Why did Jesus tell parables? Jesus told parables to teach people about God and His kingdom.

BIBLE STORY:
THE WICKED TENANTS
- Jesus told a parable about a man who built a vineyard.
- He entrusted his vineyard to men to grow grapes and take care of the land.
- The men did not listen to the servants the owner sent to collect the grapes. They even killed the owner's son.
- The parable showed how Jesus would be rejected.
- God will judge those who reject Jesus.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:
- Why did the men kill the owner's son?
- Whom did the son represent?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:
- Work with your kids to develop a plan of action if they are ever bullied or threatened by other people. Talk about how to love people who don't love Jesus.

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GOD WILL JUDGE THOSE WHO REJECT JESUS.

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LESSON 77: HUMILITY

JESUS TURNED WATER TO WINE

John 2:1–12

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JESUS TURNED WATER TO WINE

- John 2:1–12
- Big Picture Q&A: Why did Jesus perform miracles? Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove He is God the Son.
- Key Passage: JOHN 20:31 – But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.

JESUS CONNECTION

Jesus performed miracles to help people believe that He is the Messiah, the Son of God. Jesus has power over everything, and those who believe in Him will have eternal life.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

HUMILITY – Refusing to think of myself as more important than I am.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Jesus' ministry had begun. He called disciples and traveled to the region of Galilee. Jesus spent His time on Earth teaching and performing miracles, preparing for His ultimate mission: to die on the cross for the salvation of sinners. Jesus' miracles were signs that pointed to greater truths about who Jesus is and why He had come.

John 2 records Jesus' first miracle at a wedding in Cana. Jesus' mother told Jesus that the wine had run out. Culturally, running out of wine was a big deal. Weddings were important events, and the celebration could last a week. To run out of wine was a social disaster. But Jesus responded in a surprising way: "What has this concern of yours to do with Me, woman? My hour has not yet come" (John 2:4).

To understand Jesus' answer, remember that Jesus' miracles were not an end unto themselves. They were signs, pointing to something greater. When the wine ran out, Jesus turned water to wine to show that He is the Messiah, the Son of God.

Jesus offers us something greater than wine—Himself. Jesus is the true vine. On that day, His hour had not yet come. Jesus knew what lay ahead; to give us Himself, He would shed His own blood by dying on the cross for our sin.

When Jesus' disciples witnessed His miracle, the jars of wine were not the focus of their awe and wonder. Through the miracle, Jesus displayed His glory, and His disciples believed in Him. Jesus was driven by His Father's plan—not to simply solve the problem of lacking wine, but to solve the deepest problem we face: the problem of sin.

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As you teach your students, point them beyond Jesus' miracles to see Jesus for who He is. Jesus performed miracles to help people believe that He is the Messiah, the Son of God. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus provided what we need most—forgiveness and eternal life.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

We have been learning about Jesus' parables, stories He told, to teach people about God and His kingdom. Do you remember the name of the last parable? (*The wicked tenants.*) Even though the landowner had the right to demand grapes from his own land, the tenants refused to obey. What happened to some of the people, including his son, the landowner sent to speak to his tenants? (*The tenants killed them.*) What will eventually happen to people who reject Jesus? (*God will judge them.*)

Jesus not only taught, but also performed miracles. A *miracle* is an incredible display of God's power to do something no one else could do. Today, we are going to hear about Jesus' first miracle. Our Bible story is called "Jesus Turned Water to Wine." It can be found in the New Testament, in the Gospel of John.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Make Signs (Older Students)

- Distribute paper and markers or crayons. Invite each student to create a sign. They could make a sign for the door of their bedroom or the classroom or design a road sign advertising an upcoming destination or event. Allow the class to work for several minutes. Then, invite them to present their signs to the group. Ask questions about each sign:
    - What does your sign say?
    - What does your sign point to? (An event? A place?)
    - What's more important: the sign or what it points to?

- Today, we are going to hear about one of Jesus' miracles. In fact, this was Jesus' very first miracle on Earth. A *miracle* is an unusual event that only God can cause to happen. Jesus' miracles were like signs that pointed to something even greater.

Water Relay (Older and Younger Students)

- Form two teams. Instruct each team to form a single-file line. Give each player a paper cup. Position a bucket of water at the front of each line and an empty bucket at the end of each line. When you say "go," the first player in line should dip her cup into the bucket and pour the water into the next player's cup. Players will pass the water down the line from cup to cup. The last player in line will dump the water into the second bucket. The first player may dip her cup into the bucket again as soon as her cup is empty and pass more water down the line. Teams should continue passing water until the first bucket is empty.

- Great! In today's Bible story, Jesus told His disciples to fill six stone jars with water. Each jar held 20 or 30 gallons of water! When we hear the Bible story, we will find out what Jesus did with all that water.

Make a Picture (Younger Students)

- Give each student a partially sketched picture that you have made copies of. Instruct them to finish the picture.

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- When I handed you the picture, it looked like one thing, but you changed it to look different. Today, we will learn about a time Jesus changed water, but it wasn't by adding something to it. Jesus changed water into something completely different using His power as God's Son. We'll learn more about that soon.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

John 20:31

But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.

Fill in the Blank (Older and Younger Students)

- For this hangman-style game, write out most of the key passage on a dry erase board or large paper, leaving blanks for 4–6 key words. In the blanks, draw small lines, one for each letter in the skipped word. Then, draw a seasonal picture, such as a tree with autumn leaves. Invite students to guess a letter. If the letter is in one of the words, place it in the correct spot. If it is not, a leaf will fall off (be erased from) the tree. If all the leaves fall off the tree before students guess all the words, the teacher wins the game. Offer hints (e.g., it's always smart to start by guessing vowels) before beginning the game, especially for younger classes.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: Why did Jesus perform miracles?

A: *Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove He is God the Son.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Jesus Turned Water to Wine | John 2:1–12

One day, Jesus' mother, Mary, was at a wedding feast in Cana. Jesus and His disciples were there too. When the wine was all gone, Mary told Jesus, "They do not have any more wine."

Jesus replied, "What does this have to do with Me? My time has not yet come." Jesus meant that it was not yet time for Him to be glorified, or to be worshiped and praised.

Jesus knew what was best, so Mary said to the servants, "Do whatever He tells you."

Now, there were six stone water jars at the feast for religious washing. Each jar held 20 or 30 gallons. **Jesus told the servants to fill the jars with water. The servants filled the jars to the top. Then, Jesus said, "Now take some of the water out and give it to the man in charge of the feast."**

So, they did. The man in charge tasted the water that had now turned into wine. The man did not know where the wine had come from, but the servants knew. **He called to the groom and said, "Usually the best wine is served first.** Then, after the guests have had enough, the other wine is served. **But you have kept the best for last!"**

This was Jesus' first miracle, and He did it in Cana, which is in Galilee. **This miracle showed Jesus' glory, and His disciples believed in Him.**

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After this, Jesus went to Capernaum with His mother, His brothers and His disciples. They stayed in Capernaum for a few days.

JESUS CONNECTION

Jesus performed miracles to help people believe that He is the Messiah, the Son of God. Jesus has power over everything, and those who believe in Him will have eternal life.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

HUMILITY – Refusing to think of myself as more important than I am.

Living LifeWise

Jesus humbled Himself to serve us, so we can choose to humbly serve others.

Character Connection

What if I challenged you to do something nice to serve someone else? Would you want to do it more if 1) no one but the two of us will ever know; 2) your parents and teachers watched and praised you for doing it or 3) a video of what you do goes viral on social media? [*Let students answer.*]

Most people are willing to serve others and be nice. But we are more likely to do those things when we get praised or rewarded for doing them. We like to be seen. We want to get credit (or *glory*) for how "helpful" or "nice" we were.

But being humble means doing the right thing, the nice thing, the helpful thing because it's the right thing to do. We do it without requiring a pat on the back. That's how Jesus served at the wedding feast. He turned water into wine—He did a miracle! But how many people knew what Jesus did? (*The servants, Mary, disciples.*)

Jesus served humbly, even though He actually deserves all the glory all the time (Phil. 2:6–11). He is God. He died on the cross and rose again to save us from our sins. And yet He served in quiet ways, without demanding any credit. He modeled humility for us, and His Spirit will help us live humbly too. Instead of needing a pat on our back, He will help us give God all the glory.

How could you respond humbly in these situations?

- You put away the clean dishes every night for a week without being asked. No one thanks you.
- Your friend brags about how well they did on the test.
- Your teacher points out to the whole class that you reached this quarter's reading goal before anyone else.
- While you are pitching, a classmate kicks a homerun in the recess kickball game, and their team wins.

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BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- Where did this Bible story take place?

  At a wedding feast in Cana, Jn. 2:1

- Which of Jesus' relatives was at the wedding feast?

  His mother, Mary; Jn. 2:1

- What went wrong at the feast?

  Ran out of wine, Jn. 2:3

- What did Mary tell the servants to do?

  "Do whatever He tells you," Jn. 2:5

- What did Jesus tell the servants to do?

  Fill the jars with water, Jn. 2:7

- What happened to the water?

  It had become wine, Jn. 2:9

- How did the guests attending the wedding describe the wine that Jesus made?

  The best-tasting of all, Jn. 2:10

- How many miracles had Jesus performed before this?

  None; this was the first, Jn. 2:11

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REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Is It Time Yet? (Older Students)

- Write a time on an index card (e.g., 5:18 p.m.) and place it face-down. Challenge the class to guess the time written on the card. Call on them one at a time to guess. Depending on their answers, respond, "It's not time yet," or "You're too late," to indicate whether the time on the card is earlier or later than their guess. If a student guesses the exact time, shout, "It's time!" Allow that student to write down another time and play again.

- When Mary told Jesus about the wine running out, Jesus told her, "My time has not yet come." It wasn't God's timing yet for Jesus to be praised or worshiped publicly–in front of everyone. This is why he did the miracle quietly. Jesus came to Earth to do God's plan—to rescue people from sin. Jesus' first miracle was to turn water into wine, but His ministry had just begun. He had a lot more to do!

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Fill It Up (Older and Younger Students)

- Before class, drop a few drops of red food color into the bottom of two clear, identical, wide-mouthed vases. Set the vases on a table with a pitcher of water and a 1-cup measure. Form two teams. Alternate asking the teams review questions about the Bible story. For a correct answer, a player will add 1 cup of water to his team's vase. If a team answers incorrectly, the other team may answer and, if correct, pour 1 cup of water into their vase. Then, they will get a new question for their turn. The team with the most water at the end wins.

Cause and Effect Science Experiments (Older and Younger Students)

- Place the following combinations of items on the table: effervescent tablet and water, drink mix and water, baking soda and vinegar. Invite students to describe what they think will happen when

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you mix the items. Invite volunteers to mix the pairs together one at a time. Prompt the class to describe the results. Then, explain the reactions.

- When the effervescent tablet mixes with water, there is a chemical reaction that releases a lot of carbon dioxide bubbles.
- Baking soda and vinegar also react to form carbon dioxide.
- The drink mix is dissolved, or evenly distributed, in the water so the water changes color.

- Each of these changes can be explained by science, but miracles cannot be explained by science. Miracles are unusual events that only God can cause to happen. Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove He is God the Son. Jesus' first miracle was to turn water into wine. This miracle showed Jesus' glory, and His disciples believed in Him. Jesus has power over everything, and those who believe in Him will have eternal life.

Miracle Match (Younger Students)

- Before class, print the "Miracle Match Cards" onto heavyweight paper and cut them out. Group students in pairs and give each pair a set of cards. Students must arrange the cards face down in a grid. They will take turns flipping over two cards seeking matches. When all cards are matched, the student with the most matches wins.

- The Bible contains many stories of God's power shown through miracles. We have studied some of them. Every miracle God has ever worked through people was leading up to and pointing toward Jesus' arrival. Jesus performed many miracles too. Jesus' first miracle was to turn water into wine. Each miracle Jesus did showed more evidence that He is God's Son, the Messiah. The greatest miracle happened when Jesus died on the cross to pay for sin and rose again on the third day. That miracle showed that Jesus made the way for us to be forgiven and live forever with God.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Signs and Wonders (Older Students)
- Water to Wine (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Father, thank You for sending Jesus, Your Son. Thank You that He showed His power through miracles to prove who He is. Help us to believe in Him and trust that we have eternal life because of His death and resurrection.

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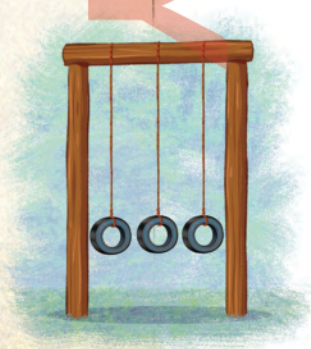
Journal Page

Do you believe Jesus is the Messiah? Are you willing to obey Him? Why or why not?



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why was Jesus able to perform miracles?
- What did Jesus' miracles prove about who He is?
- Do you think everyone who saw Jesus' miracles believed in Him? (See Luke 16:31.)

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JESUS TURNED WATER TO WINE

JOHN 2:1–12

MAIN POINT: JESUS' FIRST MILACLE WAS TO TURN WATER INTO WINE.

One day, Jesus' mother, Mary, was at a wedding feast in Cana. Jesus and His disciples were there too. When the wine was all gone, Mary told Jesus, "They do not have any more wine."

Jesus replied, "What does this have to do with Me? My time has not yet come."

Jesus knew what was best, so Mary said to the servants, "Do whatever He tells you."

Now there were six stone water jars at the feast. Jesus told the servants to fill the jars with water. The servants filled the jars to the top. Then, Jesus said, "Now take some of the water out and give it to the man in charge of the feast."

So, they did. The man in charge tasted the water that had now turned into wine. He called to the groom and said, "Usually the best wine is served first. But you have kept the best for last!"

This was Jesus' first miracle. This miracle showed Jesus' glory, and His disciples believed in Him.

Jesus Connection: *Jesus performed miracles to help people believe that He is the Messiah, the Son of God. Jesus has power over everything, and those who believe in Him will have eternal life.*

Key Passage: *John 20:31 – But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.*

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SIGNS AND WONDERS

To fill in the missing words, first find the water jug (A, B or C) and then count down to the corresponding word (1, 2, 3 …).
For example, C1 = He.



Why did Jesus perform miracles?

_____ _____ _____
B2 C3 A1

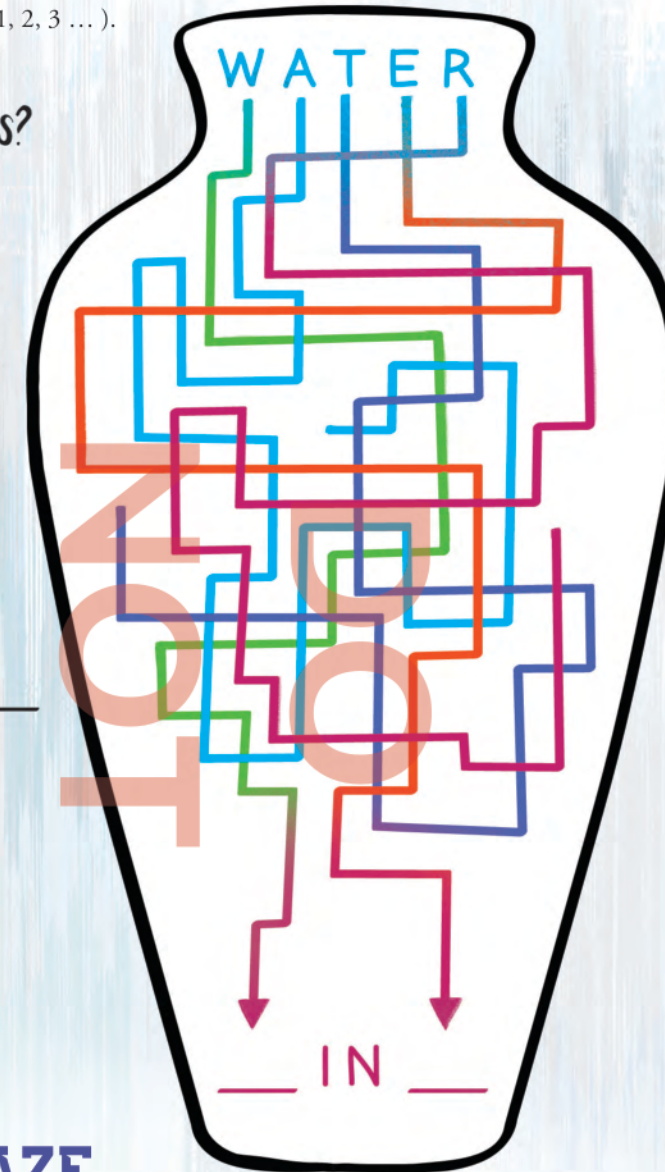
_____ _____ _____
A4 A2 B1

_____ _____
A3 C5

_____ IS
C1

_____ _____
C4 C2

OF _____.
B1



WORD MAZE

Follow the maze to figure out which letters complete the bottom word.

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WATER TO WINE

INSTRUCTIONS: Draw lines to connect the dots in numerical order to reveal a picture.



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KEY PASSAGE:
John 20:31 – But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- Why did Jesus perform miracles? Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove He is God the Son.

BIBLE STORY:
JESUS TURNED WATER TO WINE

- Jesus went to a wedding in Cana.
- Jesus' mother, Mary, told Jesus when the people ran out of wine.
- Jesus instructed servants to fill large jars with water.
- Jesus' first miracle was to turn water into wine.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Why was Jesus able to perform miracles?
- What did Jesus' miracle show about Him?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Help your kids make grape juice by crushing or blending seedless grapes and pouring it through a coffee filter to remove pulp. Review the story with your kids as you work.

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JESUS' FIRST MIRACLE WAS TO TURN WATER INTO WINE.

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Moses





Joshua



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Elijah





Jesus



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LESSON 78: GRATITUDE

JESUS PROVIDED BREAD FROM HEAVEN

Matthew 14:13–21, Mark 6:30–44, John 6:1–14

JESUS PROVIDED BREAD FROM HEAVEN

- Matthew 14:13–21, Mark 6:30–44, John 6:1–14
- Big Picture Q&A: Why did Jesus perform miracles? Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove He is God the Son.
- Key Passage: John 20:31 – But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.

JESUS CONNECTION

By feeding the 5,000, Jesus provided for the physical needs of the crowd. The next day, Jesus called Himself the bread of life (John 6:35). Only Jesus is able to satisfy our souls forever by providing forgiveness, friendship with God and eternal life.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

GRATITUDE – To appreciate what someone has done for me or given to me.

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LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Jesus' disciples had been working hard, teaching people and healing them. Jesus called them to go away with Him to a desolate place so they could rest. By now, Jesus' popularity was so great that finding a place to be alone was difficult. When Jesus and His disciples crossed the Sea of Galilee, the crowd of people were already waiting for them on the other side.

Jesus saw the crowds. He wasn't frustrated or angry. He didn't tell them to go away. Instead, He had compassion on them because they were lost—like sheep without a shepherd. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who seeks and saves the lost (see Luke 19:10; John 10:14).

The miracle Jesus performed that evening—feeding 5,000 men plus women and children—is the only miracle during Jesus' earthly ministry that is recorded in all four Gospels. God was clearly at work. The same God who provided manna for the Israelites in the wilderness multiplied loaves and fish to satisfy the crowd.

But Jesus didn't intend to only meet the people's physical needs. He came to satisfy their spiritual needs as well. In John 6:35, Jesus said, "I am the bread of life." He said that no one who comes to Him will ever be hungry, and no one who believes in Him will ever be thirsty again.

Jesus is the bread that came down from Heaven (John 6:41). God provided His Son as the perfect sacrifice to take away our sin. At the first Lord's Supper, Jesus broke bread—a symbol of His death on the cross (see Matt. 26:26).

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As you teach students this Bible story, help them know that God can and will provide for our needs. We can trust Him for our "daily bread" (Matt. 6:11). God met our greatest need in giving us salvation through Jesus. Will He not graciously give us all things (Rom. 8:32)?

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Last time, we learned about Jesus' first miracle. Does anyone remember what kind of party Jesus was at? (*A wedding feast.*) What problem did Jesus see while He was there? (*They ran out of wine.*) What miracle did Jesus do? (*Turned water into wine.*) The water turned into wine through God's amazing power. This week, we will see another way God's power was displayed in Jesus' life. Our story is called "Jesus Provided Bread from Heaven." You can find this story in your Bible in the New Testament, in the Gospels.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Fish and Loaves Matching Game (Older and Younger Students)

- Print and cut apart the "Fish and Loaves" cards. Prepare one set for every two or three students. Form groups of 2–3 people and instruct each group to mix up the cards and lay them facedown in a grid. The first player may turn over any two cards. If the cards match, she keeps them. If the cards don't match, she should turn them back over. Then, the next player takes a turn. Play until all matches are collected. The player with the most matches wins.
- In Bible times, people often ate fish and bread for meals. How many fish and loaves of bread might you eat for dinner? [*Allow students to share.*] How many fish and how many loaves of bread do you think you would need to feed 5,000 people? We will find out when we hear today's Bible story.

Fish Fling (Older and Younger Students)

- Form two teams. Line up both teams at one end of the room. Place a basket about five feet in front of each line. Give each student three fish-shaped crackers or toys. When you say "go," the first player in both lines will toss a fish, trying to land it in his basket, and then move to the back of the line. The next player will then toss a fish and move to the back of the line. The game ends when both teams have thrown all their fish. The team with the most fish in their basket wins.
- Today, we will learn a story about fish filling up a basket. What do you think could happen to make fish fill up a basket?

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

John 20:31

But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.

Key Passage Unscramble (Older Students)

- Write words or phrases of John 20:31 on six or more separate index cards. Prepare at least one card per student. If your group is large, make multiple sets. Mix up the cards and challenge the class to arrange them in the correct order. When the class is finished, guide them to read the cards aloud to check their work. If time remains, mix up the cards and play again.

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Word Fishing (Younger Students)

- Before the session, make fishing rods by tying one end of a string to a wooden dowel and the other end of the string to a magnet. Depending on the size of your group, you may want to make more than one rod. Write each word or phrase of the key passage on a separate fish-shaped cutout. Place a paperclip on each cutout near where the mouth of the fish would be. Scatter the fish in a small area of the room and allow the class to take turns catching fish with the magnet fishing rods. Once all fish have been caught, challenge students to arrange them in the correct order to form the key passage.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: Why did Jesus perform miracles?
A: *Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove He is God the Son.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Jesus Provided Bread From Heaven | Matthew 14:13–21; Mark 6:30–44; John 6:1–14

Jesus' disciples had been hard at work. They had been healing people and teaching them. So many people came and went that the disciples did not even have time to eat! Then, Jesus heard that King Herod had killed his cousin, John the Baptist. So, Jesus said to them, "Come with me. Let's go to a quiet place where we can be alone and get some rest."

Jesus and His disciples got into a boat to cross the Sea of Galilee, but many people saw them leaving. The people traveled by foot, and they ran ahead of Jesus. **When Jesus and His disciples got to the shore, the people were already there waiting for them. Jesus saw the crowd, and He cared about them because they were like sheep who needed a shepherd. So, Jesus taught the people many things about God's kingdom, and He healed people who were sick.**

By this time, it was late in the day. Jesus' disciples came to Him and said, "We are out in the middle of nowhere, and it's getting late. **Tell the people to go away** so they can go to the farms and villages **to buy themselves something to eat."**

But Jesus said, "They don't need to go away. You give them something to eat."

Jesus' disciples were confused. "We can't feed this many people," they said. "It would cost a whole year's pay to buy enough bread for them to eat," Philip said.

Jesus asked them, "How many loaves of bread do you have? Go look."

Jesus' disciple Andrew said, "A boy here has five loaves and two fish, but what good will that do for so many people?**"**

Jesus told the disciples to instruct everyone to sit down. So, all the people sat down in big groups on the grass. **Jesus took the five loaves of bread and the two fish.**

He looked up to Heaven, and then He blessed the bread. He broke it into pieces and gave it to the disciples. He also divided up the fish. The disciples passed out the food to the people, and everyone ate until they were full. Then, Jesus told the disciples to collect any leftover food. **The disciples collected**

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12 baskets full of pieces of bread and fish. Jesus fed about five thousand men that day, plus women and children.

JESUS CONNECTION

By feeding the five thousand, Jesus provided for the physical needs of the crowd. The next day, Jesus called Himself the bread of life (John 6:35). Only Jesus is able to satisfy our souls forever by providing forgiveness, friendship with God and eternal life.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

GRATITUDE – To appreciate what someone has done for me or given to me.

Living LifeWise

Because God provides everything we need, we can choose gratitude in every situation.

Character Connection

Do you ever get frustrated and think something is too hard for you? Maybe in class when the teacher introduces a new lesson. Or when trying a new sport or learning a new piece of music. But how do you feel when, after struggling with that thing, someone comes along and helps you? A teacher, coach or friend, for example. [*Take responses.*]

The disciples knew they couldn't do what Jesus wanted. Feed all those people? They didn't have enough money or time or people, and they were lost. But Jesus had the power to do what they couldn't, so He stepped into their problem, and He solved it in a BIG way. Do you think the disciples were thankful? What about the people who got to eat all that food?

When someone does something to help us, especially by doing something they can do that we can't, gratitude is always the right response. To them and to God. Because God didn't just feed those people back then. He still provides for us now, for our physical needs and, even better, for our spiritual needs. Jesus came to die on the cross to pay for our sins because we couldn't pay for them ourselves. That definitely deserves our gratitude.

How can we show gratitude to God for all that He's done for us? What are ways we can show gratitude to the people around us who help us everyday?

- Teachers
- The school secretary
- Bus drivers
- Classmates

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BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- Why did Jesus need time alone? Why did they leave the crowd?

  They were tired and hungry and heard news that John the Baptist had been killed, Mt. 14:12–13

- Why did Jesus teach and heal people in the crowd that followed him?

  He had compassion for them because they had no one to show them the way to Heaven, Mt. 14:14

- Why couldn't the crowd of people get their own food?

  There was nowhere nearby to find food, Mt. 14:15

- Why did Jesus tell the disciples to feed the people?

  So they would realize how impossible it was to feed the crowd, Mark 6:37; Jn. 6:6

- What food did a boy share with the disciples?

  Five loaves of barley bread and two fish, Jn. 6:9

- How did Jesus feed 5,000 people?

  Multiplied the food, Jn. 6:11

- How much food did Jesus make?

  Enough for everyone to be satisfied, Mk. 6:42

- How many leftovers did the disciples pick up?

  Twelve baskets, Mt. 14: 20

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Venn Diagram (Older Students)

- Distribute a Bible to each student. Form three groups and assign each group one of three passages: Matthew 14:13–21; Mark 6:30–44; John 6:1–14. Encourage the groups to work together to create a list or Venn diagram to show what details are recorded in all three accounts and what details are found in only one account.

  - Details in all three accounts:
    - Huge crowds followed Jesus and the disciples.
    - Jesus and the disciples went away by boat.
    - The people were hungry.
    - Jesus told the disciples to give them something to eat.
    - They found five loaves and two fish.
    - Jesus fed 5,000 men.
  - Details just in Matthew:
    - There were women and children not counted in the 5,000.
    - Jesus healed people before feeding them.
  - Details just in Mark:
    - The disciples had been working hard, without even having time to eat, before going to the remote place.
    - Jesus thought of the people like sheep without a shepherd.

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- Details just in John:
  - Jewish Passover was near.
  - The loaves and fish came from a boy.

- God used four different men to record different parts of Jesus' life. In some cases, the same event is recorded in more than one Gospel. Different writers that God used recorded different details and different amounts of detail. What is truly amazing, though, is that the details always fit together! From the Gospels, we know that Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove He is God the Son. Jesus died on the cross for our sins and rose again on the third day. Through believing in Him, we can be forgiven and live forever with God.

Fish and Loaves Needs (Older Students)

- Provide construction paper and encourage the class to cut out several fish shapes or bread shapes (ovals or rectangles). Guide students to write on their shapes things they worry about or needs that they have. Give examples:

  - I have a math test this week.
  - My dad is looking for a new job.
  - My grandma is in the hospital.
  - I am going to a new school this year.

- Pass around a basket and instruct the class to put their fish and loaves in the basket. Then collect the basket and ask for the students' permission to read a few of the shapes.

- Today, we heard a Bible story about how Jesus fed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish. Jesus cared about the people and provided food for them to eat. Jesus cares about us too. He cares that [*read a student's shape*]. We can trust Jesus to give us everything we need. That might not look like what we think we need, but everything Jesus does is for His glory and our good. After Jesus fed the 5,000, He said that He is the bread of life (John 6:35). Like food is necessary for physical life, Jesus is necessary for spiritual life. A loaf of bread won't last forever, but Jesus does! Only Jesus is able to satisfy our souls forever by providing forgiveness, friendship with God and eternal life.

Snack Bar Wrappers (Older Students)

- Cut paper to fit around a snack bar, one for every student. Distribute the "wrappers" and markers, and encourage each student to design a label for a snack bar. Suggest they include elements from the Bible story such as fish and loaves designs or a key idea like *Jesus provides*. Demonstrate how to fit the paper around the snack bar and tape it in place. Allow volunteers to display their labels for the group.

- Share your snack bar with someone this week. Tell them about Jesus' miracle: Jesus fed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish! Even more important than the miracle itself is what the miracle showed is true about Jesus. Why did Jesus perform miracles? Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove He is God the Son.

Act It Out (Older and Younger Students)

- Invite students to act out the Bible story. Choose volunteers to play Jesus and His disciples. The rest of the class should play the roles of people in the crowd. Narrate the story using the bolded

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text of the Bible story script or the sample script below. Pause after each description for students to act it out. Encourage them to insert dialogue where appropriate. If desired, provide props.

- Sample Script: Jesus and His disciples got into a boat to cross the Sea of Galilee. When they got to the shore, a crowd of people was already there waiting for them. Jesus saw the crowd and cared about them because they were like sheep who needed a shepherd. Jesus taught the people many things about God's kingdom, and He healed people who were sick. By this time, it was late in the day. Jesus' disciples came to Him. They thought the crowd should go away and find something to eat, but Jesus told them to let the people stay. Jesus said, "You give them something to eat." The disciples were confused. They couldn't feed that many people! They only had five loaves of bread and two fish. Jesus told the disciples to tell everyone to sit down. He took the bread and the fish. He blessed the bread and broke it into pieces. He also divided up the fish. The disciples passed out the food, and all the people ate until they were full. The disciples collected 12 baskets full of leftover pieces of bread and fish.

- Great work, everyone. How did Jesus provide for the people that day? (*He gave them bread and fish to eat.*) How does Jesus provide for us forever? (*By dying on the cross and rising again, Jesus provided forgiveness, friendship with God and eternal life.*)

Take Some and Pass (Younger Students)

- Before class, cut a "loaf" of bread from construction paper. Invite the group to sit in a circle. Have the students pass the construction paper bread around, with each one tearing off a bit before passing it on. Count together how many times you can pass the "bread" before it has all been torn up and there is nothing left to pass.

- As you can see, the more we took of our pretend bread, the less there was to pass along. In our Bible story, Jesus blessed the bread and fish and began tearing off bits and passing it to others to do the same. By God's power, they never ran out of bread! Jesus fed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish. Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove He is God the Son. When we believe in Jesus, God forgives our sins and gives us brand new lives.

Lunch Plate Fish (Younger Students)

- Distribute a paper plate to each student. Help them make a cut from the edge of the plate toward the center twice to remove a wedge shaped section of the plate. Glue this to the opposite side of the plate to form a tail; the missing portion forms a mouth. Then, students will make a second set of cuts to remove a smaller wedge shape from the top of the plate. Glue this piece to the center of the plate to form a fin. Then, let the class decorate their fishes with other craft supplies.

- Jesus fed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish. But that was not Jesus' greatest miracle! Jesus died on the cross for our sins and rose again on the third day. He made the way for us to live with God forever. When we trust Jesus, God forgives our sins and makes us new. Use your lunch plate fish to tell your family and friends about Jesus' power to do miracles and provide salvation to the world.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Challenge 5000 (Older Students)

- Lots of Loaves (Younger Students)

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- ✧ Answer: There are 33 loaves.

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

God, thank You for Jesus—Your answer to our greatest need, to be saved from sin. Thank You for Your Word which shows us all the ways You have provided for Your people. Help us to trust You for everything because You can and will provide for our needs. We love You. Amen.

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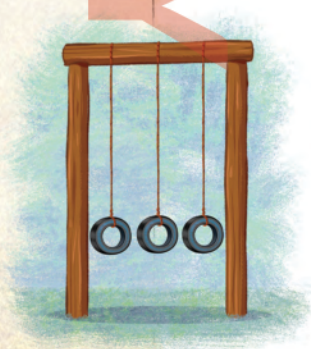
Journal Page

List things God has provided for you.



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- How did Jesus feel about the crowds that followed Him? (See Mark 6:34.)
- What do you do when you see people in need?
- How did God provide for our greatest need–to be saved from sin?

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JESUS PROVIDED BREAD FROM HEAVEN

MATTHEW 14:13–21; MARK 6:30–44; JOHN 6:1–14

MAIN POINT: JESUS FED 5,000 PEOPLE WITH FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISH.

Jesus and His disciples got into a boat to cross the Sea of Galilee. When Jesus and His disciples got to the shore, the people were already there waiting for them. Jesus saw the crowd and He cared about them because they were like sheep who needed a shepherd. So, Jesus taught the people many things about God's kingdom, and He healed people who were sick.

By this time, it was late in the day. Jesus' disciples came to Him and said, "Tell the people to go away to buy themselves something to eat."

But Jesus said, "They don't need to go away. You give them something to eat."

Jesus' disciples were confused. "We can't feed this many people," they said.

Jesus asked them, "How many loaves of bread do you have? Go look."

Jesus' disciple Andrew said, "A boy here has five loaves and two fish."

Jesus told the disciples to instruct everyone to sit down. Jesus took the five loaves of bread and the two fish. He looked up to Heaven, and then He blessed the bread. He broke it into pieces and gave it to the disciples. He also divided up the fish. The disciples passed out the food to the people, and everyone ate until they were full.

The disciples collected 12 baskets full of pieces of bread and fish. Jesus fed about five thousand men that day, plus women and children.

Jesus Connection: *By feeding the five thousand, Jesus provided for the physical needs of the crowd. The next day, Jesus called Himself the bread of life (John 6:35). Only Jesus is able to satisfy our souls forever by providing forgiveness, friendship with God and eternal life.*

Key Passage: *John 20:31 – But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.*

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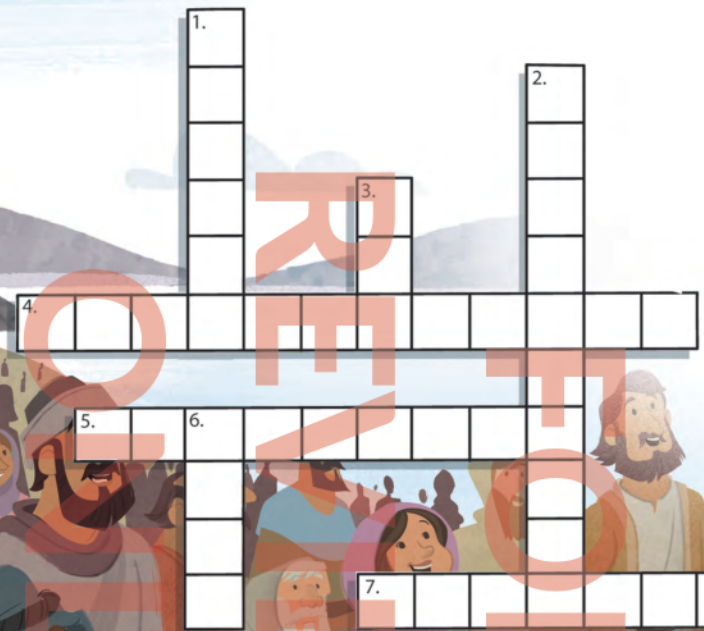
CHALLENGE 5,000

Use the clues and word list to complete the crossword puzzle.
Word List: compassion, five thousand, evening, two, twelve, disciples, sick



ACROSS

4. how many men Jesus fed (Matthew 14:21)

5. who asked Jesus to send the people away (Matthew 14:15)

7. the time of day when the crowds were fed (Matthew 14:15)

DOWN

1. number of baskets full of leftovers (Matthew 14:20)

2. what Jesus felt when He saw a huge crowd (Matthew 14:14)

3. how many fish the disciples had (Matthew 14:14)

6. Jesus healed these people (Matthew 14:14)

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LIFEWISE ACADEMY
POWERED BY THE GOSPEL PROJECT

NEEDS AND WANTS

List five things you or your family members need and five things you or your family members want. Rank them in order from 1 (most important) to 5 (least important).

NEEDS	WANTS
[ ] _____	[ ] _____
[ ] _____	[ ] _____
[ ] _____	[ ] _____
[ ] _____	[ ] _____
[ ] _____	[ ] _____

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LOTS OF LOAVES

INSTRUCTIONS: Count the number of loaves of bread. Mark each to make sure you have counted them all.



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KEY PASSAGE:
John 20:31 – But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- Why did Jesus perform miracles? Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove He is God the Son.

BIBLE STORY:
JESUS PROVIDED BREAD FROM HEAVEN

- Jesus and His disciples went away to rest, but a large crowd followed them.
- Jesus taught the crowd until it grew late.
- The disciples wanted to send the people away to get food, but Jesus insisted they feed the crowd.
- Jesus fed over 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- How did Jesus feel about the crowds that followed Him?
- Why did the disciples want to send the people away?
- When you see people in need, do you respond like Jesus or like the disciples? Why?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Volunteer with your family at a local food bank.

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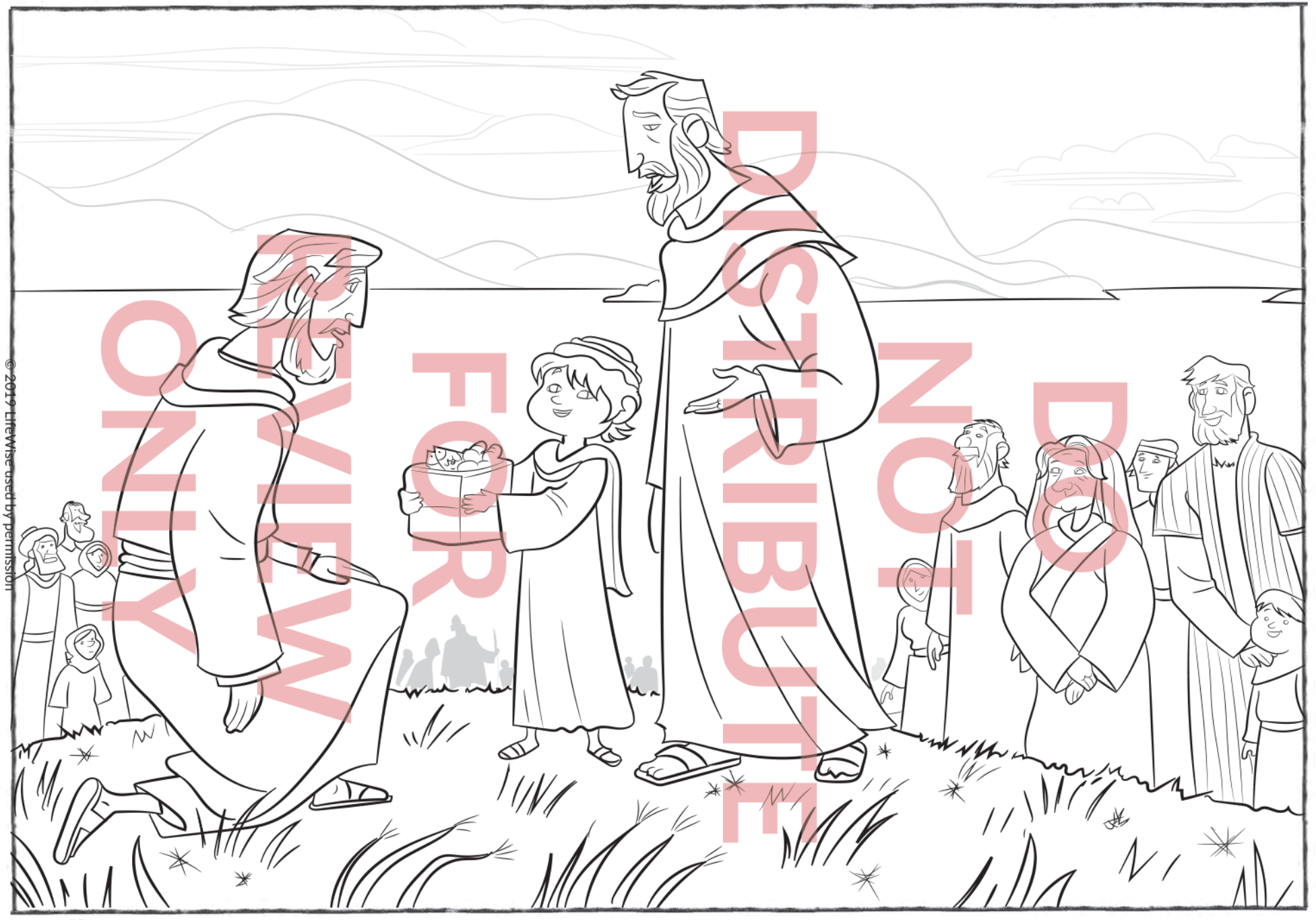

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JESUS FED 5,000 PEOPLE WITH FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISH.

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Fish and Loaves Cards

Instructions: Print and use as directed in the leader guide.

L 78 Jesus Provided Bread From Heaven | GRATITUDE

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LESSON 79: COURAGE

JESUS WALKED ON WATER

Matthew 14:22–33

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JESUS WALKED ON WATER

- Matthew 14:22–33
- Big Picture Q&A: Why did Jesus perform miracles? Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove He is God the Son.
- Key Passage: John 20:31 – But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.

JESUS CONNECTION

Jesus proved that He can be trusted. His miracles, teaching, death and resurrection showed that He is who He says He is. Only Jesus can save us when we look to Him in faith.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

COURAGE – Boldly doing the right thing, even when it's hard.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Jesus had just fed more than 5,000 people on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. After sending away the people and directing His disciples to go back across the sea, Jesus went to a mountain to pray. It was late, and He sought to be alone with His Father. Jesus was preparing to fulfill His Father's plan. Before long, He would die on the cross and rescue people from their sin.

It was not uncommon for a storm to suddenly swoop down on the Sea of Galilee from the mountains. These storms couldn't be seen from far away. When the disciples got in their boat, the weather probably appeared fine, but a storm began, and the disciples were caught in it.

While Jesus prayed, the disciples struggled to cross the sea. The storm tossed their boat up and down. They didn't make any progress against the waves. Then, in the early morning hours, they saw a figure walking toward them on the water. They thought it was a ghost, but it was Jesus!

Peter asked Jesus for permission to come out on the water, and Jesus called to him. Peter walked on the water too—until he remembered the storm. Peter took his eyes off of Jesus, and he began to sink. Peter cried out to Jesus, "Save me!"

Jesus took Peter by the hand and got in the boat. The wind and waves calmed. Though Peter had doubted, the disciples worshiped Jesus. Clearly He was no ordinary man; this was the Son of God—the promised Messiah!

Jesus proved that He can be trusted. His miracles, teaching, death, and resurrection showed that He is who He says He is. As you teach students, encourage them to look to Jesus in faith every day. We can seek Him for our salvation and for help as we live in this world. Even in the midst of fear and doubt, we can hold

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out our empty hands and cry, "Lord, save me!" He will answer, and we can respond in worship of our Lord and Savior.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Can anyone remember what Jesus' first miracle was? I'll give you a hint: It happened at a wedding. (*Turned water into wine.*) Last time, we learned about a miracle Jesus performed by the sea after people had been with Him all day. Even the disciples didn't think Jesus could do it. What was it? *(Fed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish.*) Today, we are going to hear a Bible story called "Jesus Walked on Water." This story comes from the Gospel of Matthew in the New Testament.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Captain, May I? (Older Students)

- Divide the class into pairs. If you have an odd number of players, choose a student to be the captain. Otherwise, you be the captain. The captain should stand 10 to 20 feet away from the pairs of players (the crew members). Warn the crew members to keep their eyes on the captain. Have the pairs of crew members take turns asking the captain for permission to move across the room. For example, "Captain, may I take three steps forward?" If the captain says, "Yes, you may," both players may advance. If the captain says, "No, you may not," he should provide an alternative move: "But you may take two hops forward." As they play, the captain should carefully observe the crew members. If anyone is caught looking away from the captain, that pair must return to the start.

- Was it hard to keep your eyes on the captain while you played? In today's Bible story, we are going to hear about a time one of Jesus' disciples took his eyes off of Jesus and found himself in deep water!

Float or Sink? (Older and Younger Students)

- Set a large tub of water on the floor and display various objects. Invite the class to gather around. For each item, ask students if they think it will float or sink. Then, test their prediction. Group the objects based on whether they float or sink in the water. Be sure to provide towels to dry off objects and clean up any spills.

- Do you think a person would float or sink in the water? You know from taking baths or swimming in a pool that people tend to sink in water. Well, today's Bible story is about a miracle. Would you believe that Jesus walked on water? Even one of His disciples walked on water! Let's find out more.

Stepping Stones (Younger Students)

- Before class, use tape to make irregular shapes on the floor. These will be "stepping stones" where students can step. Then, play a game where the class must hop from "stone" to "stone" to avoid falling in the "sea" (unmarked areas of the floor).

- People cannot walk on water usually. We would need stepping stones to avoid falling into the sea. Today, we will talk about a time when Jesus walked on water without stepping stones, and Peter wanted to join Him. What do you think happened to Peter? We'll learn more soon.

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KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

John 20:31

But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.

Word for Word Relay (Older Students)

- Form two teams and instruct the teams to line up, single file, in front of a white board or large piece of paper. Give the first student on each team a marker. They will write the first word of the verse, hand the marker to the next student in line and run to the back. Alternatively, two small white boards could be used, with students writing one word and passing the white board and marker, racing to finish the verse (or get their board to the last student in line) first.

Key Passage Wave (Older and Younger Students)

- Instruct students to stand in line, shoulder to shoulder. As each student says one word of John 20:31 in order, they will lift their arms to make a wave. With larger groups, form two lines, facing one another, and have two students say the same word simultaneously. With very large groups, line students up in rows, facing the first row, and assign each line of students a word from the verse.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: Why did Jesus perform miracles?

A: *Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove He is God the Son.*

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BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Jesus Walked On Water | Matthew 14:22–33

Jesus had been teaching crowds of people by the Sea of Galilee. It was getting late, so He told His disciples to get into the boat and go to the other side of the sea. Jesus sent the crowds away and went up on the mountain to pray by Himself. That evening, the boat was far from the shore, and the wind blew, and the waves tossed the boat around. Jesus was still on the mountain alone.

Around three in the morning, Jesus came toward His disciples, walking on the sea. When the disciples saw Jesus, they were terrified. "It's a ghost!" they cried.

Right away, Jesus spoke to them. "Have courage! It's Me. Do not be afraid."

Peter answered, "Lord, if it really is You, tell me to come to You on the water."

So, Jesus said, "Come!"

Peter got out of the boat and started walking on the water toward Jesus. But when Peter saw how strongly the wind was blowing [and how great the waves were], he was afraid. Peter began to sink. "Lord, save me!" he cried.

Jesus reached out His hand and grabbed Peter. Jesus said, "You have little faith. Why did you doubt?"

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They got into the boat and the wind stopped. Then, everyone in the boat worshiped Jesus and said, "Truly You are the Son of God."

JESUS CONNECTION

Jesus proved that He can be trusted. His miracles, teaching, death and resurrection showed that He is who He says He is. Only Jesus can save us when we look to Him in faith.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

COURAGE – Boldly doing the right thing, even when it's hard.

Living LifeWise

Because Jesus is powerful and good, we can live with courage every day.

Character Connection

Have you ever gone to a new place or done an activity where you didn't know anyone? How does that feel? Then, you suddenly heard a familiar voice, like a friend you didn't know was coming. How would it feel to hear that voice? How would your behavior or responses change?

That's what happened in our story. One minute, Jesus's disciples were in a boat in a storm, and the next minute, Peter was walking on the water. What made the difference? [*Let students answer.*] Seeing Jesus wasn't enough. They thought they were seeing a ghost and got more scared. But when they heard their friend and teacher speak to them—"Have courage! It's Me."—it changed everything.

When we know a person, we trust them. And the disciples knew Jesus was powerful (He'd literally just fed 5,000 people!) and entirely good. Knowing it was Him by hearing His voice gave them courage. So much so that Peter stepped out of a boat onto the water and walked.

Knowing Jesus helps us have courage, too. When we read in the Bible about Jesus' miracles and love, how He died for us and rose again, we learn what He can do and that we can trust Him to take care of us. As we pray and read God's Word, we come to know who He is, which gives us courage to live God's way boldly.

Courage is often easier to see in big situations, like walking on water, but we also need it for normal life. Living with courage often happens in small ways, as we live God's way at home or at school or at a friend's house.

How can you show courage to live God's way in these situations?

- Your friends are talking unkindly about a classmate behind their back.
- You break something that belongs to a family member.
- You get a flier about a sport or activity you've never done before, but want to try.
- Someone asks why you (or your family) prays before you eat.

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BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- Where was Jesus when the storm first began?

  On a mountain, Mt. 14:23

- When did the storm first begin?

  Evening, Mt. 14:23

- What was Jesus doing on the mountain?

  Praying, Mt. 14:23

- When did Jesus leave the mountain to rescue the disciples?

  3 a.m., Mt. 14:25

- How did Jesus reach the disciples during the storm?

  He walked on water, Mt. 14:25

- Why were the disciples terrified of Jesus?

  They thought He was a ghost, Mt. 14:26

- Why did Peter think Jesus was a ghost?

  No one can walk on water

- What did Jesus say to Peter when he saw Him?

  "Have courage; it's Me," Mt. 14:27

- What sign did Peter want that it was really Jesus?

  To walk on water too, Mt. 14:28

- Why did Peter begin to sink?

  He looked at the wind and waves and was afraid, Mt. 14:30

- How did Jesus help Peter?

  Reached out and grabbed him, Mt. 14:31

- What happened when Jesus and Peter got in the boat?

  The wind stopped, Mt. 14:32

- How did the disciples respond to Jesus walking on water and calming the storm?

  Worshiped Him and confessed He was the son of God, Mt. 14:32

- Why did Jesus perform miracles?

  Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove He is God the Son.

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Leap of Faith (Older Students)

- Choose a volunteer to attempt to jump over a chair, trash can or other large obstacle. Instruct him to wait until you say "go" before attempting the jump. Blindfold the volunteer and quietly remove the obstacle from their path. Make sure the rest of the class is silent to avoid giving away the twist. Tell the volunteer to jump over the obstacle. Then, remove the blindfold and let him see that the obstacle was moved.

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- It can be a little scary to trust Jesus when we aren't sure how things will work out. However, like Peter, sometimes we need to simply take a "leap of faith" and let Jesus take care of the results. It may not always turn out as we thought it would, but we can trust Jesus to take care of us.

Act It Out (Older and Younger Students)

- Invite students to act out the Bible story. Choose volunteers to play Jesus, Peter and the disciples. The rest of the class should be the wind and the waves. Give the wind group white construction paper to wave in the air and the waves group blue construction paper to wave by the ground. Act as the narrator. Retell the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script. Pause after each description for students to act it out. Encourage them to insert dialogue where appropriate.

Raft Review (Older and Younger Students)

- Use masking tape to make outlines of two large rafts on the floor. Tape a large letter *A* in the first raft and *B* in the second raft. Give two possible answers to each question. Have the students "swim" to the raft they think is correct and sit inside it.
    - Where was Jesus when the storm first began? A. Teaching the crowds of people **B. On a mountain**
    - What was Jesus doing on the mountain? **A. Praying** B. Sleeping
    - Why did Jesus walk on the water? A. He wanted to get to the other side. **B. The disciples needed His help.**
    - Why were the disciples terrified of Jesus? **A. They thought He was a ghost.** B. They were scared of His power.
    - Why did Peter think Jesus was a ghost? **A. It's impossible for a person to walk on water.** B. Jesus looked like a ghost.
    - What did Jesus say to Peter when he saw Him? A. Let me in the boat. **B. Have courage; it's Me.**
    - What sign did Peter want to show that it was really Jesus? **A. To be able to walk on water** B. To touch Jesus
    - Why did Peter begin to sink? **A. He became afraid.** B. The waves pulled him down.
    - How did Jesus help Peter? A. He allowed him to walk on water. **B. He grabbed Peter when he sank.**
    - What happened when Jesus and Peter got in the boat? A. The boat sank. **B. The wind stopped.**
    - How did the disciples respond to Jesus walking on water and calming the storm? **A. They worshiped Him. B. They confessed He was the son of God.**

Don't Be Afraid (Older and Younger Students)

- Before class, make two signs, *Scary* and *Not Scary*, and tape them on opposite walls. Instruct the class to listen to scenarios you read and run to the side of the room that matches their thoughts about that situation. For each scenario, discuss ways we can trust Jesus through the scary situation.

- Scenarios:
    - Your family is driving during a snowstorm and your car spins out of control on the road.
    - You are swimming at the beach and see a shark fin poking out of the water, heading straight toward you.

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- You are camping out in the woods and drop a marshmallow in the fire before it finishes roasting.
- You walk into your classroom and remember that you have a spelling test today, but you know most of the words.
- You throw a ball inside your friend's house and accidentally hit their TV. It falls to the ground and breaks.

- A lot of situations can make us worry. Fear is a normal feeling, and God gave us the ability to feel fear to protect us from things that can hurt us. However, when we let fear control our hearts, we are not trusting Jesus. We know that Jesus is our Rescuer, and He provides us with salvation. When we believe in Him, our future is forever secure with God. Even the scariest things on Earth cannot take us away from God. God wants us to remember His power and trust Him even in difficult or scary situations.

Stormy Seas (Younger Students)

- Fill a few tubs or large bowls with water. The larger your group, the more stations with tubs you will need. Provide each student with one 6-inch square of aluminum foil. Help students make a boat shape by bending up the edges. Allow each student a chance to place her boat in the water to see if it floats. If it does, ask her to scoop some water into the boat. Discuss what happens as the boat fills with water.
- Boats are built to float on water, but if too much water gets into the boat, it begins to sink! That's why storms can be so dangerous for boats; big waves can crash into the boat, filling it with water. Today, we learned about a time the disciples were in a boat during a storm. They were in great danger and were not strong enough to row back to shore. How did Jesus get to them? (*He walked on water.*) How was Jesus able to save them? (*Through His great power.*)

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Calling Out (Older Students)
- The A-MAZE-ing Walk (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

God, thank You for Jesus. Help us to trust You with everything we have. Give us strength and courage to live for You and call out to You when we feel like we are sinking in the middle of a storm. Amen.

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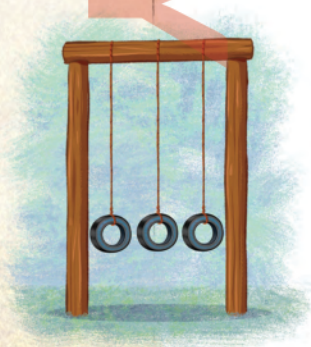
Journal Page

Write things you know to be true about Jesus. How can knowing these things about Jesus help you trust Him?



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why did Peter step out of the boat?
- What caused Peter to sink?
- What did Jesus do when Peter called out for help?
- How can we call out to Jesus today?

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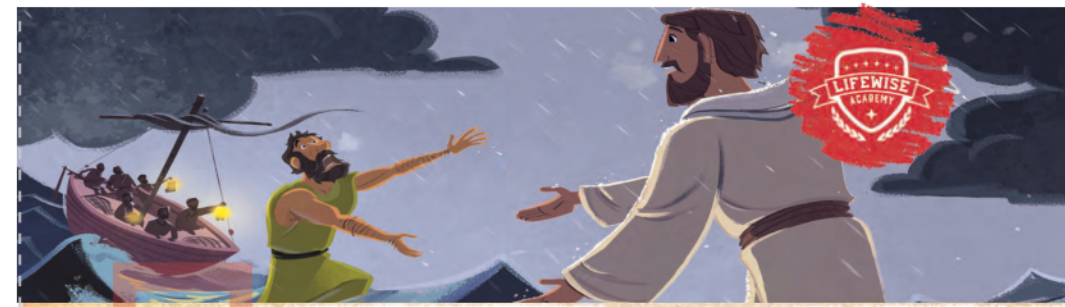

JESUS WALKED ON WATER

MATTHEW 14:22–33

MAIN POINT: JESUS WALKED ON THE SEA.

Jesus had been teaching crowds of people by the Sea of Galilee. It was getting late, so He told His disciples to get into the boat and go to the other side of the sea.

Around three in the morning, Jesus came toward His disciples, walking on the sea. When the disciples saw Jesus, they were terrified.

Right away, Jesus spoke to them. "Have courage! It's Me. Do not be afraid."

Peter answered, "Lord, if it really is You, tell me to come to You on the water."

So, Jesus said, "Come!"

Peter got out of the boat and started walking on the water toward Jesus. But when Peter saw how strongly the wind was blowing, he was afraid. Peter began to sink.

"Lord, save me!" he cried.

Jesus reached out His hand and grabbed Peter. They got into the boat and the wind stopped. Then, everyone in the boat worshiped Jesus and said, "Truly You are the Son of God."

Jesus Connection: *Jesus proved that He can be trusted. His miracles, teaching, death and resurrection showed that He is who He says He is. Only Jesus can save us when we look to Him in faith.*

Key Passage: *John 20:31 – But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.*

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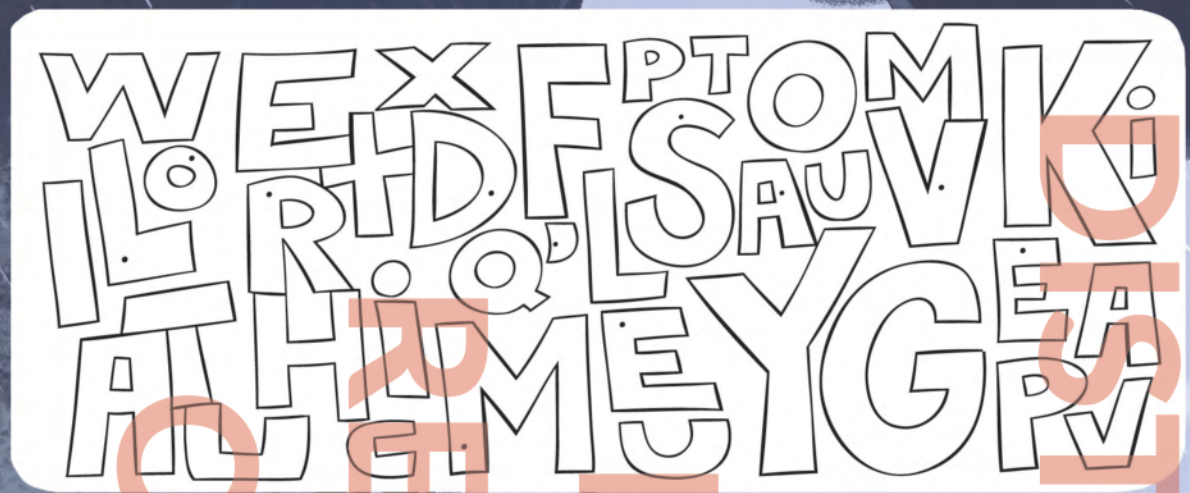
CALLING OUT

Color the letters that have a dot to read what Peter said.



OUT OF PLACE

Circle at least seven things that seem strange or out of place.



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THE A-MAZE-ING WALK

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete the maze to guide Peter from the boat to Jesus.



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KEY PASSAGE:
John 20:31 – But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- Why did Jesus perform miracles? Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove He is God the Son.

BIBLE STORY:
JESUS WALKED ON WATER

- Jesus' disciples were alone in a boat tossed by wind and waves.
- Jesus walked on the sea to help the disciples.
- Peter joined Jesus, but sank when he remembered the scary seas around him.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Why did Peter step out of the boat?
- Why did Peter start to sink?
- What did Jesus do when Peter called for help?
- What does Jesus do when we call for help?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Take your family on an outing to a swimming pool. Review the story and take turns jumping feet first into the water. Talk about how strange it must have felt for Peter when his feet didn't fall through the water.

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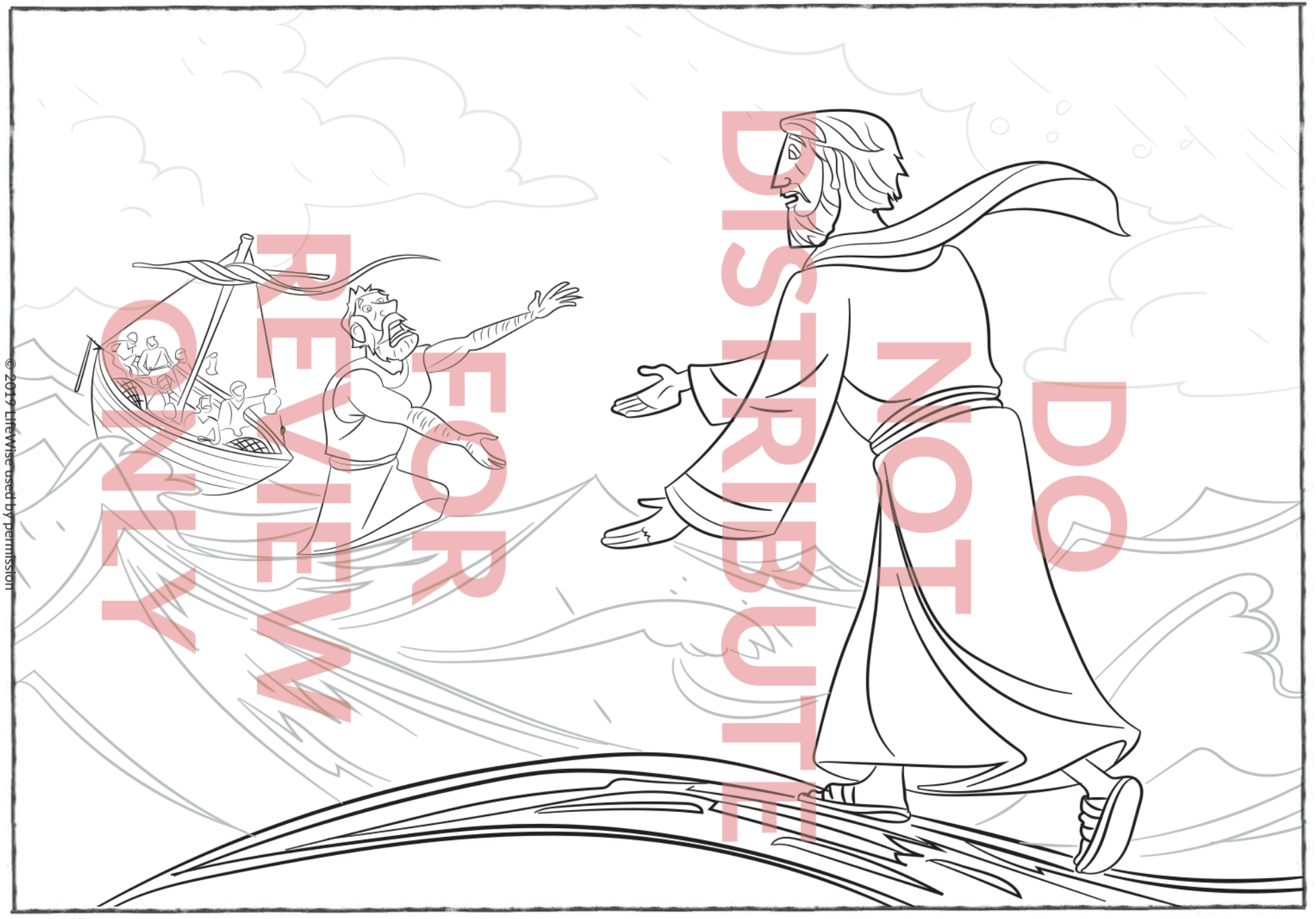

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JESUS WALKED ON THE SEA.

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LESSON 80: LOYALTY

FOUR FRIENDS HELPED

Mark 2:1–12

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FOUR FRIENDS HELPED

- Mark 2:1–12
- Big Picture Q&A: What did Jesus heal people from? Jesus healed people from sickness, sin and death.
- Key Passage: Psalm 103:2–3 – My soul, bless the Lord, and do not forget all His benefits. He forgives all your iniquity; He heals all your diseases.

JESUS CONNECTION

The man who was paralyzed needed to be healed. Jesus knew this and did something even greater: Jesus forgave his sins, and then He healed the man. Because Jesus is God, He has the power and authority to heal and forgive. Jesus forgives those who trust in Him.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

LOYALTY – Choosing to stay with someone, even when it costs me.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Jesus was in Capernaum, a city on the Sea of Galilee. The Pharisees and scribes—teachers of the law—came to listen to Jesus' teaching. They were curious about His message and wanted to make sure He was teaching things that were true. So many people came that they crowded the house; there was no more room.

That day, four friends came to see Jesus. The four men carried their friend who was paralyzed. Jesus had healed people before—even people who were paralyzed (Mt. 4:24, 8:6). The men believed Jesus came from God, and He could heal people. So, their faith led to action. Because the friends could not get through the crowd, they carried their friend to the roof and lowered him down to Jesus.

Jesus' words to the man surprised the Pharisees and teachers of the law. Rather than saying, "Get up and walk," Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven." The religious leaders kept quiet, but Jesus knew their thoughts. They accused Jesus of blasphemy, dishonoring God by claiming to do what only God can do. But Jesus did not blaspheme. He is God, and He has authority to forgive sins.

Jesus asked them, "Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?" Simply saying, "Your sins are forgiven," seems to be the easier thing, but to actually forgive sins is harder, something only God can do. As God, Jesus has the power and authority to heal and forgive. And Jesus knew He would take the man's sins upon Himself on the cross—an act of love that would cost Him His life.

Jesus healed the man who was paralyzed to prove to the religious leaders His power to forgive. Mark 2:12 records the crowd's reaction: "They were all astounded and gave glory to God, saying, 'We have never seen anything like this!'"

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BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Does anyone remember what miracle we learned about last time? (*Jesus walked on water.*) Why were the disciples afraid when they saw Jesus walk on water? (*They didn't believe it was Him because it was impossible.*) What did Peter ask Jesus to do to prove He was really Jesus? (*Help him walk on water, too.*) Today's Bible story comes from the Gospel of Mark in the New Testament and describes another miracle Jesus did. This time, it wasn't multiplying food or commanding the wind and waves. This time, Jesus changed someone's life.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Human Obstacle Course (Older and Younger Students)

- Choose four to six students to be human obstacles spaced throughout the room. Determine a pose for each obstacle (see examples below) and demonstrate what players must do at each obstacle. Allow students to take turns moving through the obstacle course. Then, switch roles and create new obstacles.
    - Human obstacle lies flat on his back; players must carefully step over him.
    - Human obstacle stands with his legs apart to form a tunnel that players must crawl through.
    - Human obstacle raises hand in the air, and players must give her a high five.
    - Human obstacle sits cross-legged on the floor. Players must circle her twice.
    - Human obstacle crouches with knees, arms and legs on the floor. Players must hop over him like a frog.
- Have you ever been in a room so crowded that it was hard to move from one side to the other? Imagine so many people in a house that you couldn't get in at all! That's what happened to some friends who were trying to get to Jesus. We will hear more in our Bible story today.

Unique Inventions (Older and Younger Students)

- Form groups of three or four students. Provide various supplies and challenge them to create something. After several minutes, allow students to explain how their invention is used. After a group presents its invention, exclaim, "I've never seen anything like this!"
- In today's Bible story, Jesus did something that caused people to say, "We have never seen anything like this!" Let's find out what happened.

Healthy Hearts (Younger Students)

- Instruct the class to do a series of simple exercises, like jumping jacks, running in place, push-ups, squats, or arm circles. Allow volunteers to take turns leading the workout.
- Today, we will learn about a man who had two big problems. One was with his physical body. He couldn't do any of the exercises you just did. He was paralyzed, which means he could not move the muscles in his body. We will learn about his other problem and how both problems were solved. What do you think his other problem was? What do you think could fix his two problems?

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KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Psalm 103:2–3

My soul, bless the Lord, and do not forget all His benefits. He forgives all your iniquity; He heals all your diseases.

Key Passage Collages (Older Students)

- Before class, find magazine pages with the necessary letters on them for students to use. Display the key passage poster. Divide the class into four groups and the key passage into four phrases. Assign one phrase to each group. Challenge the groups to work together to cut out and arrange letters from the magazines to spell out their phrase of Psalm 103:2–3. When all groups finish, call on them one at a time to read their portions aloud.

Write, Color and Read (Older and Younger Students)

- Display the key passage poster. Provide paper and crayons, and have students copy the passage using a different color for every other word. When the class is finished, guide them to read the verses aloud together two times.

- This key passage comes from the Book of Psalms. Can anyone tell me what part of the Bible the Book of Psalms is in? (*The Old Testament.*) Does anyone know who wrote this psalm? (*King David; Psalm 103:1.*) Whom is David talking to? (*Himself, his soul; Psalm 103:2.*) It might seem strange that David is talking to his own soul, but he is telling himself, "Remember this! This is important!" David wanted to remember to praise the Lord. He wanted to remember everything the Lord had done. God forgives sin and heals our diseases.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: What did Jesus heal people from?

A: *Jesus healed people from sickness, sin and death.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Four Friends Helped | Mark 2:1–12

Jesus had been traveling, and He went to Capernaum (kuh PUHR nay uhm). **When the people in the town heard that Jesus was home, they gathered at the house to hear Him teach.** Pharisees and other teachers of the law had traveled from villages all over Galilee and Judea. Some even came from Jerusalem to hear Jesus. **So many people came that they stood in the doorway, and there was no more room for anyone else.**

Just then, four men came to the house. They were carrying their friend on a mat because he could not walk. They wanted Jesus to heal him, but they could not get through the crowd. So, the men carried their friend up to the roof. They took off part of the roof above Jesus. **Then, they lowered their friend through the crowd so that he was right in front of Jesus.**

Jesus saw that the friends had faith, and He told the man lying on the mat, "Young man, your sins are forgiven!" When the religious leaders heard this, they thought, *Who does Jesus think He is? He is being disrespectful to God! Only God can forgive sins.*

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Jesus knew what the religious leaders were thinking. He said to them, "Why are you thinking like that? Is it easier for Me to say to this man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or 'Get up and walk'?"

As God's Son, Jesus had the power to forgive people's sins. But how could He prove that the man's sins were really forgiven? **Jesus showed His power on Earth to forgive sins by turning back to the man on the mat. "Get up, pick up your mat and go home," Jesus said.**

The man who had been unable to walk immediately got up. He picked up his mat, and he went home, just like Jesus commanded. Everyone in the crowd saw what happened, and they **could hardly believe what they had seen! They praised God** and said, "We have never seen anything like this!"



JESUS CONNECTION

The man who was paralyzed needed to be healed. Jesus knew this and did something even greater: Jesus forgave his sins, and then He healed the man. Because Jesus is God, He has the power and authority to heal and forgive. Jesus forgives those who trust in Him.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

LOYALTY – Choosing to stay with someone, even when it costs me.

Living LifeWise

God never leaves us, so we can be loyal to those who need a friend.

Character Connection

Groups of things are always harder to break apart than a single thing. A single string will snap easily, but a thick rope can hold a whole boat at the dock. And one person alone will struggle more in hard times than someone who is surrounded by loyal friends. The paralyzed man in today's story needed his four friends to give their time, energy and problem-solving skills to make sure he saw Jesus. And they did. Their loyalty to a friend in need resulted not only in healing, but in forgiveness, too.

God never leaves us. He always keeps His promises. He is our friend (John 15:14–15), not because we deserve it or because He owes us, but because He is loving and kind toward us. That's how God will empower us to live toward others, too. He will help us look out for our friends and family, stand by them and help them. And He will also help us to notice others who need a friend and choose to support and be kind to them as well.

How could you be loyal to (stand alongside) the people in these situations?

- Your friend moved in with his grandparents and seems sad a lot.
- The teacher seems really grumpy today; she scolds you when you come up to ask a question about your worksheet.
- The school is holding a donation drive to serve the homeless in your community.
- A classmate who struggles with his schoolwork is teased about the shirt he has on.

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BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- How crowded was the house where Jesus preached?

  There was no more room, Mk. 2:2

- How many friends carried the man who was paralyzed?

  Four friends, Mk. 2:3

- What part of the man was paralyzed?

  Legs

- How did the men get their friend to Jesus?

  Removed the roof and lowered the man down to Jesus, Mk. 2:4

- What did Jesus see in the four friends?

  Their faith, Mk. 2:5

- What did the religious leaders accuse Jesus of doing?

  Blaspheming, or speaking against God, Mk. 2:6–7

- How did Jesus know what the religious men were thinking?

  He knows everything

- What did Jesus tell the man to do?

  Get up, pick up his mat and go home, Mk. 2:11

- How did the crowd react?

  They were amazed and gave glory to God, Mk. 2:12

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Life Line (Older Students)

- Provide a Bible for each student. Choose four students to sit at the front of the room to be life lines. Form two teams with the remaining students. Explain that you will ask a review question to the first team. Teams do not have to choose a life line if they know the answer. If the team is unsure, they may choose one of the life lines to answer. If the chosen student answers correctly, the team earns one point. If the player answers incorrectly, the other team may answer for a point. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins.

Act It Out (Older and Younger Students)

- Invite the class to act out the Bible story. Select volunteers to play Jesus, the four friends and the paralyzed man. The rest of the class will be the Pharisees and the crowds. Act as the narrator. Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script. Pause after each description for students to act it out. Encourage them to insert dialogue where appropriate.

What's Easier? (Older and Younger Students)

- Give each student a pencil and two or more index cards. [*Aim to use at least 30 cards total.*] Have the class write on each index card something they know how to do, such as ride a bike or bake a cake. Prepare two cards that say *heal a man who is paralyzed* and *forgive sins* and set them aside. Collect the cards and mix them up. Read the cards, two at a time. The class will vote on which task is easier by walking to one side of the room or the other. Read multiple pairs of cards.

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- Today, we heard a story about Jesus healing a man and forgiving his sins. The religious leaders were upset with Jesus, and Jesus asked them, "Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk?'" The religious leaders might have thought it was easier to say "Your sins are forgiven" because the result was invisible. No one could disprove Jesus' power to forgive. But Jesus proved His power to both forgive the man's sins and heal his body by healing the paralyzed man. Jesus could forgive the man because He knew He was going to do the hardest thing. Jesus was going to die on the cross. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, everyone who trusts in Him receives forgiveness and eternal life.

On the Mat (Older and Younger Students)

- Set up cones around the room to make a race course. Form teams of four and provide each team with a towel and a beach ball. Instruct each player to grab a corner of their team's towel and try to carry their ball through the race course and around the cones. If the ball falls off the towel, the team must return to the start and try again. The team with the fastest time wins. For an added challenge, form teams of five, give each team a towel and have them carry the lightest member of their team down the race course.

- In our story today, we heard about a man who was carried on a mat by four friends. Why do you think his friends were willing to carry him so far?

Connect Four (Younger Students)

- Form two teams. Place a vertical four-in-a-row game such as Connect Four at the front and assign each team a color from the game (typically red and yellow). Ask review questions, alternating between teams. If the team answers correctly, they will choose where to drop their colored disk into the game. If they answer incorrectly, the other team gets to choose where their disk is dropped. Play until one team has four disks in a row or there are no questions left to ask. If you do not have a Connect Four board, make one on a board or focal wall with blue painters tape and use two colors of sticky notes or laminated red and yellow circles with magnetic strips on the back as game pieces.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Four Friends (Older Students)

- Unexpected Guests (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Thank You, Lord, for sending Jesus to be our Healer, Friend, Savior and King. Help us learn to trust You with all our problems. Help us to be the kind of friends who are willing to step out and bring others to Jesus so they can find healing and forgiveness too. Amen.

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Journal Page

Write the name of a friend and list a few things you can pray for that friend this week.



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- In what ways do we need healing?
- Does Jesus heal every sickness or injury? Why or why not?
- How do we experience healing from Jesus?

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FOUR FRIENDS HELPED

MARK 2:1–12

MAIN POINT: JESUS HEALED A PARALYZED MAN AND FORGAVE HIS SINS.

Jesus had been traveling, and He went to Capernaum. When the people in the town heard that Jesus was home, they gathered at the house to hear Him teach. So many people came that they stood in the doorway, and there was no more room for anyone else.

Just then, four men came to the house. They were carrying their friend on a mat because he could not walk. They wanted Jesus to heal him, but they could not get through the crowd. So, the men carried their friend up to the roof. Then, they lowered their friend through the crowd so that he was right in front of Jesus.

Jesus saw that the friends had faith, and He told the man lying on the mat, "Young man, your sins are forgiven!"

Jesus knew what the religious leaders were thinking. He said to them, "Why are you thinking like that? Is it easier for Me to say to this man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or 'Get up and walk'?"

Jesus showed His power on Earth to forgive sins by turning back to the man on the mat. "Get up, pick up your mat and go home," Jesus said.

The man who had been unable to walk immediately got up. He picked up his mat, and he went home, just like Jesus commanded.

Everyone in the crowd could hardly believe what they had seen! They praised God.

Jesus Connection: *The man who was paralyzed needed to be healed. Jesus knew this and did something even greater: Jesus forgave his sins, and then He healed the man. Because Jesus is God, He has the power and authority to heal and forgive. Jesus forgives those who trust in Him.*

Key Passage: *Psalm 103:2-3 – My soul, bless the Lord, and do not forget all His benefits. He forgives all your iniquity; He heals all your diseases.*

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JESUS THE HEALER

Use the grid to fill in the blanks and answer the big picture question.

What did Jesus heal people from?

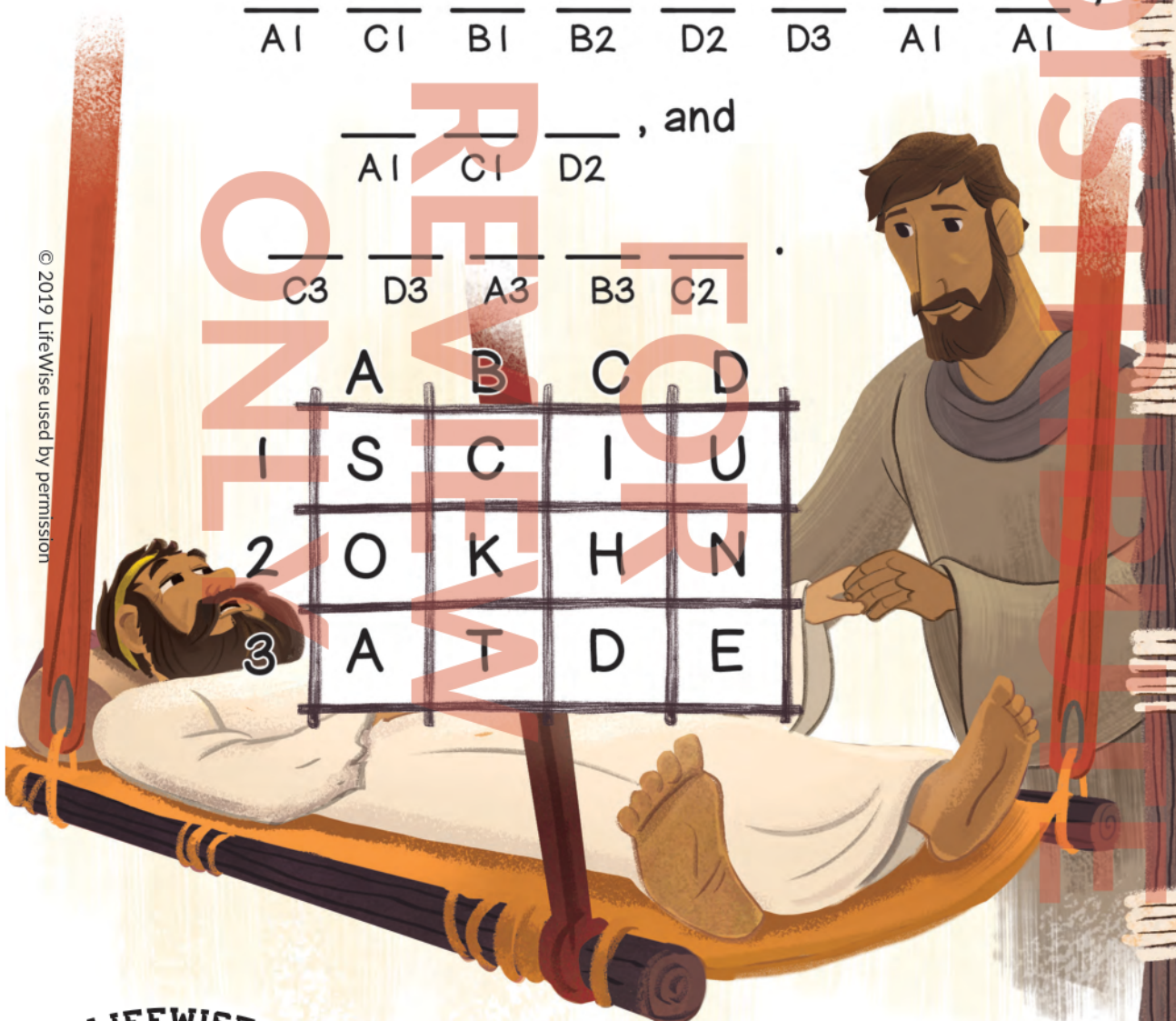
Jesus healed people from

___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___,
A1 C1 B1 B2 D2 D3 A1 A1

___ ___ ___, and
A1 C1 D2

___ ___ ___ ___ ___.
C3 D3 A3 B3 C2

	A	B	C	D
1	S	C	I	U
2	O	K	H	N
3	A	T	D	E



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FOUR FRIENDS

Interview classmates and collect signatures for each of the following categories.

Four friends who have a brother or sister:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Four friends who have a pet:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Four friends who love Jesus:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

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UNEXPECTED GUESTS

INSTRUCTIONS: Find and circle the six things that don't belong in the picture.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Psalm 103:2-3 – My soul, bless the Lord, and do not forget all His benefits. He forgives all your iniquity; He heals all your diseases.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- What did Jesus heal people from? Jesus healed people from sickness, sin and death.

BIBLE STORY:
FOUR FRIENDS HELPED

- Jesus was teaching at home and many people crowded in.
- While He was teaching, four friends lowered a man who was paralyzed down through the roof.
- Religious leaders grew angry when Jesus said the man's sins were forgiven.
- To show His power, Jesus healed a man and forgave His sins.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- What is the greatest healing we need?
- Who can heal our sin?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- If your church has a ministry for the elderly or homebound, spend a day volunteering through that ministry with your family. Otherwise, consider contacting a local nursing home to find ways to volunteer there.

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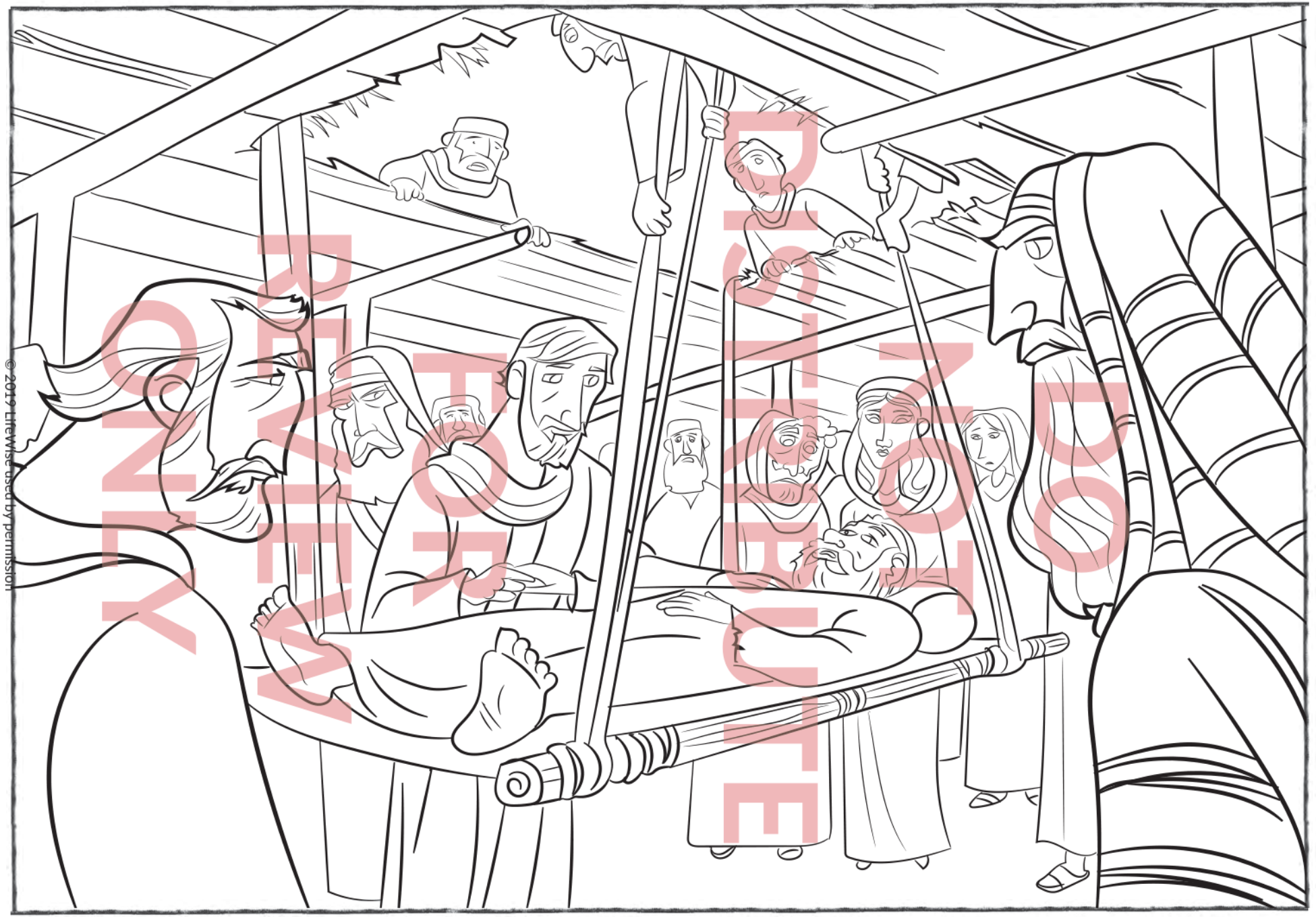

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JESUS HEALED A MAN AND FORGAVE HIS SINS.

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LESSON 81: HOPE

JESUS HAS POWER OVER EVIL

Mark 5:1–20

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JESUS HAS POWER OVER EVIL

- Mark 5:1–20
- Big Picture Q&A: What did Jesus heal people from? Jesus healed people from sickness, sin and death.
- Key Passage: Psalm 103:2–3 – My soul, bless the Lord, and do not forget all His benefits. He forgives all your iniquity; He heals all your diseases.

JESUS CONNECTION

Only Jesus had the strength to control the man with the evil spirits. Jesus has power over evil, and He used His power to free the man. He has power over everything. Jesus came to Earth to destroy the Devil by dying on the cross. One day, Jesus will end evil forever.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

HOPE – Expecting God will do what is best in every situation.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Jesus had enemies. In the midst of His public ministry, the Jewish religious leaders began plotting to kill Him (Mk. 3:6). So, one day, Jesus went to a land on the east side of the Sea of Galilee where Gentiles lived. Jesus' mission to the Gentiles was not a backup plan after the Jews rejected Him; when Jesus was an infant, Simeon prophesied that His work would be for all people—both Jews and Gentiles (Lk. 2:30–32).

In that land was a man who needed help. An evil spirit was inside the man, and he suffered greatly. The people had tried to control the man by tying him up with chains, but the man broke free. So, he lived alone in the tombs, crying out day and night.

When Jesus stepped ashore, the man ran to Him and kneeled down. Jesus commanded the evil spirit to come out of the man. Many evil spirits were in the man, and Jesus gave the evil spirits permission to go into a herd of pigs. They did, and the man was healed.

The healed man wanted to travel with Jesus, but Jesus told the man to go home to his own people and tell what the Lord had done for him. The man obeyed Jesus. He testified to the cities in that area about the Lord's mercy, and the Gentiles were amazed.

Jesus is Lord over all things, good and evil. In His teaching, Jesus said, "If I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you" (Mt. 12:28). Jesus—as well as the Bible—is clear that Satan exists, and he and the demons work against God and His purposes.

Jesus came to Earth to destroy the devil by dying on the cross, and He was victorious. A battle between good and evil still rages on today, but the outcome has already been decided. Spoiler alert: Jesus wins. One day, Jesus will end evil forever.

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BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Last class, we heard a story about a man who needed to be healed by Jesus. What was wrong with the man? (*He was paralyzed, or couldn't walk.*) Who brought him to Jesus? (*Four friends.*) The house where Jesus taught was too crowded for them to enter. How did they get their friend to Jesus? (*They made a hole in the roof.*) Jesus healed the man of two things to show that he was the Son of God. What were they? (*He forgave his sin and healed his body so he could walk.*) This week's story is called "Jesus Has Power Over Evil." It comes from the Gospel of Mark in the New Testament.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Animal Guessing Game (Older Students)

- Before class, write the names of animals on separate index cards, at least one per student. Use a variety of animal names, but write *pig* on a few of the cards. Form two teams. The first player on Team 1 should draw a card and describe the animal in three words (e.g., "pink," "farm" and "oink" for *pig*). If her teammates guess the animal within 30 seconds, they earn one point. If they do not guess correctly within 30 seconds, allow the other team to guess. The player should add a fourth word to describe the animal if the "stealing" team doesn't already have a guess. Continue playing, alternating between teams, until everyone has a turn.
- Great descriptions, everyone! Which animal was described more than once? (*Pig.*) Today, we are going to hear a Bible story about a time Jesus healed someone. This healing involved a herd of pigs!

What's Different? (Older and Younger Students)

- Choose a student. For 15 seconds, have the class study every detail about his hair, clothing and appearance. Let the student briefly leave the classroom or go behind the door of a cabinet where they are partially hidden. Guide the student to change one thing about his appearance that can be clearly seen. For example, untie a shoe, remove glasses, pull out a pocket, remove jewelry, roll down a sock or turn up a collar. Have the volunteer come back and invite the class to find what is different. The first student to guess correctly will be the next volunteer.
- Today, we are going to hear a Bible story about a man who had an evil spirit in him. But after the man met Jesus, he was very different! Let's find out how he changed.

Power Poses (Younger Students)

- Instruct the class to dance while you play music. When you stop the music, students must freeze in their best "power pose," such as flexing muscles, standing like a superhero, etc. Any student caught dancing after the music stops is out. Play until only one student is left. Restart as time allows.
- Power is an interesting idea. When we think of power, we think of bodybuilders, superheroes and other such people. Today, we will learn about Jesus' power and how He used it to heal a man with a very big problem.

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KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Psalm 103:2–3

My soul, bless the Lord, and do not forget all His benefits. He forgives all your iniquity; He heals all your diseases.

The Next Word (Older Students)

- Show the key passage poster and read it aloud together two or three times. Then, cover or remove the poster. Begin saying the key passage, one or two words at a time, and then pause. Prompt the class to supply the next word. Then, say the next one or two words. Pause again for students to say the next word. Continue through the entire key passage.

Balloon Bop (Older and Younger Students)

- Blow up a balloon before class. Invite the class to form a circle to practice the key passage. Instruct the class to say the next word of the key passage every time someone bops the balloon without moving from their spot in the circle. Challenge the class to finish the verse before the balloon drops to the ground. If the balloon drops before the verse is finished, start the verse over.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: What did Jesus heal people from?
A: *Jesus healed people from sickness, sin and death.*

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BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Jesus Has Power Over Evil | Mark 5:1–20

One day, Jesus and His disciples sailed across the sea from Galilee to the region of the Gerasenes (GEHR uh seens). **As soon as Jesus stepped out of the boat, a man came out to meet Him.** The man had been living in the caves where people were buried. Something was wrong with the man; he was not himself. He often cried out in pain.

He had an evil spirit in him that caused him to hurt himself and others. People had tried to tie up the man with chains and shackles, but the man had broken the chains and smashed the shackles. No one was strong enough to tie him up.

This man saw Jesus coming, and he ran to meet Him. **He knelt down in front of Jesus, and Jesus commanded the evil spirit. "Come out of this man!"** Jesus said.

The man cried out with a loud voice, and **the evil spirit spoke through him. "What do You have to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?** I beg You before God, don't punish me!**"**

Jesus asked, "What is your name?"

The evil spirit inside the man answered, "My name is Legion because there are many evil spirits with me." **The spirits inside the man begged Jesus not to send them away.**

Nearby, a large herd of pigs was eating on a hillside. The evil spirits said, "If you send us anywhere, send us into those pigs." So, Jesus allowed the evil spirits to leave the man and go into the pigs. All of the pigs—about 2,000 of them—**ran down the hill and into the sea.** They drowned there.

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The men who took care of the pigs saw what happened, and they ran off and told everyone in the town and the nearby farms about **what Jesus had done. The people came out to see Jesus, and they saw the man who had been living in the caves. The man did not have an evil spirit inside him anymore.** He was dressed and behaved normally again. **The people were afraid, and they asked Jesus to leave.**

As Jesus was getting back into the boat, the man who had been living in the caves asked Jesus if he could go with Him. But Jesus did not allow the man to go with Him. **Jesus said, "Go home to your friends and family members. Tell them what happened and how the Lord helped you." The man obeyed Jesus. He went to the Decaoplis and told all the people about what Jesus had done for him.** All the people were amazed.

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JESUS CONNECTION

Only Jesus had the strength to control the man with the evil spirits. Jesus has power over evil, and He used His power to free the man. He has power over everything. Jesus came to Earth to destroy the devil by dying on the cross. One day, Jesus will end evil forever.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

HOPE – Expecting the best outcome in any circumstance.

Living LifeWise

Jesus has power over all things, so I can have hope that He can help me in any situation.

Character Connection

Whom do you turn to when you need help? Who helps you with homework? A problem with a friend? Fixing something?

The man in our story today had no hope. No one could help him at all. He was very sick; his mind was broken, he was physically hurting and he was an outcast from other people. It was a very sad situation.

But Jesus is God the Son; He has the power to handle all of our diseases and sin and problems. So, He was *able* to heal this man. And because Jesus is Emmanuel, the God who came down to be with us and save us, He *wanted* to heal this man. He saw him in the middle of his utter darkness, and He came beside him to help him.

That same Jesus is part of our lives, and He is still powerful and cares about each of us. He wants us to turn to Him for help in every situation we face. And because we can turn to Him, we can have hope in every circumstance. There is nothing God cannot handle. There is no darkness or sin He can't overcome. And there is no problem we face that we can't bring to Him. We can expect God to always work for our good and His glory, so we can live with hope.

How can God's power and presence with us give us hope in these situations?

- You're struggling with a particular subject in school, and there's a big test coming up.
- You're having a fight with a friend.

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- Someone you love is very sick.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- How did the people try to control the man?

  Tied him up with chains and shackles, Mk. 5:3–4
- Where did Jesus send the evil spirits?

  Into a herd of pigs, Mk. 5:12
- What happened to the pigs?

  They ran down the hill and drowned in the sea, Mk. 5:13
- How did the man behave after Jesus sent away the evil spirits?

  He was dressed and behaved normally again, Mk. 5:15
- How did the people feel when they saw what happened?

  They were afraid, Mk. 5:16–17
- Did Jesus allow the man to travel with Him?

  No, Mk. 5:19
- What did Jesus tell the man to do?

  Go home, Mk. 5:19
- What did Jesus tell the man to say to his friends and family members?

  To tell them how the Lord had helped him, Mk. 5:19
- When people heard what Jesus had done, how did they feel?

  They were amazed, Mk. 5:20

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Chain Trivia (Older Students)

- Before class, print and cut apart the "Review Question Strips." Be sure to include about 20 blank strips. Put all of the strips in a bag. Form two teams. The first player from Team 1 will pull a strip from the bag. If the strip contains a question, the player should answer it. If correct, he may tape the ends of the strip together to form a loop. If incorrect, he should put the strip back in the bag and play passes to the other team. If a blank strip is pulled, it is a "free play" and should be added to the team's chain. Alternate between teams until all the strips are used. The team with the most links is the winner.
- In today's Bible story, Jesus healed a man with many evil spirits. Only Jesus had the strength to control the man with the evil spirits. Chains could not hold the man. Jesus has power over evil. In fact, Jesus has power over everything. He came to Earth to destroy the devil by dying on the cross. One day, Jesus will end evil forever.

The Sculptor and the Clay (Older Students)

- Have students find a partner. One partner will be the sculptor; the other is the clay. You will say a phrase and challenge the sculptors to move the clay to represent the phrase. Consider these phrases: *eating a whole pie, running from bears, dancing at a fancy ball, thinking about life*. Allow

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students a couple minutes to work. Then, allow each sculptor to present her work. Switch roles and play again. Work with the following guidelines:

- Clay should begin standing straight with their arms to their sides.
- Sculptors should move the clay gently. Do not force a move that causes the clay to fall.
- Instead of touching the clay's face, the sculptor should show an expression on her own face and the clay should mirror it.
- No talking! Clay doesn't speak or understand the language of the sculptor.
- Give a 10-second countdown for sculptors to make finishing touches.

- If you were the sculptor, you had complete control over the clay. As the clay, how did you feel having to do what someone else decided? [*Allow responses.*] Today, we heard a story from the Bible about how Jesus helped a man who was controlled by something that was not himself. Jesus healed a man with many evil spirits. Did you know that unless Jesus saves us, we too are controlled by something? We are controlled by sin. Sin separates us from God, but Jesus came to Earth, died on the cross to take the punishment we deserve and rose again. When we trust in Him, God forgives our sin and gives us eternal life. Sin no longer controls us, so we can live for Him!

Chain Breakers (Older and Younger Students)

- Before class, cut tissue paper into strips. Allow the class to take turns tying up each other's wrists in tissue paper. After each student is wrapped, give him a signal to begin breaking free. For an added challenge, help the class braid three strands of tissue paper into a braid. Can anyone still break it?

- Tissue paper is not that strong. It's fun to be wrapped up and tear free, but if you wanted to tie someone up, you wouldn't use such a weak material. In today's story, we heard about a man who tore off even strong chains people used to tie him up. We are like that man. We are chained up by sin. There is only one person who has the power to break our chains of sin and give us a new life. Who is it? How is He able to do this?

Picture Perfect (Younger Students)

- Before class, print the "Bible Story Review" pictures. Challenge students to put the pictures in the correct order. Then, ask the review questions as you go over the correct order.

- Jesus has power over all things: evil, sickness, the weather and even sin and death!

Pig Toss (Younger Students)

- Form two teams. Provide each team with a plastic pig and a bucket. Students must stand at one end of the room and toss their team's pig into their team's bucket. Each time a student is able to land the pig in the correct bucket, the team gets a point. The team with the most points after each student has taken a turn wins.

- In our story today, the evil spirits knew that Jesus had power over them. They had to obey Jesus. They asked Jesus not to send them away and to send them into a herd of pigs instead. Jesus healed a man with many evil spirits by sending the spirits into the pigs. The pigs ran off a cliff into the ocean, but the man was safe and healed. One man was worth more than many pigs because he was made in God's image, or made to be like God.

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Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Power Up (Older Students)
  - Answers: *Gerasenes, evil spirit, commanded, begged, pigs, hill, sea, afraid, leave, friends, helped, power, forever.*
- Power Play (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Father, thank You for Your goodness. We know that there is evil and sin in the world. Thank You that Jesus is more powerful than anything or anyone else. Help us to trust in Him for our salvation. Thank You that we don't have to be afraid of evil. Amen.

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Journal Page

Write a few sentences about what you were like before you met Jesus and how He has changed you. If you are not a believer, list questions you have about Jesus, the Bible or church.



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What are some examples of evil in the world today?
- Why do we not have to be afraid of evil?
- How did Jesus defeat evil?

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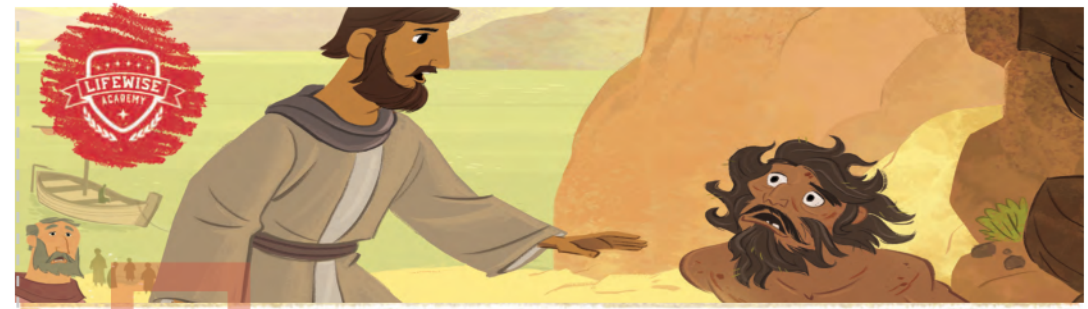

JESUS HAS POWER OVER EVIL

MARK 5:1–20

MAIN POINT: JESUS HEALED A MAN WITH MANY EVIL SPIRITS.

One day, Jesus and His disciples sailed across the sea from Galilee to the region of the Gerasenes. As soon as Jesus stepped out of the boat, a man came out to meet Him. He had an evil spirit in him that caused him to hurt and suffer.

He knelt down in front of Jesus, and Jesus commanded the evil spirit. "Come out of this man!"

The evil spirit spoke through him. "What do You have to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?"

The spirits inside the man begged Jesus not to send them away.

Nearby, a large herd of pigs was eating on a hillside. The evil spirits said, "If you send us anywhere, send us into those pigs." So Jesus allowed the evil spirits to leave the man and go into the pigs. All of the pigs ran down the hill and into the sea.

The men who took care of the pigs saw what happened, and they ran off and told everyone what Jesus had done. The people came out to see Jesus, and they saw the man who had been living in the caves. The man did not have an evil spirit inside him anymore. The people were afraid, and they asked Jesus to leave.

As Jesus was getting back into the boat, the man who had been living in the caves asked Jesus if he could go with Him. But Jesus said, "Go home to your friends and family members. Tell them what happened and how the Lord helped you." The man obeyed Jesus. He told all the people about what Jesus had done for him.

Jesus Connection: *Only Jesus had the strength to control the man with the evil spirits. Jesus has power over evil, and He used His power to free the man. He has power over everything. Jesus came to Earth to destroy the devil by dying on the cross. One day, Jesus will end evil forever.*

Key Passage: *Psalm 103:2-3 – My soul, bless the Lord, and do not forget all His benefits. He forgives all your iniquity; He heals all your diseases.*

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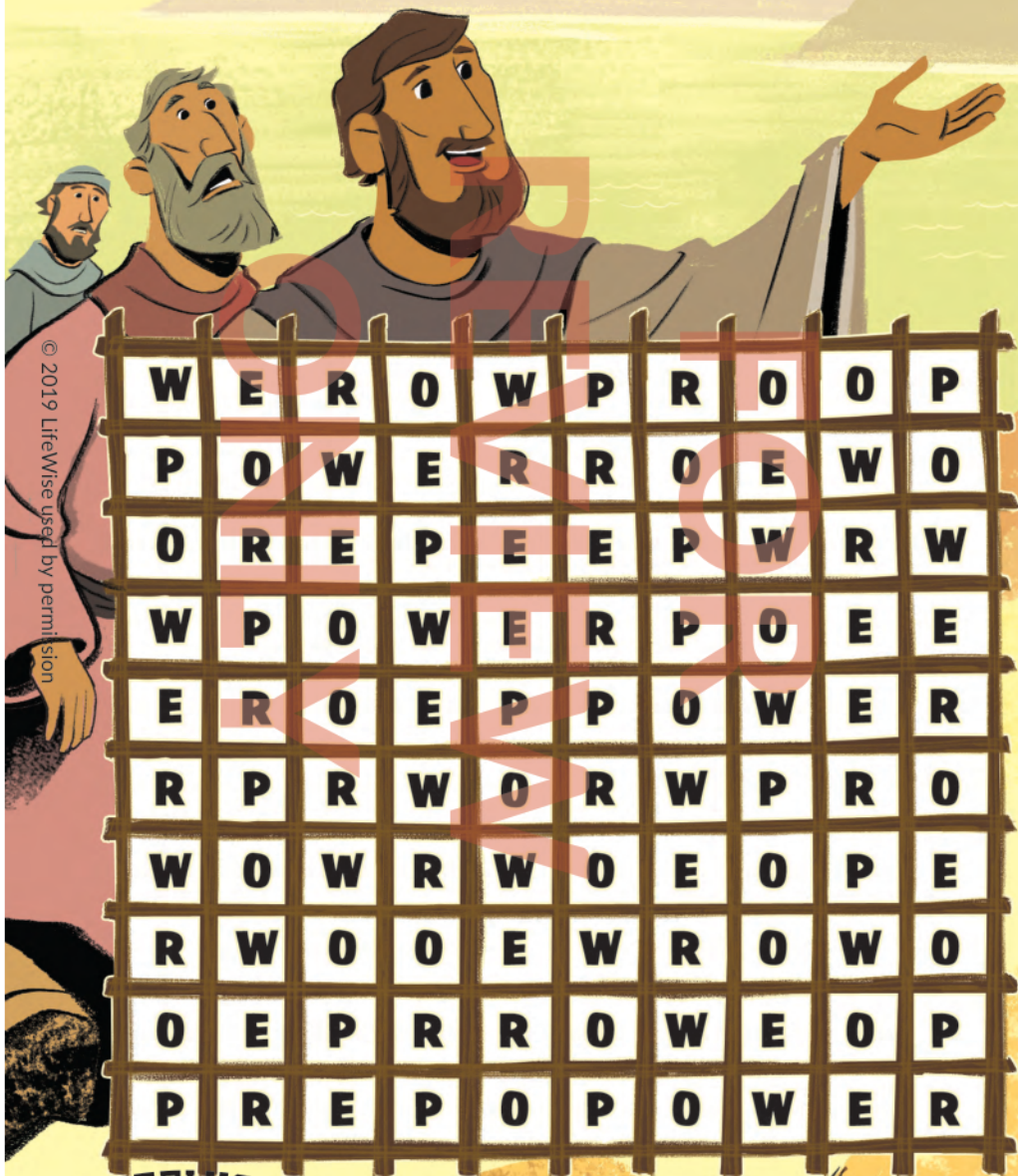
POWER UP

Jesus has power over evil. How many times can you find the word *power* in the puzzle below?



W	E	R	O	W	P	R	O	O	P
P	O	W	E	R	R	O	E	W	O
O	R	E	P	E	E	P	W	R	W
W	P	O	W	E	R	P	O	E	E
E	R	O	E	P	P	O	W	E	R
R	P	R	W	O	R	W	P	R	O
W	O	W	R	W	O	E	O	P	E
R	W	O	O	E	W	R	O	W	O
O	E	P	R	R	O	W	E	O	P
P	R	E	P	O	P	O	W	E	R

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TELL THE STORY

Use the words from the word list to fill in the blanks and complete the story.

Jesus met a man living in the region of the _____.

The man had an _____ inside him. Jesus _____

the evil spirit to come out. The spirits inside the man

_____ Jesus not to send them away. Jesus allowed the

evil spirits to leave the man and go into the _____.

The pigs ran down the _____ and into the

_____. The people were _____, and they

asked Jesus to _____. Jesus told the man to tell

his _____ and family members how the Lord had

_____ him. Jesus has _____ over evil.

One day, Jesus will end evil _____.

Word list: afraid, begged, commanded, evil spirit, friends, forever, Gerasenes, helped, hill, leave, pigs, power, sea

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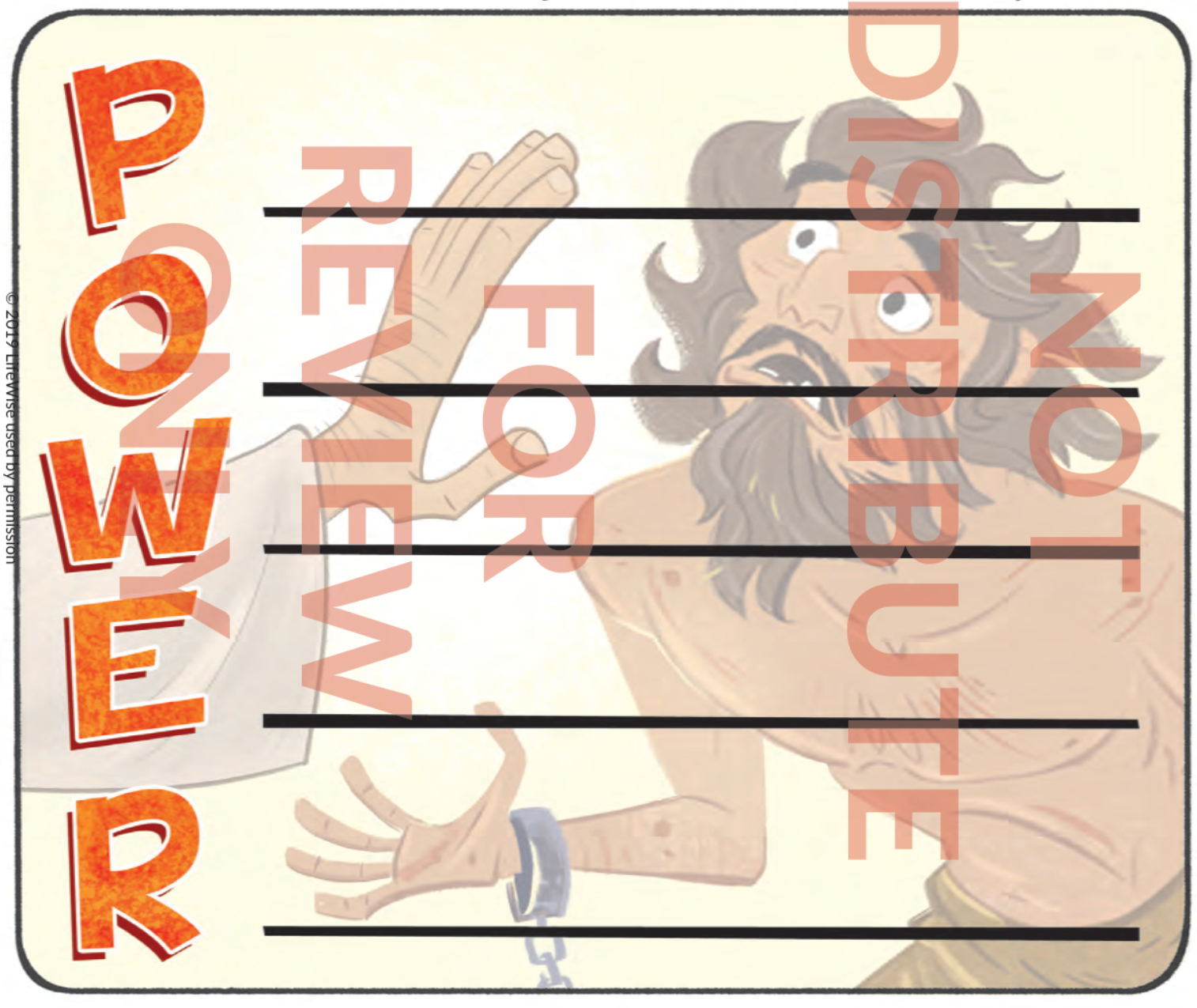
POWER PLAY

INSTRUCTIONS: In the blanks below, write a word describing Jesus that starts with each of the letters in the word *power*.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Psalm 103:2-3 – My soul, bless the Lord, and do not forget all His benefits. He forgives all your iniquity; He heals all your diseases.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- What did Jesus heal people from? Jesus healed people from sickness, sin and death.

BIBLE STORY:
JESUS HAS POWER OVER EVIL

- Jesus and His disciples traveled to the region of the Gerasenes.
- A man with evil spirits approached them.
- The evil spirits begged Jesus not to send them away.
- Jesus healed a man with many evil spirits.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- What are some examples of evil we see today?
- Why do we not have to be afraid of evil?
- How did Jesus defeat evil?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Find instructions online for how to make a potato battery. Talk to your kids about more powerful sources of electricity, like a power outlet. Remind your family that Jesus is more powerful than evil, so we don't have to be afraid.

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JESUS HEALED A MAN WITH MANY EVIL SPIRITS.

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Review Question Strips

Instructions: Print and use as directed in the leader guide.

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What part of the Bible is Mark in?

Where did Jesus meet the man with an evil spirit?

How did the people try to control the man?

What did Jesus command the evil spirit to do?

Where did Jesus send the evil spirits?

What happened to the pigs?

How did the man behave after Jesus sent
away the evil spirits?

How did the people feel when they
saw what happened?

Did Jesus allow the man to travel with Him?

What did Jesus tell the man to do?

What did Jesus tell the man to say to his friends
and family members?

When people heard what Jesus had done,
how did they feel?

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Review Question Strips

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Answers

1. What part of the Bible is Mark in? (*New Testament, Gospels*)
2. Where did Jesus meet the man with an evil spirit? (*in the region of the Gerasenes, Mark 5:1*)
3. How did the people try to control the man? (*They tried to tie him up with chains and shackles, Mark 5:3-4*)
4. What did Jesus command the evil spirit to do? (*come out, Mark 5:8*)
5. Where did Jesus send the evil spirits? (*into a herd of pigs, Mark 5:12*)
6. What happened to the pigs? (*They ran down the hill and drowned in the sea, Mark 5:13*)
7. How did the man behave after Jesus sent away the evil spirits? (*He was dressed and behaved normally again, Mark 5:15*)
8. How did the people feel when they saw what happened? (*They were afraid, Mark 5:16-17*)
9. Did Jesus allow the man to travel with Him? (*no, Mark 5:19*)
10. What did Jesus tell the man to do? (*go home, Mark 5:19*)
11. What did Jesus tell the man to say to his friends and family members? (*to tell them how the Lord helped, Mark 5:19*)
12. When people heard what Jesus had done, how did they feel? (*They were amazed, Mark 5:20*)

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Bible Story Review Pictures

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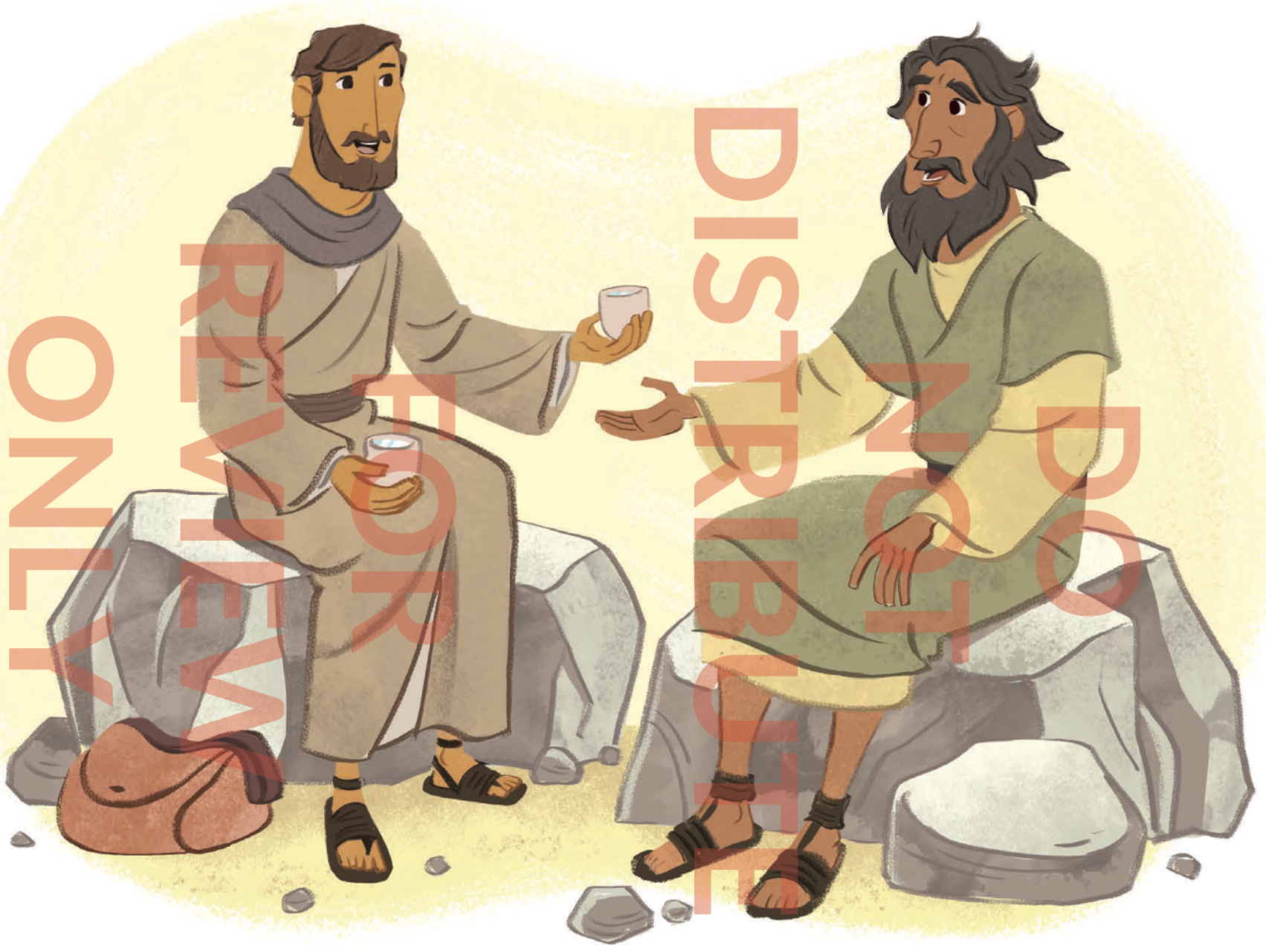

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LESSON 82: KINDNESS

JESUS HEALED A WOMAN AND RAISED A GIRL

Mark 5:21–43

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JESUS HEALED A WOMAN AND RAISED A GIRL

- Mark 5:21–43
- Big Picture Q&A: What did Jesus heal people from? Jesus healed people from sickness, sin and death.
- Key Passage: Psalm 103:2–3 – My soul, bless the Lord, and do not forget all His benefits. He forgives all your iniquity; He heals all your diseases.

JESUS CONNECTION

By healing the woman and raising the little girl from the dead, Jesus showed His power as the Messiah. Jesus died on the cross and rose again to save people from sin and death. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin and changes us to be more like His Son.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

KINDNESS – Showing others they are valuable by treating them with compassion and generosity.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Jesus had just returned from the region of the Gerasenes, where He had healed a man with an unclean spirit. He crossed the Sea of Galilee and came ashore, where He was surrounded by a large crowd of people. News of Jesus' teachings and healings was spreading, and people wanted to see Jesus. They wanted to learn from Him and be healed.

Jairus, a leader in the synagogue, came to Jesus in crisis. His daughter was at the point of death. Without Jesus' help, she would surely die. Jesus went with Jairus, but as He walked, a woman in the crowd came up behind Him and touched His robes. She too was desperate for healing. The woman believed that Jesus' power was strong enough to heal her even if all she did was touch His robes. Because she had faith, Jesus healed her.

Jairus and the bleeding woman were very different. He was wealthy and respected. The woman was a poor outcast of society. However, both were equally desperate for Jesus' healing touch and both needed the forgiveness of sins that He offered.

Imagine Jairus' devastation when he heard that his daughter had died. The people suggested that Jesus was too late to help her, but Jesus proved them wrong. He went to Jairus' house and raised the little girl from the dead.

Through His healing miracles, Jesus showed His power as the Messiah. Jesus died on the cross and rose again to save people from sin and death. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin and changes us to be more like His Son.

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As you teach your students, point out that the woman and the father of the little girl came to Jesus in faith. They needed Jesus' help, and they trusted in Jesus' power to heal. After Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, He ascended to Heaven. Even though Jesus is not physically on Earth today, we can pray and ask God to heal people who are sick. Whether or not God grants physical healing, we can rest knowing that He brings ultimate healing through His Son, Jesus.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

So far, we have heard two Bible stories about Jesus healing people. How did four friends help a man in the story? (*They carried him to Jesus, made a hole in the roof to get him close to Jesus.*) What did Jesus do before He healed the paralyzed man? (*Forgave his sins.*) Jesus also showed His power over evil. How did Jesus heal the man who had evil spirits inside? (*He commanded the demons to come out, and they obeyed.*) Why did Jesus want the man to go home instead of staying with Jesus? (*To share the good news with everyone in his city.*) Today's Bible story is about a man and woman who were both desperate for Jesus' help. This story is found in the Gospel of Mark in the New Testament.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Who Touched Me? (Older Students)

- Choose up to seven players to be *It*. Students who are *It* will stand at the front of the room. The rest of the class will sit at tables, put their heads down and hold up one thumb each. Players at the front of the room will quietly move to tap someone's thumb. If a player's thumb is tapped, she should put her thumb down. When all the players have tapped a thumb and returned to the front of the room, they call out, "Sun's up, heads up!" Players whose thumbs were tapped should stand. Call on them to guess who tapped them. If a player guesses correctly, she takes a spot at the front of the room. Play additional rounds as time allows.

- In our story today, a woman touched the hem of Jesus' clothing. In just a few minutes, we will learn why.

Signs of Life (Older and Younger Students)

- Prompt the class to share ways to tell that a person is alive. (*Moving, breathing, pulse, etc.*) Demonstrate how to check your pulse: press the tips of your first two fingers (index and middle) lightly on the artery of your opposite wrist, just below the thumb. Help students find their pulse and count the beats for 30 seconds (use a timer). Then, double that number to calculate beats per minute. Allow students to share their results. Direct the class to do 15 jumping jacks. Then, start a timer as they check their pulse again. How do the results compare to the first measurement?

- In today's Bible story, a man came to Jesus for help because his daughter was sick. But before Jesus could get there, the girl died. She had no signs of life—no breathing, no moving and no pulse. But Jesus did something miraculous. We'll find out more when we hear the Bible story.

Special Touch (Younger Students)

- Select one student to stand at the front of the room with her back to the class. She will wear an adult-size bath robe and must close her eyes while you secretly select another student to sneak forward and lightly touch the bottom hem of the robe. If she feels the touch, she may turn around to tag the student, making him the next player to stand at the front. If she doesn't feel the touch,

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she will guess who touched the robe. If she is correct, that player will be *It*. Otherwise, she will remain *It* for another round.

- In our story today, a woman touched the hem of Jesus' clothing. In just a few minutes we will learn why.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Psalm 103:2–3

My soul, bless the Lord, and do not forget all His benefits. He forgives all your iniquity; He heals all your diseases.

Ball Toss (Older and Younger Students)

- Guide the class to sit in a circle. Display the key passage poster and read it aloud together. Then, give one student a foam ball. Explain that he should say as much of the key passage as he wants and then toss the ball to the next player. The next player will say as much as they can remember. After the class says the Key Passage and Scripture reference, they should start again. The class should continue passing the ball around the circle until everyone has taken a turn.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: What did Jesus heal people from?
A: *Jesus healed people from sickness, sin and death.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Jesus Healed a Woman and Raised a Girl | Mark 5:21–43

Jesus got into a boat and crossed the Sea of Galilee. He stood on the shore, and a large crowd gathered around Him. Then, **Jairus** (JIGH ruhs), one of the rulers in the synagogue, **fell at Jesus' feet and begged for His help.**

"My daughter is about to die! Please come touch her so she will be healed and live," he said. Jesus went with Jairus, and many people followed, crowding around Him.

In the crowd was a woman who had been bleeding for 12 years. She had seen many doctors and spent all her money, but no one could help her. She was getting worse. **The woman had heard about Jesus, so she came up behind Him in the crowd and touched His clothes. She said to herself, "If I touch even His clothes, I will be healed." As soon as she touched Jesus' clothes, her bleeding stopped and she knew she was healed.**

At that moment, **Jesus** felt that power had gone out of Him. He **turned around and said, "Who touched My clothes?"** Jesus' disciples pointed out that many people were crowded around Him. But Jesus kept looking around.

The woman, knowing she was healed, came forward and fell before Jesus. She told Him what had happened. Jesus said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. You are healed."

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While Jesus was speaking, some men came from Jairus' house and said, "Your daughter is dead. Do not bother Jesus anymore.**"**

Jesus heard what the men said, and He **told Jairus, "Do not be afraid. Just believe."**

Jesus and three of His disciples went to Jairus' house. The people there were crying and wailing loudly. Jesus said, "Why are you crying? The child is not dead. She is sleeping."

The people laughed at Jesus, and He told them all to go. **Jesus took Jairus and his wife into the room where the child was. He took the girl by the hand and said, "Little girl, get up."**

Immediately, the girl got up and began walking around. Jairus and his wife were amazed. Jesus told them to give the girl some food and to not tell anyone what had happened.

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JESUS CONNECTION

By healing the woman and raising the little girl from the dead, Jesus showed His power as the Messiah. Jesus died on the cross and rose again to save people from sin and death. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin and changes us to be more like His Son.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

KINDNESS – Showing others they are valuable by treating them with compassion and generosity.

Living LifeWise

God's heart is kind toward us, so we can show His kindness to others.

Character Connection

Kindness can be anything we do or say for someone else that shows that we notice them or helps them feel better. And we can all be kind. We talk about kindness a lot and even do Random Acts of Kindness challenges to inspire more kindness in our world.

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But kindness isn't something we are always good at. When someone interrupts us, or when their problems are really big or when they aren't our favorite person, we don't always respond with kindness. But Jesus did. When Jairus interrupted Him, He went with Him right away. When the woman who was considered unclean touched Him, He spoke to her, looked at her, made time for her and welcomed her back, fully healed, into the community. Then, He raised the little girl from the dead and restored her and her family.

That's the God we have. In our sorrow and sickness and hard times, He is always kind. In the face of our sin, He took our punishment Himself so we could be forgiven. God empowers us to see and be kind to others in the same way that He is kind to us.

For these examples, how could you show kindness?

- You see a classmate crying at recess. Their family just received some bad news.
- Your brother or sister lost a big game.

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- The whole class got in trouble because of one student. His desk is next to yours, and he's sitting with his head down on his hands.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- What important position did Jairus have?

  Synagogue ruler, Mk. 5:22
- What did Jairus ask Jesus to do?

  Heal his daughter, Mk. 5:23
- Who was walking with Jairus and Jesus?

  A large crowd, Mk. 5:24
- What illness did a woman in the crowd have?

  She had been bleeding for 12 years, Mk. 5:25
- What happened as soon as the woman touched Jesus' clothes?

  She was healed, Mk. 5:29
- What did Jesus feel when the woman touched Him?

  Power went out from Him, Mk. 5:30
- What did Jesus say to Jairus?

  "Don't be afraid; just believe," Mk. 5:36
- What did people do when Jesus told them she was only sleeping?

  Laughed, Mk. 5:40
- What did Jesus do to bring the dead girl back to life?

  Took her hand and said "Get up," Mk. 5:41–42

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Make a Yarn Tassel (Older Students)

- Give each student an index card and a long length of yarn, about 6 feet. Demonstrate how to make a tassel.

  1. Wrap yarn 10 to 15 times around the short sides of the index card. Cut off any extra length of yarn so the wrap ends at the bottom of the card.
  2. To make the hanger, thread a short piece of yarn under the wrapped yarn at the top edge of the card. Bring the hanger ends together to form a loop, and tie a knot to secure it.
  3. Carefully slip the wrapped yarn off of the card.
  4. Tie another piece of yarn around the top third of the yarn loops, near the hanger.
  5. Slide scissors through the bottom of the loops and cut the pieces to make the tassel.

- In today's Bible story, a woman reached out and touched the bottom of Jesus' clothes. His clothes might have had tassels on it, like these. When the woman touched Jesus' clothes, she was healed. Jesus' clothes weren't magical; the healing power came from Jesus Himself. Keep this tassel on your backpack or in your room. When you see it this week, remember how the woman and the father of the little girl came to Jesus in faith. They needed Jesus' help and trusted in His power to heal. By healing the woman and raising the little girl from the dead, Jesus showed His power as the

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Messiah. Jesus died on the cross and rose again to save people from sin and death. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin and changes us to be more like His Son.

True or False (Older and Younger Students)

- Cut red and green construction paper into fourths. Provide one red and one green rectangle for each student. Explain that you will say a statement. If students think it is true, they should hold up the green paper. If they think it is false, they should hold up the red paper. Allow the class to correct each false statement.

  - Today's Bible story comes from the Old Testament. (*False; New Testament, Mk. 5:21–43*)
  - Jairus was one of the rulers in the synagogue. (*True, Mk. 5:22*)
  - Jairus asked Jesus to come to his house for dinner. (*False; to heal his daughter, Mk. 5:23*)
  - Jairus believed his daughter would be healed if Jesus would lay His hands on her. (*True, Mk. 5:23*)
  - Jairus and Jesus traveled alone. (*False; a large crowd followed them, Mk. 5:24*)
  - A woman came to Jesus. She had been bleeding for 12 minutes. (*False; 12 years, Mk. 5:25*)
  - The woman said to herself, "If I touch even Jesus' beard, I will be healed." (*False; His clothes, Mk. 5:28*)
  - As soon as the woman touched Jesus' clothes, she knew she was healed. (*True, Mk. 5:29*)
  - Jesus asked, "Who touched My shoes?" (*False; My clothes, Mk. 5:30*)
  - The woman came forward and told Jesus what had happened. (*True, Mk. 5:33*)
  - Some men came from Jairus' house and said, "Your daughter is dead." (*True, Mk. 5:35*)
  - Jesus decided not to go to Jairus' house. (*False; He went to the house, Mk. 5:37–38*)
  - Jesus told the little girl to get up, and she did. (*True, Mk. 5:41–42*)

Popcorn Prayers (Older and Younger Students)

- Instruct the class to sit in their seats quietly. Ask them to think of someone to pray for who needs God's healing touch (physically, emotionally or spiritually). Encourage them to raise their hand to pray out loud in a few short sentences or pray silently. Tap students with their hand raised when it is their turn to pray.

- Jesus healed a bleeding woman and raised a girl from the dead. Jairus and the woman both needed Jesus' help. They trusted in Jesus' power to heal. Even though Jesus is not physically on Earth today, we can pray and ask God to heal people who are sick and hurting. God may not heal everyone physically, but we know that He brings ultimate healing through His Son, Jesus.

Broken Hearts Made New (Younger Students)

- Provide each student with red construction paper. Show the class how to fold it in half and cut a curved shape that folds out into a heart. Then, invite them to cut the heart in half down the middle. Provide each student with a few bandaids they can use to put the heart back together. Students may also write the key passage or big picture question on the heart shape.

- Our hearts are broken by sin. We are like the woman in the story who was sick for years: we can't heal ourselves, and no one but Jesus can help. When we trust in Jesus and believe that He died for our sin and rose again on the third day, He fixes our hearts. In fact, though our fun craft uses bandages to stick the broken heart back together, the Bible says that Jesus makes us totally new again!

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Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- The Healer's Journey (Older Students)
- Crossing Paths (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Father, thank You for sending Your perfect Son to be our Savior. Help us trust Him for forgiveness of sins. We know that You are good and Your promises are true. No matter what we face in our lives, we can trust You to give us a wonderful future with You. Amen.

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Journal Page

List anything you need that you cannot do yourself. Consider things you are nervous or worried about.



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What did Jesus say made the woman well? (See Mark 5:34.)
- How do you think Jairus felt when he heard his daughter had died? What did Jesus say to him?
- Do you know anyone who has been suffering for a long time? Pray as a family that Jesus would bring healing.

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JESUS HEALED A WOMAN AND RAISED A GIRL

MARK 5:21–43

MAIN POINT: JESUS HEALED A BLEEDING WOMAN AND RAISED A GIRL FROM THE DEAD.

Jairus fell at Jesus' feet and begged for His help. "My daughter is about to die! Please come touch her so she will be healed and live," he said.

Jesus went with Jairus, and many people followed, crowding around Him.

In the crowd was a woman who had been bleeding for 12 years. She had seen many doctors and spent all her money, but no one could help her. The woman had heard about Jesus, so she came up behind Him in the crowd and touched His clothes. She said to herself, "If I touch even His clothes, I will be healed."

As soon as she touched Jesus' clothes, her bleeding stopped and she knew she was healed.

Jesus turned around and said, "Who touched My clothes?"

The woman, knowing she was healed, came forward and fell before Jesus. She told Him what had happened.

Jesus said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. You are healed."

While Jesus was speaking, some men came from Jairus' house and said, "Your daughter is dead."

Jesus told Jairus, "Do not be afraid. Just believe."

Jesus and three of His disciples went to Jairus' house. Jesus took Jairus and his wife into the room where the child was. He took the girl by the hand and said, "Little girl, get up."

Immediately, the girl got up and began walking around. Jairus and his wife were amazed. Jesus told them to give the girl some food and to not tell anyone what had happened.

Jesus Connection: *By healing the woman and raising the little girl from the dead, Jesus showed His power as the Messiah. Jesus died on the cross and rose again to save people from sin and death. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sin and changes us to be more like His Son.*

Key Passage: *Psalm 103:2-3 – My soul, bless the Lord, and do not forget all His benefits. He forgives all your iniquity; He heals all your diseases.*

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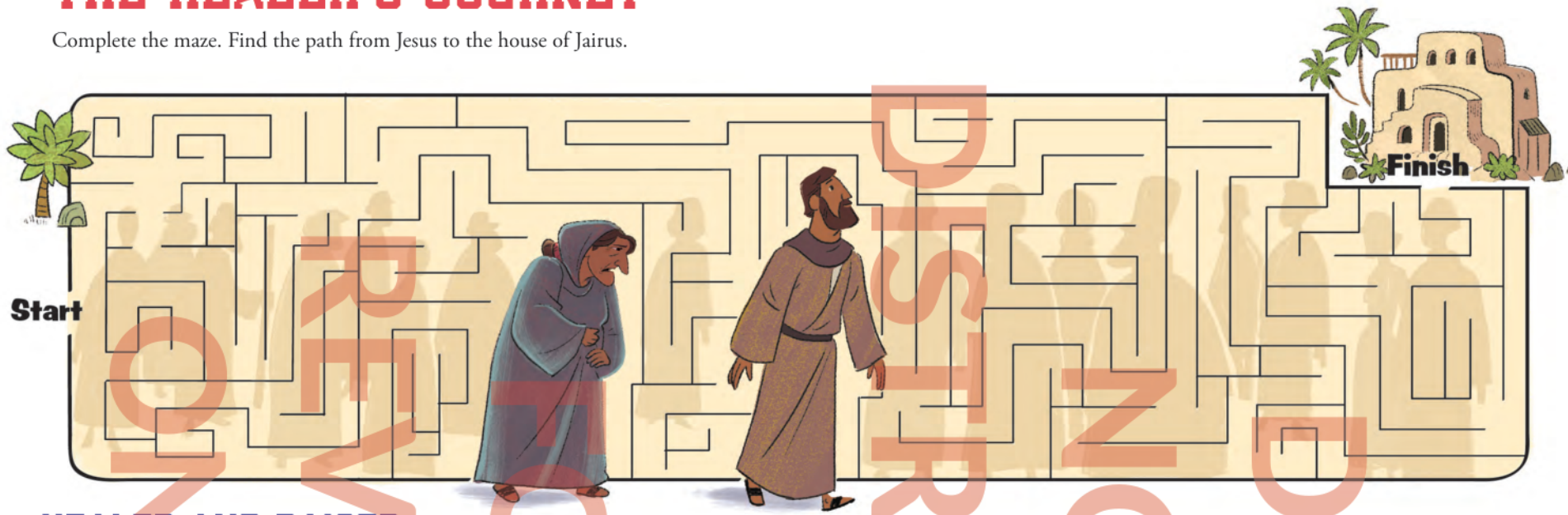
THE HEALER'S JOURNEY

Complete the maze. Find the path from Jesus to the house of Jairus.



HEALED AND RAISED

Number the events in the order they happened.



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CROSSING PATHS

INSTRUCTIONS: Use the clues and the pictures provided to complete the crossword puzzle.

ACROSS:

1. A region Jesus traveled in, teaching and healing others



2. This is what sick people need



3. Ability to do things



DOWN:

4. A kind of clothing worn by people in Bible times

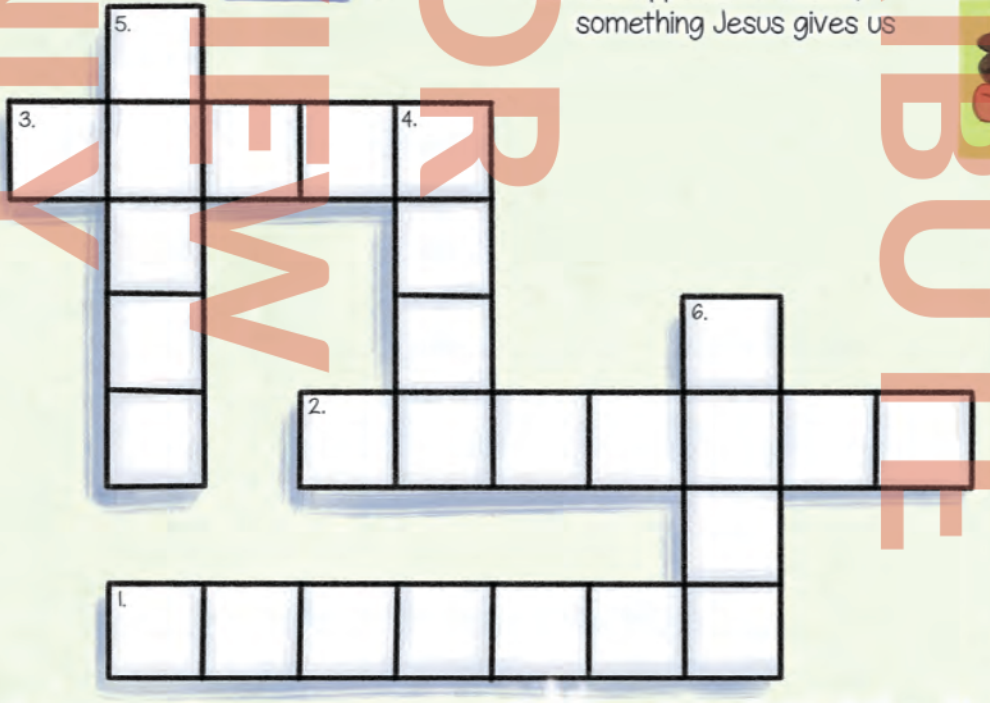


5. When your fingers come into contact with something else



6. The opposite of death, something Jesus gives us





WORD BANK

GALILEE
HEALING
LIFE
POWER
ROBE
TOUCH

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KEY PASSAGE:
Psalm 103:2-3 – My soul, bless the Lord, and do not forget all His benefits. He forgives all your iniquity; He heals all your diseases.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- What did Jesus heal people from? Jesus healed people from sickness, sin and death.

BIBLE STORY:
JESUS HEALED A WOMAN AND RAISED A GIRL

- A man named Jairus begged Jesus to come heal his daughter.
- On the way, a sick woman touched Jesus' clothing and was healed.
- Jesus stopped to see who touched Him.
- Jesus healed a bleeding woman and raised a girl from the dead.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Why did the woman want to touch Jesus' clothing?
- How did Jesus know the woman had touched Him?
- Why do you think people laughed when Jesus said the girl was only sleeping?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Play a game of "bathrobe tag" with your family. Each person should wear a robe. Select one person to be *it*. *It* only has to touch the robe to tag someone.

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JESUS HEALED A BLEEDING WOMAN AND RAISED A GIRL FROM THE DEAD.

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LESSON 83: CONFIDENCE

JESUS RAISED LAZARUS

John 11:1–7, 17–44

JESUS RAISED LAZARUS

- John 11:1–7, 17–44
- Big Picture Q&A: What did Jesus heal people from? Jesus healed people from sickness, sin and death.
- Key Passage: Psalm 103:2–3 – My soul, bless the Lord, and do not forget all His benefits. He forgives all your iniquity; He heals all your diseases.

JESUS CONNECTION

When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He showed that He has power over death. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life." Jesus died on the cross for our sins and rose from the dead. He gives eternal life to those who trust in Him.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

CONFIDENCE – Trusting in God's goodness and character no matter what.

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LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Jesus received word that His friend Lazarus was sick. Lazarus was the brother of Mary and Martha. They lived in the town of Bethany, which was about two miles away from Jerusalem. Mary and Martha sent a message to Jesus, likely expecting Him to come right away.

Jesus loved Mary, Martha and Lazarus, yet He stayed where He was, and Lazarus died. Why would Jesus do such a thing? Jesus said that Lazarus' sickness was "for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it" (John 11:4). He said that He was glad He wasn't there when Lazarus died so that the disciples may believe (John 11:15). Jesus' timing is always perfect, and He acts or doesn't act so that God will be glorified.

By the time Jesus arrived in Bethany, Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days. Martha went to meet Jesus. She said to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother wouldn't have died." Jesus had shown His power to heal people who were sick. Martha affirmed that even though Jesus hadn't healed her brother, God would still do whatever He asked.

Jesus told Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). Jesus is the source of life—eternal life that cannot be destroyed by death. Believers do not need to fear death because physical death is not the end (John 11:25–26). Jesus endured death for us so that when we die and are absent from our physical bodies, our souls are with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8).

Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. His messiahship was clearly on display, and it was Jesus' claims to be the Son of God that would lead to His death on the cross. Jesus interrupted Lazarus' funeral, knowing His would soon follow.

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Emphasize to students that when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He showed that He has power over death. Jesus died on the cross for our sins and rose from the dead. He gives eternal life to those who trust in Him.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Let's review our stories about Jesus healing someone. How did he help the man with four friends? (*He healed him and forgave his sins.*) How did Jesus show His power over evil? (*He cast many evil spirits out of a man.*) Last time, we learned about two people whom Jesus helped. How was the bleeding woman healed? (*She touched His clothes, trusting in His power to heal her.*) What did Jairus ask Jesus to do? (*Heal his little girl.*) But before they got there, what happened? (*His daughter died.*) When they arrived, what did Jesus do? (*Jesus raised her from the dead.*) Jesus' power is incredible! In today's story, we'll learn about one of Jesus' greatest miracles. It's found in the Gospel of John in the New Testament.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Jump Rope (Older Students)

- Clear an area large enough to safely jump rope. Form groups of three. Choose a group to play first. Two students from the group will stand several feet apart and hold the ends of a long jump rope. The third student will stand between them. Guide the group to jump rope together:
  - The jumper will turn and face one of the turners. The rope should lay on the ground to her left or right.
  - The turners will throw the rope over the jumper's head. The jumper should jump when the rope reaches the ground.
  - Allow the group members to practice until they develop a rhythm. Then, allow other groups to try.
  - Prompt the other groups to cheer on and encourage the team who is jumping rope.
- Space Modification: Use a smaller jump rope and have one student at a time jump. Or the teacher or an adult volunteer can jump rope. Pretend that jumping rope is very difficult for you. Ask the class for tips on how to do it correctly.
- What did you have to do to jump rope? [*Allow students to respond.*] Jumping rope involves having just the right timing. If you jump too soon or too late, you'll trip over the rope. Today's Bible story is about a time when Jesus had perfect timing. He didn't jump rope; He did something even more amazing!

What's That Smell? (Older and Younger Students)

- Post an allergy alert before class. Bring in multiple strongly scented items, like vanilla extract, lemon oil or cocoa powder. Bring one stinky object, like pungent cheese, a dirty sock or malt vinegar. Put each item in an opaque container with a lid. Allow students to come up, put on a blindfold, and smell one of the items. If they don't know what it is, give other students a chance to smell it. When someone guesses correctly, take it out and show the item.
- Smells can communicate different things to us. Vanilla might make you think of cookies or ice cream. Something that stinks might warn you to stay away, like a skunk! In our Bible story today, we will learn about something people did not want to open because what was inside smelled badly.

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Sad or Happy? (Younger Students)

- Gather the class in the center of the room. Read different scenarios and invite students to act out being happy or sad depending on the situation. Encourage them to ham it up and be silly.
    - You won first prize at a dance competition.
    - Your baseball team lost every game.
    - You skinned your knee while climbing a tree.
    - You got invited to your friend's birthday party.
- Our Bible story today starts with sad news and ends with a happy event. We'll learn more soon!

Come Out! (Younger Students)

- Lead the class to stand in a circle. Give one player a beach ball. Students should pass the ball around the circle. As they pass the ball, play a song. Randomly pause the music. Say to the player with the ball, "[*Student's name*], come out!" The player should step out of the circle and perform a silly motion. [*Suggestions: spin around three times, whistle a familiar tune, etc.*] Start the music and resume play.
- When it was your turn, we asked you to come out of the circle for a purpose. Today, we are going to hear a Bible story about a time Jesus told His friend to come out of a tomb. Jesus had a purpose for that, too. We'll find out what happened next.

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KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Psalm 103:2–3

My soul, bless the Lord, and do not forget all His benefits. He forgives all your iniquity; He heals all your diseases.

Passage Echo (Older and Younger Students)

- Form two groups of students. Say a phrase (two to four words) of the Key Passage and then prompt the first group to repeat after you. Then, the second group should echo the phrase. Continue saying, repeating and echoing phrases until the class says the entire passage. Play again, allowing the second group to repeat you and the first group to echo. In today's Bible story, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Psalm 103:2–3 reminds us that Jesus is our Healer. Like the people in the Bible, we can look to Him to heal us from sickness, sin and death.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: **What did Jesus heal people from?**
A: *Jesus healed people from sickness, sin and death.*

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BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Jesus Raised Lazarus | John 11:1–7, 17–44

Jesus and Lazarus were friends. Lazarus lived in the town of Bethany, in Judea, with his sisters, Mary and Martha. **One day, Lazarus got sick. Mary and Martha sent a message to Jesus. "Lord, Your friend Lazarus is sick," they said.**

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Jesus told His disciples, "Lazarus' sickness will not end in death. **This sickness will bring glory to God and to the Son of God."** Jesus stayed where He was for two more days. Then, Jesus said, "Let's go back to Judea."

By the time Jesus arrived in Bethany, Lazarus had been in a tomb for four days. Martha hurried to meet Jesus, but Mary stayed home.

Martha said, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother wouldn't have died." Martha knew Jesus could still do miracles, though. "I know God will give You whatever You ask," she said.

Jesus replied, "Your brother will rise again."

Martha believed that Lazarus would rise from the dead in the future—on the last day. But **Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me, even if he dies, will live. Everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die—ever. Do you believe this?"**

"Yes, Lord," Martha said. "I believe You are the Messiah, the Son of God." Martha went back to her house. She told Mary that Jesus wanted to see her. So, Mary left the house, and all the people who had come to comfort Mary and Martha followed her.

Mary fell at Jesus' feet and said, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died!" Mary was crying, and Jesus wept too. Mary led Jesus to the tomb where Lazarus was buried. It was a cave, and a huge stone covered the opening.

"Remove the stone," Jesus said.

Martha told him, "Lord, there is already a bad smell because Lazarus has been dead for four days."

Jesus said to her, "Didn't I tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?"

So, the stone was moved aside. Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank You that You heard Me." Then, Jesus shouted, "Lazarus, come out!" Lazarus came out of the tomb, wrapped in linen and cloth. Jesus said, "Unwrap him and let him go."

Many of the Jews who went to the tomb with Mary and Martha believed in Jesus. But when the religious leaders heard about the miracle Jesus had done, they planned to kill Jesus.

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JESUS CONNECTION

When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He showed that He has power over death. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life." Jesus died on the cross for our sins and rose from the dead. He gives eternal life to those who trust in Him.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

CONFIDENCE – Trusting in God's goodness and character no matter what.

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Living LifeWise

God has power over life and death, so we can have confidence that He can take care of us.

Character Connection

The world is full of amazing things and people can do pretty amazing things. But nothing was more amazing to the people in Bethany that day than to see Lazarus come walking out of a grave. How would you have reacted to seeing that happen?

Mary and Martha had been so confident that Jesus could save their sick brother. But then He didn't come, and Lazarus died. And their confidence was shaken. Both of the sisters came to Jesus with the same statement. Do you remember what it was? (*Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.*) They doubted. They weren't sure anymore, about anything.

Then, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Do you think the sisters had more confidence in Jesus or less after that? (*More.*) We can do the same. When we see and experience God's power, we gain confidence to trust Him in even more of our lives.

We can have confidence in God. He knows us and gave us the Bible and His Spirit so we can know Him. He always keeps His promises. His power is unmatched and covers everything in life, even death. So, we can be confident that He will take care of us, no matter what.

How can we show that we have confidence in God and others in the following situations?

- You tried out for a special part in the school program, but you weren't picked.
- A classmate is bullying you at school.
- You lost the money someone gave you.
- There is a big storm that is about to hit your city.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- **Which of Jesus' friends got sick?**
  Lazarus, Jn. 11:1
- **Who were Lazarus' sisters?**
  Mary and Martha, Jn. 11:1, 21, 32
- **How much longer did Jesus stay in the place where He was?**
  Two days, Jn. 11:6
- **Could Jesus have healed Lazarus without going to Bethany?**
  Yes
- **How long had Lazarus been in the tomb when Jesus arrived?**
  Four days, Jn. 11:17
- **Which sister came to meet Jesus right away?**
  Martha, Jn. 11:20
- **Who did Jesus say He is?**
  The resurrection and the life, Jn. 11:25

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- What did Jesus shout?

  "Lazarus, come out!" Jn. 11:43

- How did many people respond when they saw Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead?

  They put their faith in Jesus, Jn. 11:45

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Go For Help! (Older Students)

- Prepare three signs: *Mom*, *medicine* or *map*. Tape the signs to separate walls. Have the class stand in the center of the room. As you describe a situation, students should run and stand by the sign that shows who or what would help them most in that situation. For each one, ask a player to explain his choice. [*Suggested situations: lost in a forest, having trouble with geography homework, feeling sick, feeling hungry, having leg pain, planning a trip, etc.*]

- When Lazarus got sick, Mary and Martha sent for Jesus. But Jesus didn't come right away, and Lazarus died. Mary and Martha must have thought their situation was hopeless and that no one could help them. But Jesus has power over death! Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. The Bible is clear that because we sin, we deserve to die. That's bad news. But the good news is that God loves us and sent His Son, Jesus, to live the perfect life we cannot live and die the death we don't want to die. When we trust in Him, God forgives our sin. Jesus frees us from sin and death, and He gives us eternal life. We may die physically, but we have the hope of life with God forever.

Take Off the Grave Clothes (Older and Younger Students)

- This game may be played as a class or as two competing teams. Measure out lengths of crepe or toilet paper ahead of time. For teams, provide eight strands of crepe or toilet paper and wrap two students. For a class game, use 16 strands on one student. Be sure to choose a student who can stand or sit still for 5–10 minutes to be wrapped. For younger students, you may choose to wrap a stuffed animal, action figure or other toy figure instead.

- Remind the class that after Jesus healed Lazarus, his sisters had to take off the tight strips of cloth that Lazarus was buried in. Ask the class the Bible review questions. Every time a question is answered correctly, a piece of wrap may be taken off.

Wrapped-Up Relay (Older and Younger Students)

- Divide into teams and have each team pick someone to be Lazarus. Give each team a roll of crepe paper or two rolls of bath tissue. When you say "go," teams should wrap their Lazarus from ankles to head. Have them wrap arms and legs separately to aid mobility. Students should use all the paper, but be sure not to cover Lazarus' eyes or mouth. Then, the students must unwrap Lazarus. The team to completely wrap and then unwrap their Lazarus first wins.

- Nice work! In Bible times, when a person died, his body would be washed, covered with good-smelling spices or oils, wrapped in linen cloth and buried in a cave or tomb. That's what had happened to Lazarus. He had died and had been in a tomb for four days! But that didn't stop Jesus. Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Like Lazarus was physically dead, we are all spiritually dead. But Jesus can free us from the power of sin and death. When we trust in Him as Lord and Savior, God forgives our sin and gives us eternal life.

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Just in Time (Younger Students)

- Invite the class to sit in a circle with their legs crossed. Each student should rest his hands on his knees with his palms up. Each student's left hand will be under the right hand of the player sitting to his left. Choose a volunteer to go first. She will use her right hand to gently clap the right hand of the student to her left, while you lead the class to chant a rhyme. The clapping will pass around the circle in rhythm with the chant. When the last word, *out*, is spoken, the last player will attempt to clap the hand of the player to his left. If that student pulls her hand away quickly enough, she is safe and he is out. If he claps her hand, she is out. Restart the game and play until there is only one student remaining.

- Rhyme: "Down in the town of Bethany, Where Mary and Martha liked to be, Laz'rus' death made people pout, 'Til Jesus said to him, 'Come out!'"

- In our game, you needed perfect timing to make sure your hand didn't get slapped. In our story, Jesus displayed His perfect timing, but not by rushing to heal Lazarus. Jesus waited two more days before traveling to Bethany. When He arrived, He showed everyone His power and glory by raising Lazarus from the dead. Jesus' timing is always perfect, even when we don't understand it. Jesus died on the cross at just the right time to save people from sin.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Jesus Is ... (Older Students)
  - Answers: *Mary, Martha, Jesus, Lazarus, Jesus, Lazarus, Mary, Jesus, Lazarus, Jesus, Lazarus, Lazarus, Jesus.*

- Miraculous Color (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Dear God, thank You for sending Jesus. We praise You for His mighty works. He is our Healer. We know that because Jesus died on the cross and is alive, we have hope beyond this life. Though our bodies may die, we believe that we will live forever with You. We love You. Amen.

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Journal Page

List questions or thoughts you have about today's Bible story. Do you have any questions about death or eternal life? Talk with a parent or teacher this week about your questions.



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why do you think Jesus waited two days to visit Lazarus?
- Can you think of other times God might not act right away when we ask Him to?
- What does it mean that Jesus is "the resurrection and the life"?

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JESUS RAISED LAZARUS

JOHN 11:1–7, 17–44

MAIN POINT: JESUS RAISED LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD.

Jesus and Lazarus were friends. One day, Lazarus got sick. Mary and Martha sent a message to Jesus. "Lord, Your friend Lazarus is sick," they said.

Jesus told His disciples, "This sickness will bring glory to God and to the Son of God."

By the time Jesus arrived in Bethany, Lazarus had been in a tomb for four days. Martha said, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother wouldn't have died."

Jesus replied, "Your brother will rise again."

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me, even if he dies, will live. Everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die—ever. Do you believe this?"

"Yes, Lord," Martha said. "I believe You are the Messiah, the Son of God."

Mary fell at Jesus' feet and said, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died!" Mary was crying, and Jesus wept too.

Mary led Jesus to the tomb where Lazarus was buried. Remove the stone," Jesus said.

So, the stone was moved aside. Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank You that You heard Me." Then, Jesus shouted, "Lazarus, come out!"

Lazarus came out of the tomb, wrapped in linen and cloth. Jesus said, "Unwrap him and let him go."

Jesus Connection: *When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He showed that He has power over death. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life." Jesus died on the cross for our sin and rose from the dead. He gives eternal life to those who trust in Him.*

Key Passage: *Psalm 103:2-3 – My soul, bless the Lord, and do not forget all His benefits. He forgives all your iniquity; He heals all your diseases.*

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JESUS IS . . .

Unscramble the following words and fill in the blanks to reveal what Jesus said about Himself.

CETUORSIRRNE **FILE**

Jesus said, "I am the

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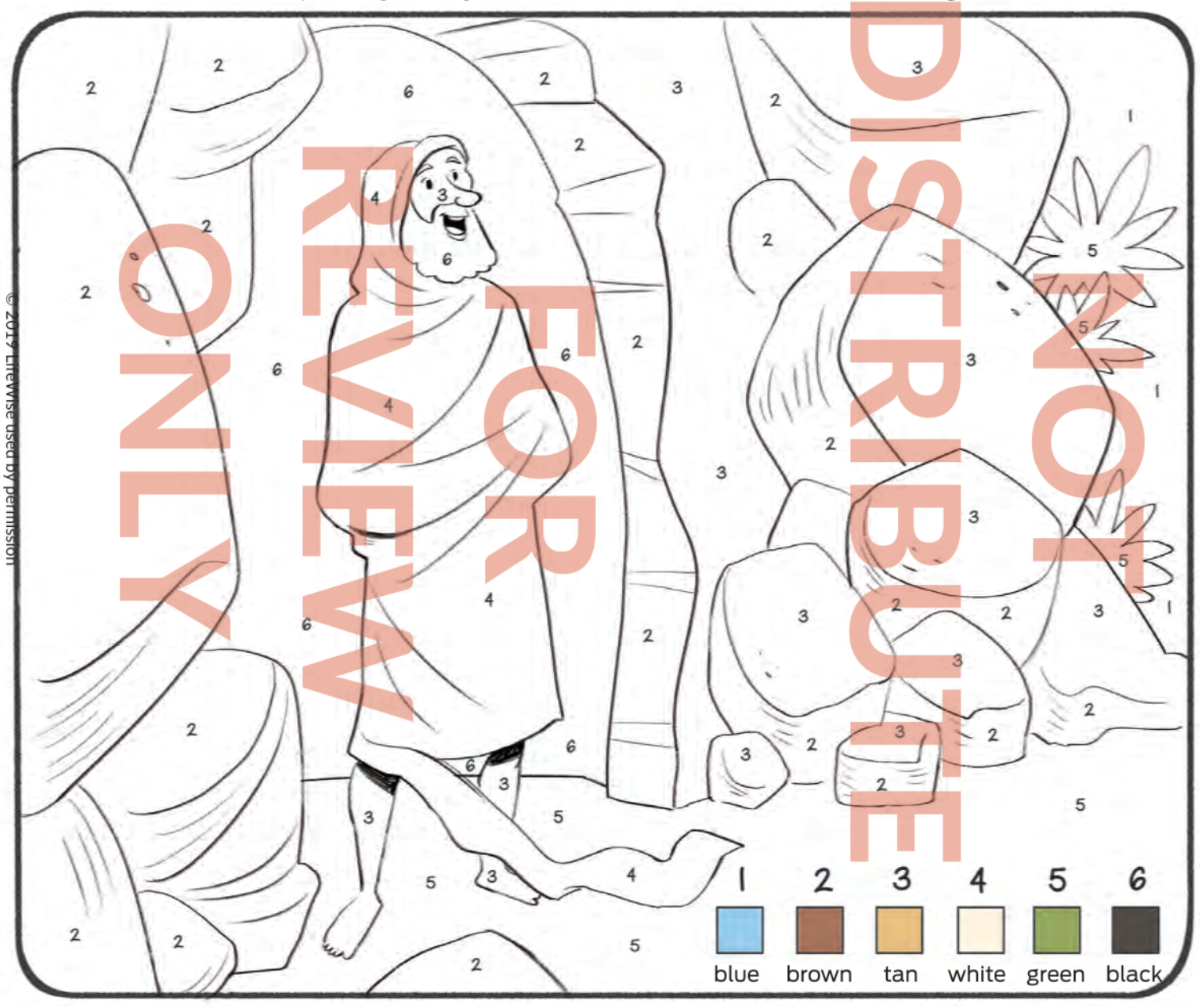
MIRACULOUS COLOR

INSTRUCTIONS: Use the color key to complete the picture. Fill each numbered section with the color assigned.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Psalm 103:2-3 – My soul, bless the Lord, and do not forget all His benefits. He forgives all your iniquity; He heals all your diseases.

• BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- What did Jesus heal people from? Jesus healed people from sickness, sin and death.

BIBLE STORY:
JESUS RAISED LAZARUS

- Jesus' friend Lazarus was sick.
- Jesus waited two days before traveling to visit him.
- When Jesus arrived, Lazarus was dead.
- Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Why did Jesus wait two days before visiting Lazarus?
- Can you think of other times God asks us to wait for His timing?
- What does it mean for Jesus to be "the resurrection and the life"?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Build a "tomb" by draping blankets over chairs and tables. Use couch cushions or large pillows to block the entrance. Take turns sitting in the tomb until someone moves the pillows and says, "Come out!"

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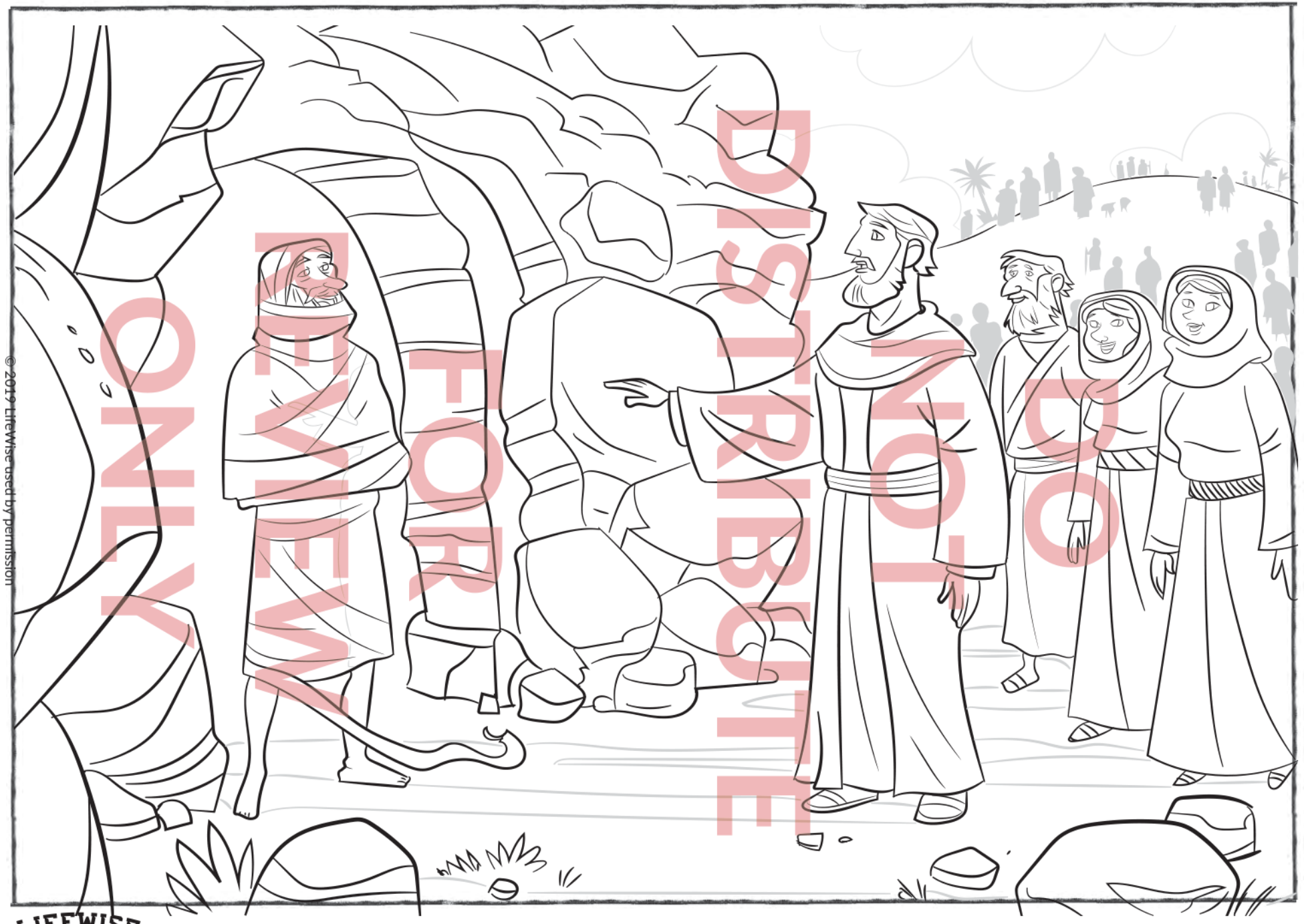

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JESUS RAISED LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD.

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LESSON 84: GENEROSITY

JESUS WAS ANOINTED

Matthew 26:6–13; John 12:1–8

JESUS WAS ANOINTED

- Matthew 26:6–13; John 12:1–8
- Big Picture Q&A: Why do believers share the Lord's Supper? Believers share the Lord's Supper to remember Jesus' life and death and to proclaim Him until He returns.
- Key Passage: John 3:16 – For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

JESUS CONNECTION

Pouring the expensive oil on Jesus was not a waste; it was worship. By allowing Mary to anoint Him, Jesus showed that He is more valuable than anything. Jesus knew He would soon die for sinners, be buried and rise from the dead on the third day.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

GENEROSITY – Sharing my best with others.

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LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Three decades had passed since Jesus arrived on Earth as a helpless baby. He grew up and began His ministry. People wondered, *Could this be the Messiah?* From the time sin entered the world through Adam, God was working out His rescue plan. Finally, at just the right time, God sent His Son into the world.

John the Baptist announced Jesus' purpose: "Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). Jesus called disciples to follow Him, and He spent three years teaching people about God and proclaiming the good news.

People began talking about the possible Messiah. If He really was the "Anointed One"—the promised Deliverer—when would He rise up against the Roman government? As Jesus' ministry came to a close, He made His way toward Jerusalem. But Jesus wasn't about to overthrow a government; He was about to die.

Jesus was eating supper at Simon's house in Bethany when Mary (the sister of Lazarus) poured oil over Jesus. Her act angered the disciples, who thought the oil should have been sold and the money used to help people who were poor. But Jesus affirmed Mary for her actions. Mary did not waste the oil; she used it to worship Jesus. Jesus allowed Mary to anoint Him because He deserved to be anointed. Jesus is more valuable than anything.

Help the students you teach see the bigger picture here. What happened in the days leading to Jesus' death was part of God's plan. Jesus said that Mary had prepared Him for burial (Matt. 26:12). Days later, Jesus died on the cross to rescue people from sin. On the third day, He rose from the dead. Jesus is alive! Jesus is our Lord and Savior. God calls us to treasure Him more than anything or anyone else. We can show our love for Him through the ways we worship. He is worthy of all our praise.

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BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

When we look back at all the stories in the Old Testament and the stories we have heard so far in the New Testament, we know that they aren't a bunch of unrelated stories. All of these stories fit together to tell a much bigger story—the story of how God sent His Son to save sinners.

Jesus came to Earth as a baby and grew in favor with God and man. When Jesus got older, He spent time teaching people about God and His kingdom using stories called parables. Do you remember any of the truths Jesus taught about the kingdom of God in His parables? (*Not everyone will believe in it, it is filled with mercy and love, Jesus seeks out lost people, people who reject God's kingdom will be judged.*) Jesus also healed people and performed many miracles. Can you remember any of the miracles He performed? (*Turned water into wine, multiplied food, walked on water, cast out evil spirits, healed a paralyzed man, raised people from the dead.*)

Now, we are coming to the end of Jesus' time on Earth, and the events that happened during the last week of His life. Today's story is called "Jesus was Anointed."

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

What's It Worth? (Older and Younger Students)

- Display several grocery items or write their names on separate large index cards. Record the retail value of each item on the back of each card. Pass out paper and pencils. Students will number their papers and guess the price of each item. After about two minutes, let volunteers share their guess for the value of the first item. Reveal the actual value and see which player's guess was closest to the actual value. Continue with the remaining items, allowing students to guess the value and then revealing the actual value.

- Did any of the prices surprise you? Did you guess correctly? Today, we are going to hear about how one woman showed how valuable she thought Jesus was. What she did surprised everyone else in the room.

What's That Smell? (Older and Younger Students)

- Post an allergy alert. Before the session, prepare several containers of scents, such as peppermint oil, vanilla, orange or lemon extract and cinnamon oil. You may also use perfumes or colognes, pine oil, sunscreen or bug spray. Put a few drops of oil or extract on cotton balls, then seal the cotton balls in separate opaque containers with a lid. Number the containers. Divide into two groups, and give each group a paper and pencil. One player at a time will smell a scent and report to his group what he smelled. Groups will list their guesses for each container. They may send additional players to confirm a scent, if needed. When both groups have their guesses (or time is up), allow them to share their guess for each container, then reveal the actual scent.

- Which of these scents did you like? Were there any scents you didn't like? Today, we are going to hear a story from the Bible about a woman who poured sweet-smelling oil on Jesus. Let's find out why.

What's Your Treasure? (Younger Students)

- Ask students to think of something they treasure but encourage them not to tell anyone what it is. Invite them to take turns drawing their treasure on a dry erase board or chalkboard for the class

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to guess. You can play this game as one large group or divide into teams to compete against each other.

- We all treasure different things for different reasons. One of Mary's greatest treasures was a jar of expensive, fragrant oil. She was glad to give it up for Jesus because she treasured Jesus more than anything she owned. She used her treasure to show how much she loved Jesus. How can we use our greatest treasure to show how much we love Jesus?

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Loud, Louder, Loudest (Older and Younger Students)

- Have the class repeat John 3:16 after you several times. Challenge them to say the verse loudly, louder and then as loud as they can without yelling.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: Why do believers share the Lord's Supper?

A: *Believers share the Lord's Supper to remember Jesus' life and death and to proclaim Him until He returns.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Jesus was Anointed | Matthew 26:6–13; John 12:1–8

The time was coming to celebrate the Passover. Every year, the Jewish people gathered together to remember a special event that happened long ago. When God's people were slaves in Egypt, God did great things to rescue His people. The pharaoh saw God's power and authority, and the pharaoh let God's people go. God had used Moses to lead His people out of Egypt and to the Promised Land. God did not want the people to forget that time, so every year, the Jews had a feast. Many Jews traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate.

Six days before the Passover feast began, Jesus went to the town of Bethany. Bethany was near Jerusalem, and Jesus' friend Lazarus lived there with his sisters, Mary and Martha.

Jesus went to His friend Simon's house for a meal. Jesus was reclining at the table when Lazarus' sister Mary came to Him. She had a jar of very expensive oil. The oil smelled good, like a perfume. **Mary broke open the jar and poured the oil on Jesus' head and feet.**

Jesus' disciples were very upset! They thought Mary had wasted the expensive oil by pouring it on Jesus. The oil was worth 300 denarii—about a year's pay. **One of the disciples**, Judas Iscariot (iss KAR ih aht), **said, "She could have sold the oil for a lot of money, and then she could have given the money to the poor!"** Judas did not say this because he cared about the poor; he said it because he loved money. In fact, he was a thief.

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They told Mary that she had done the wrong thing, but Jesus spoke up. "Leave her alone," He said. "She has done a very good thing for Me."

Then, Jesus explained, "You will always have people around you who are poor, but you will not always have Me. Mary has poured oil on My body to get it ready for burial." Jesus said that wherever the gospel was told in the whole world, people would also hear about Mary and what she had done.

JESUS CONNECTION

Pouring the expensive oil on Jesus was not a waste; it was worship. By allowing Mary to anoint Him, Jesus showed that He is more valuable than anything. Jesus knew He would soon die for sinners, be buried and rise from the dead on the third day.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

GENEROSITY – Sharing my best with others.

Living LifeWise

God gives us all things, so we can give generously out of what He's given us.

Character Connection

When something is valuable to us, it's good to protect and take care of it. God gives us all things to enjoy. They are gifts from Him. But sometimes we focus on something, even a very valuable something, and forget that there are more important things than, "things."

People are always more important than things. And God is the most important One of all. That's why Jesus defended Mary's decision to pour out her oil. It was expensive oil. It was very valuable. But it was right for her to pour out that very valuable thing for a more important Person—Jesus.

Being generous means we're willing to share what's very important to us, instead of keeping it to ourselves. This is how God treated us when He sent His one and only Son to die on the cross for our sins and sent the Holy Spirit to live within us. He helps us give generously too. We can ask God to help us be willing to give generously to help others and to worship Him.

Mary didn't give to Jesus because she had to. No one made her do it. She gave generously as an act of worship, to show Him how valuable Jesus was to her. Let's think about how we might live generously, too. For example:

- It's your turn to be captain of the game you and your friends play after school. One of your friends had a very bad day. How can you be generous?
- It's been a long day and it's finally bedtime, but you haven't read your Bible yet. How can you give your time generously to God?
- A classmate asks you to help him catch up on work he missed while he was sick, but helping him will mean missing recess, maybe more than one. What would it look like to be generous to your classmate?

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BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- Jesus was at whose house?

  Simon's house, Mt. 26:6

- What did the woman pour on Jesus?

  Very expensive, fragrant oil, Mt. 26:7

- Why were Jesus' disciples upset?

  They thought she wasted the oil, Mt. 26:8

- What did Judas say Mary should have done with the oil?

  Sold it and given the money to the poor, Mt. 26:9

- Did Judas really want to give the money to the poor?

  No; he was a thief and would have taken the money for himself, Jn. 12:4–6

- What did Jesus say Mary had done for Him?

  Anointed Him for burial, Mt. 26:12; Jn. 12:7

- Mary could have sold the oil and used the money to help people who are poor. Why do you think Jesus said Mary had done the right thing by pouring oil on Him instead?

  She was honoring and worshiping Jesus with her gift

- Jesus said Mary anointed Him for burial. What was going to happen to Jesus?

  Jesus would soon die on the cross for sinners

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Act It Out (Older and Younger Students)

- Divide students into groups. Let the groups re-enact the story on their own. Allow several minutes to plan. Give them guidance as needed and answer their questions, but let them work together to retell the story with different students acting out the parts. Then, let them share with the rest of the class to see which details are emphasized by each group.

Mural Scene (Older and Younger Students)

- Hang a large sheet of paper on a wall or tape it on the floor. If you prefer, give students smaller individual sheets of paper. Provide crayons or markers for students to create a life-size scene of the Bible story. Suggest they trace one another in the positions of the people in the story—Jesus, Mary and some of Jesus' disciples. Encourage the class to illustrate the scene in detail. As they work, talk about how Mary's actions didn't make sense to the disciples. Point out that when we give our best to Jesus, other people might think we are being foolish.

- The disciples thought Mary had done the wrong thing, but Jesus said Mary had done what was right. Jesus said Mary anointed Him for burial. Jesus knew He was going away; He knew He would die to save sinners.

Fill in the Blank (Older and Younger Students)

- Draw a blank on the board for each letter in the Bible story's main point: *Jesus said Mary anointed Him for burial*. Form two or three teams. Ask the first team a Bible review question. If they answer

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correctly, they may guess a letter. If the letter appears in the puzzle, fill in the corresponding blanks. Then, give the next team a turn. Teams will guess one letter at a time until they complete the puzzle.

- Jesus said Mary anointed Him for burial. Pouring the expensive oil on Jesus was not a waste; it was worship. By allowing Mary to anoint Him, Jesus showed that He is more valuable than anything. Jesus knew He would soon die for sinners, be buried and rise from the dead on the third day.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- The Oil Jar (Older Students)
- Connect the Dots (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

God, You are so good to us. Thank You for sending Jesus, who poured Himself out through His death on the cross to rescue us from our sin. We confess that we do not treasure Jesus like we should. Help us to not cling to our comforts and possessions in this world. Jesus deserves all of our worship because He truly is our greatest treasure. Amen.

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Journal Page

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why did Mary pour expensive oil on Jesus?
- Why did the disciples think Mary had done the wrong thing?
- How can we worship Jesus?

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JESUS WAS ANOINTED

MATTHEW 26:6–13; JOHN 12:1–8

MAIN POINT: JESUS SAID MARY ANOINTED HIM FOR BURIAL.

Jesus went to His friend Simon's house for a meal. Jesus was reclining at the table when Lazarus' sister Mary came to Him. Mary broke open the jar and poured the oil on Jesus' head and feet.

Jesus' disciples were very upset! They thought Mary had wasted the expensive oil. One of the disciples said, "She could have sold the oil for a lot of money, and then she could have given the money to the poor!"

They told Mary that she had done the wrong thing, but Jesus spoke up. "Leave her alone," He said. "She has done a very good thing for Me."

Then, Jesus explained, "You will always have people around you who are poor, but you will not always have Me. Mary has poured oil on My body to get it ready for burial."

Jesus Connection: *Pouring the expensive oil on Jesus was not a waste; it was worship. By allowing Mary to anoint Him, Jesus showed that He is more valuable than anything. Jesus knew He would soon die for sinners, be buried and rise from the dead on the third day.*

Key Passage: *John 3:16 – For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

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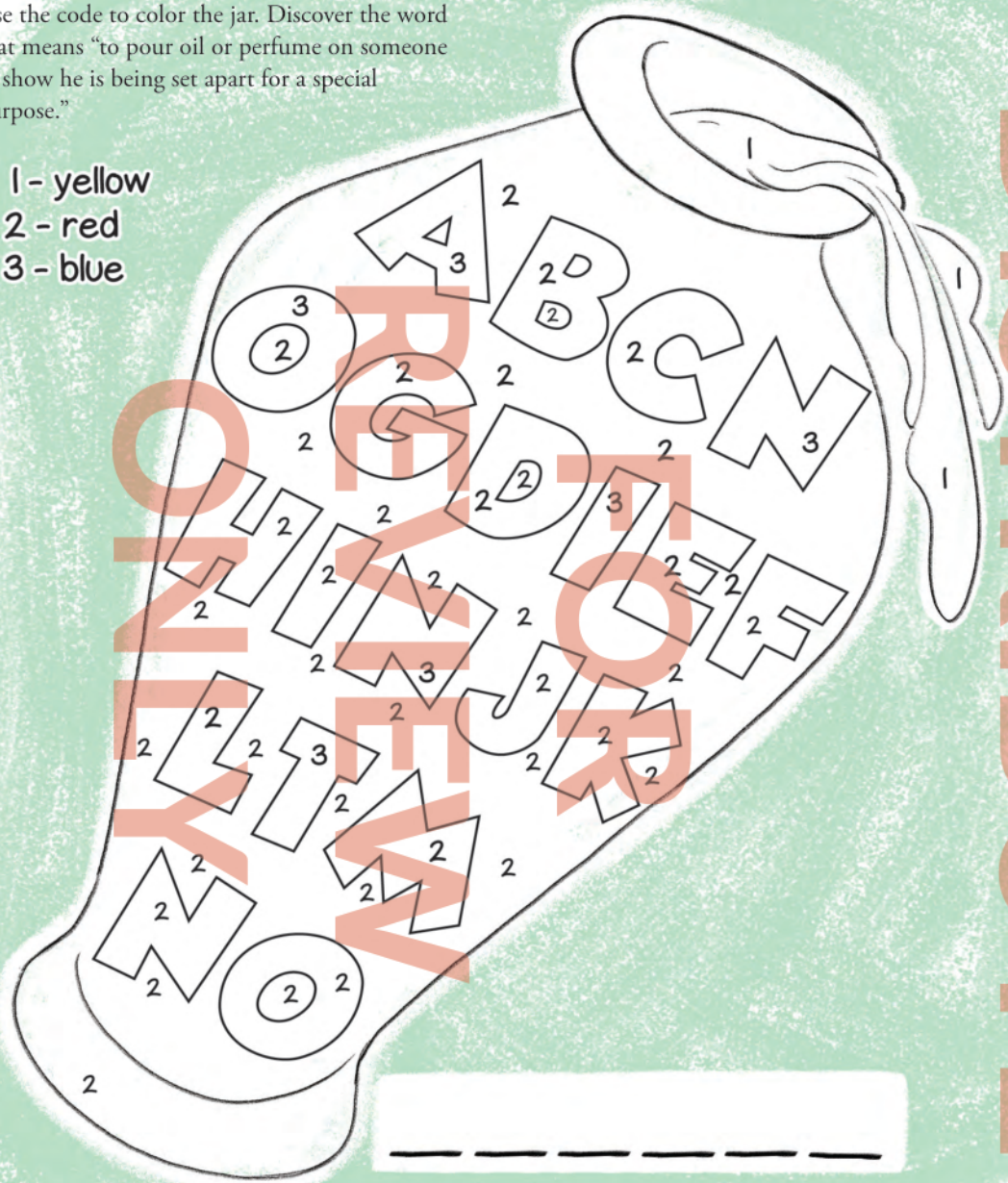
THE OIL JAR

Use the code to color the jar. Discover the word that means "to pour oil or perfume on someone to show he is being set apart for a special purpose."

1 - yellow
2 - red
3 - blue



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WASTE OR WORSHIP?

Circle how each situation could be used to worship God.



JACK EARNED SOME MONEY MOWING LAWNS IN HIS NEIGHBORHOOD. JACK CAN WORSHIP GOD BY ...

a. spending all the money on his favorite candy.

b. giving some money to his church's mission offering.



JEANETTE LOVES TO SING. SHE CAN WORSHIP GOD BY ...

a. volunteering to sing in the church choir.

b. telling all her friends how awesome she is.

BONUS: HOW CAN YOU WORSHIP GOD THIS WEEK?

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CONNECT THE DOTS

INSTRUCTIONS: Draw lines to connect the dots in numerical order.



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KEY PASSAGE:
John 3:16 – For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- Why do believers share the Lord's Supper? Believers share the Lord's Supper to remember Jesus' life and death and to proclaim Him until He returns.

BIBLE STORY:
JESUS WAS ANOINTED

- Mary poured expensive oil on Jesus.
- Jesus' disciples thought her actions were wasteful.
- Jesus said Mary anointed Him for burial. Her actions were worship.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Why was it OK for Mary to use expensive oil to anoint Jesus?
- What was the problem with selling the oil to give money to the poor?
- How can we worship Jesus?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Make scented oil with your kids. Warm fragrant herbs and citrus zest in almond oil over low heat for 5 minutes. Transfer the mixture to a lidded jar and let sit for 24 hours. Strain out remaining particles.

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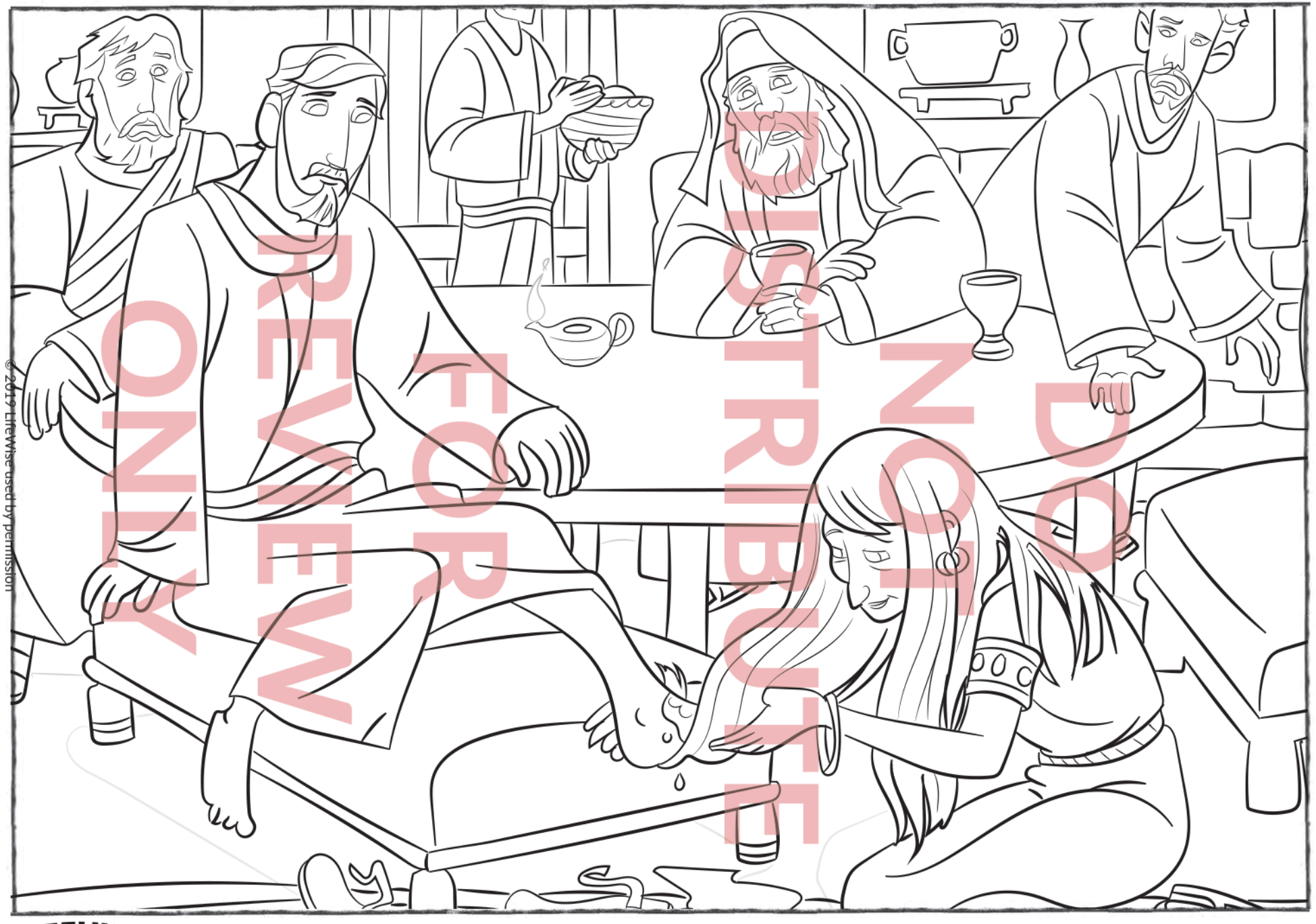

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JESUS SAID MARY ANOINTED HIM FOR BURIAL.

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LESSON 85: WHOLEHEARTEDNESS

JESUS CLEANSED THE TEMPLE

Matthew 21:12–17; Mark 11:15–19

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JESUS CLEANSED THE TEMPLE

- Matthew 21:12–17; Mark 11:15–19
- Big Picture Q&A: Why do believers share the Lord's Supper? Believers share the Lord's Supper to remember Jesus' life and death and to proclaim Him until He returns.
- Key Passage: John 3:16 – For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

JESUS CONNECTION

When Jesus cleared the dishonest people from the temple, He showed His commitment to honoring God. The temple was supposed to be a place where people could pray and worship God. Jesus was going to die on the cross to take away people's sins so anyone who trusted in Him could come to God.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

WHOLEHEARTEDNESS – Complete dedication in everything I do.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

In preparation for the Passover feast, Jesus made His triumphal entry to Jerusalem. Jesus went to the temple there. Herod the Great completely rebuilt the temple in 20–18 B.C. as part of his architectural projects. The temple was surrounded by walls and gates, with specific places for Gentiles, women and men to worship God and offer sacrifices. The temple was a symbol of God's presence among His people.

When Jesus entered the Court of the Gentiles, He was furious to see people buying and selling in the temple. Animal sacrifices were required for participation in the temple. For many worshipers traveling from all over the Roman Empire to take part in Passover, it was easier to purchase unblemished animals for sacrifice in the Court of the Gentiles. There, they also exchanged foreign currency for the temple taxes and offerings. So, why was Jesus angry at the people?

The merchants buying and selling in the temple were treating the temple as a market or bazaar, not like the house of prayer for all nations that God had intended for it to be (Isa. 56:7). The money changers' prices were so exorbitant, they were practically robbing the people (Mk. 11:17). On top of that, people were using the temple courts as a shortcut to get to their businesses. The Gentiles who wished to worship God in peace were surrounded by greed and extortion.

Jesus threw out the merchants and money changers. He was committed to honoring God and did not believe the temple should be used as a marketplace. The chief priests and the scribes saw what happened, and they wanted to destroy Jesus (Lk. 19:47).

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We no longer need to go to a temple to meet with God. Jesus came as God's presence among us (Jn. 1:14) and to be the final sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. We gather with the church to worship Him together.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Last time we learned about Jesus being anointed. Jesus was eating with some disciples when Mary came and poured expensive perfume on His head and feet. Does anyone remember how the disciples felt about her doing this? (*They thought she was wasteful.*) How did Jesus explain what Mary had done for Him? (*Mary had anointed Him for burial.*) Jesus knew His time on Earth was coming to an end. He knew He was about to carry out God's plan to rescue sinners by dying on the cross, and He was dedicated to obeying the Father. Today's Bible story shows just how committed Jesus was to bringing honor to God the Father. It's called "Jesus Cleansed the Temple."

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Collect the Clues (Older Students)

- Before the session, write the following clues on separate index cards. Then, hide the cards in plain sight.
  - *1. Who? Jesus*; *2. Who? The Jewish people*; *3. Who? Money changers*; *4. Where? Jerusalem*; *5. Where? The temple*; *6. What? Buying and selling*; *7. What? Exchanging money*; *8. What? Taking a shortcut*; *9. When? The week of Passover*; *10. Why? Misusing God's temple*
- Announce that you've hidden 10 clue cards in the room. Challenge students to collect the clue cards. When they find them all, call on volunteers to read the cards aloud.
- These clues are about what happened in the Bible story we will hear today. Can anyone guess what was going on? [*Allow students to respond.*] Good ideas. Let's find out what happened.

Flip Coins (Older Students)

- Before class, use masking tape to create a circle on the floor and a line several feet away. Show the class how to flip pennies with their thumbs. Students will line up behind the tape line and try to flip coins inside the circle of tape. For an added challenge, make several concentric circles like a dart board and award different points for different rings. Keep score and allow the class to compete.
- Was it difficult to get the coins into the circle of tape? Sometimes, we were able to get the coins inside the target, and other times we missed the mark. Today's Bible story is about some people who "missed the mark" in the way they used coins inside the temple.

Emotion Matching (Younger Students)

- Before class, print two copies of the "Emotion Match Cards" printable and cut them apart. Mix up the cards and place them face down in a grid. Students will take turns flipping over two cards at a time. If the cards do not match, turn them face-down, and it will be the next player's turn. If the player gets a match, she must tell about a time when she felt the emotion shown on the card. If time allows, play the game several times.

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- Everyone experiences different emotions from time to time. Jesus is fully God, and He is also fully man, which means He has emotions and feelings like we do. Let's look through the emotions together and try to think of a time Jesus felt some of these different emotions.

Coin Toss Challenge (Younger Students)

- Position a large bucket in the center of the room. Instruct the class to stand around the edges of the room. Give each student a small handful of pennies. Explain that the class will toss the pennies toward the bucket. Challenge them to see how many coins they can land in the bucket in two minutes. When time is up, count the number of pennies in the bucket. If time allows, redistribute the coins and play again.

- What a fun game! It sure was loud! Would you expect to find people moving coins, making that much noise, in a place set apart to worship God? Why or why not? Today's Bible story is about a time Jesus went to the temple and found people doing just that. They were exchanging money, and Jesus wasn't happy about it!

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Word Wipe Out (Older and Younger Students)

- Write your memory verse on a chalkboard or dry erase board. Say it together. Erase one word. Say it again. Keep going until the whole verse is erased.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: Why do believers share the Lord's Supper?

A: *Believers share the Lord's Supper to remember Jesus' life and death and to proclaim Him until He returns.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Jesus Cleansed the Temple | Matthew 21:12–17; Mark 11:15–19

It was the week of Passover. Jesus, His followers and many other Jewish people traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate.

Jesus and His disciples went into the temple area. What Jesus saw made Him angry. In the area around the temple, **people were doing things they were not supposed to be doing. Some were buying and selling animals for sacrifices**—animals like oxen, sheep and doves.

Other people had set up tables, and they were exchanging money. The Jews had to pay a tax at the temple, and they needed to have the right kind of money. So, the people at the tables traded for the money accepted at the temple. **And still other people were carrying supplies through the temple area, using it as a shortcut to get from one side of the city to the other.** This was not what the temple was for!

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Jesus made those people leave. He pushed over the tables of the money changers, and He pushed over the chairs of the people selling doves. Jesus did not allow people to carry supplies through the area around the temple. He wanted the people to learn something important.

Jesus said, "Is it not written, 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'?" He told the people, **"You have made this temple into a den of thieves!"**

Not only were the people wrong for doing business there, they were not fair in the way they did business. They charged people too much money. **They were misusing the temple—God's house. Jesus was right to be angry! The religious leaders saw that the people were amazed at the things Jesus taught and at the miracles He did.**

Every day, Jesus went to the temple to teach people about God. People who were blind came to Jesus, and He healed them. People who could not walk came to Jesus, and He healed them too. **Children began shouting in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David!"**

The religious leaders did not like what was happening. "Do You hear what these children are saying?" they asked Jesus.

"Yes," Jesus said. "Have you never read the Scripture that says, 'You have prepared praise from the mouths of children and babies'?"

The religious leaders were afraid of Jesus, so they started looking for a way to kill Him. That evening, Jesus and His disciples left Jerusalem. They went to the nearby city of Bethany and spent the night there.

JESUS CONNECTION

When Jesus cleared the dishonest people from the temple, He showed His commitment to honoring God. The temple was supposed to be a place where people could pray and worship God. Jesus was going to die on the cross to take away people's sins so anyone who trusted in Him could come to God.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

WHOLEHEARTEDNESS – Complete dedication in everything I do.

Living LifeWise

God is the good King over our whole lives, so we can do everything wholeheartedly for Him.

Character Connection

Sometimes we don't always do our best at everything. Sometimes, we cut corners, take the easy route or give up because we'd rather do what's easier or what we think we can get away with than what's right. Others may notice. A teacher might ask why we didn't do our best work. Or someone on the sidelines may ask why we just gave up and let the other team win.

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In today's story, God's people were misusing the temple. They knew better. But they let it go on because they made money from it; it was easier and they (like us) didn't think God was watching that closely or that He would care. He did care. So, Jesus cared.

Jesus could have let what was happening in the temple slide. He could have said it was okay. But He wanted them to use the temple correctly—to live out the wholehearted devotion and obedience God asked for.

We don't have a temple, but God still calls us to live His way with complete dedication. When we ask Him to help us do that, He changes our hearts and minds so that we can (Romans 12:2).

Divide the class in half. For these situations, have one group describe what it might look like to cut corners or take the easy way out, and the other what it might look like to live wholeheartedly. Switch what the groups describe each time.

- You have homework but there's a movie/sports event/new episode you want to watch.
- You have to sit next to a difficult classmate on the bus.
- You and your siblings are assigned a chore that none of you wants to do.

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BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- **What were people doing wrong in the temple area?**

  Buying and selling, exchanging money, selling animals, Mt. 21:12

- **How did Jesus force the moneychangers and people selling animals to leave?**

  Pushed over their tables and chairs, scattered their money and made them leave, Mt. 21:12

- **Jesus said the temple should be a house of what?**

  Prayer, Mt. 21:13

- **How did Jesus help people who were blind or lame?**

  He healed them, Mt. 21:14

- **What did the children shout in the temple area?**

  "Hosanna to the Son of David!" Mt. 21:15

- **What kinds of things might keep people from worshiping God today?**

  Answers will vary: lack of understanding, too busy, loving other things more than God

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Worship Experience (Older Students)

- Attach a large piece of paper to a wall or table. You may choose to play a worship song softly in the background. Ask: "Why do you think we worship God?" Emphasize that we worship God because of who He is. We show Him respect and focus on Him alone. Invite the class to use the crayons to draw pictures or write words that describe God. Give some examples: *good, loving, holy, just*, etc. Maintain a worshipful environment by encouraging students to quietly focus on God. Wrap up the time with prayer, praising God for some of the attributes listed.

- Did you know that anything we think, say or do can be an act of worship to God? In our Bible story, we learned that Jesus drove out the people who were misusing the temple. Jesus was dedicated

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to honoring God. The moneychangers and merchants in the temple made it difficult for people to focus on God and give Him the worship He deserves.

Clear the Temple (Older Students)

- Before the session, outline two concentric rectangles with masking tape on the floor. Make the rectangles large enough for several players to stand inside. Assign two to four players to stand inside the outer rectangle. Leave the inner rectangle empty. Give each player in this first group a broom. Challenge the remaining students to stand outside the rectangles and try to move five balls into the inner rectangle. Players with brooms will sweep balls away from the inner rectangle. Brooms and balls must remain in contact with the floor (no throwing or swinging). If a ball gets to the inner rectangle, the outside players earn one point. Play until they earn five points. You may also pause the game and substitute players to create new groups.

- In today's Bible story, Jesus drove out the people who were misusing the temple. The people buying and selling in the temple made a lot of noise; they made it difficult for people to worship God. Jesus was right to be angry. He came into the world to bring people to God. Jesus was going to die on the cross to take away people's sins so anyone who trusts in Him can come to God.

Story Sequencing (Older and Younger Students)

- Before class, print out the "Story Sequence Cards," cut them out and place them under various pieces of furniture throughout the room. [*For larger groups, have students work in groups. Print multiple sets of cards and number each set.*] Announce that the Bible story pictures are hidden under pieces of furniture and students must carefully "turn over" the pieces of furniture to find them. After they find all the pictures, the class must work together to put the story cards in order. For younger students, give clues and help them place the sequencing cards, or take out card 1 and 4.

    1. Jesus saw some people misusing the temple.
    2. People were buying and selling animals, exchanging money and carrying supplies.
    3. Jesus felt angry.
    4. Jesus said, "My house will be called a house of prayer …"
    5. Jesus made people misusing the temple leave.
    6. Jesus turned over the money changers' tables and chairs.
    7. Jesus healed people.
    8. Children praised Jesus.
    9. The religious leaders made plans to kill Jesus.

Hide-and-Seek Coins (Younger Students)

- Before class, hide 20 coins throughout the room. Challenge the class to find them all as quickly as possible. If time allows, let students take turns hiding the coins and play again.

- Is it wrong to collect and use coins? Of course not! We can find many ways to glorify and worship God using our money. In today's Bible story, the money changers were collecting coins and keeping others from worshiping God, and that is a sin. That's why Jesus drove out the people who were misusing the temple.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Not in My House (Older Students)

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- False statements: *1. false, for Passover; 2. false, selling animals; 3. false, angry; 4. false, drove them out; 5. false, God's house; 6. false, to teach; 7. false, the people praised Jesus; 8. false, they hated Jesus.*

- Correct or Incorrect (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

God, You are worthy of our love and worship. You want all people to worship You. Help us to live our lives in a way that makes it easy for people to love You and want to worship You too. Amen.

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Journal Page

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why was it wrong for people to sell and trade in the temple?
- What ways are people kept from worshiping God today?
- What can we do to help people worship God?

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FOLD



JESUS CLEANSED THE TEMPLE

MATTHEW 21:12–17; MARK 11:15–19

MAIN POINT: JESUS DROVE OUT THE PEOPLE WHO WERE MISUSING THE TEMPLE.

It was the week of Passover. Jesus, His followers and many other Jewish people traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate.

Jesus and His disciples went into the temple area. What Jesus saw made Him angry. People were doing things they were not supposed to be doing. Some were buying and selling animals for sacrifices.

Other people had set up tables, and they were exchanging money. And still other people were carrying supplies through the temple area, using it as a shortcut to get from one side of the city to the other.

Jesus made those people leave. He pushed over the tables of the money changers, and He pushed over the chairs of the people selling doves. Jesus said, "Is it not written, My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations? You have made this temple into a den of thieves!" They were misusing the temple—God's house. Jesus was right to be angry!

The religious leaders saw that the people were amazed at the things Jesus taught and at the miracles He did. Children began shouting in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

The religious leaders did not like what was happening. The religious leaders were afraid of Jesus, so they started looking for a way to kill Him. That evening, Jesus and His disciples left Jerusalem. They went to the nearby city of Bethany and spent the night there.

Jesus Connection: *When Jesus cleared the dishonest people from the temple, He showed His commitment to honoring God. The temple was supposed to be a place where people could pray and worship God. Jesus was going to die on the cross to take away people's sins so anyone who trusted in Him could come to God.*

Key Passage: *John 3:16 – For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

DISCIPLE DO NOT

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NOT IN MY HOUSE

Circle the items that don't belong in the temple.



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GET OUT OF HERE!

Mark whether each statement is true or false. Correct the false statements. Check your work by reading Matthew 21:12-17; Mark 11:15-19.

TRUE	FALSE		TRUE	FALSE	
☐	☐	1. Jesus was in Jerusalem for Thanksgiving.	☐	☐	5. Jesus said the people misused God's car.
☐	☐	2. People were selling snacks in the temple.	☐	☐	6. Jesus went to the temple to sleep.
☐	☐	3. What Jesus saw made Him happy.	☐	☐	7. The animals praised Jesus.
☐	☐	4. Jesus let the people stay in the temple.	☐	☐	8. The religious leaders loved Jesus.

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CORRECT OR INCORRECT?

INSTRUCTIONS: Circle the pictures that show people using items correctly. Mark an *X* over those with items used incorrectly.



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KEY PASSAGE:
John 3:16 – For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- Why do believers share the Lord's Supper? Believers share the Lord's Supper to remember Jesus' life and death and to proclaim Him until He returns.

BIBLE STORY:
JESUS CLEANSED THE TEMPLE

- Jesus saw people using the temple to buy and sell things.
- Jesus was angry because the temple was a place to worship.
- Jesus drove out the people who were misusing the temple.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Is it sinful to be angry?
- Why was Jesus' anger righteous?
- What else did Jesus drive out that prevents us from worshiping God?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Plan a family outing to a farmer's or flea market in your area. Discuss with your kids why using the temple as a market angered Jesus.
- Encourage your kids to invite friends to church this week. Offer to pick up the kids and take them home after service.

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JESUS DROVE OUT THE PEOPLE WHO WERE MISUSING THE TEMPLE.

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Story Sequencing Cards

Instructions: Print and use as directed in the leader guide.

L 85 Jesus Cleansed the Temple | WHOLEHEARTEDNESS

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Angry



Bored



Happy



Angry



Bored



Happy

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Emotion Match Cards

Instructions: Print and use as directed in the leader guide.

L 85 Jesus Cleansed the Temple | WHOLEHEARTEDNESS

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Excited



Sad



Scared



Happy



Sad



Scared

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Emotion Match Cards

Instructions: Print and use as directed in the leader guide.

L 85 Jesus Cleansed the Temple | WHOLEHEARTEDNESS

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Shy



Surprised



Tired



Shy



Surprised



Tired

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Emotion Match Cards

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Worried



Worried

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Emotion Match Cards

Instructions: Print and use as directed in the leader guide.

L 85 Jesus Cleansed the Temple | WHOLEHEARTEDNESS

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LESSON 86: COMMITMENT

JESUS' LAST SUPPER AND ARREST

Matthew 26:26–30, 36–27:2; John 13:1–15

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JESUS' LAST SUPPER AND ARREST

- Matthew 26:26–30, 36–27:2; John 13:1–15
- Big Picture Q&A: Why do believers share the Lord's Supper? Believers share the Lord's Supper to remember Jesus' life and death and to proclaim Him until He returns.
- Key Passage: John 3:16 – For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

JESUS CONNECTION

God forgives the sins of those who trust in His Son, Jesus. Jesus knew that His death was God's plan to save people from sin. Jesus' friends turned against Him, and He was arrested and put on trial, but Jesus followed His Father's plan in order to bring salvation to the world.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

COMMITMENT – Doing what I say I'll do.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Jesus knew it was time for Him to die. He sat down with His disciples for the Passover meal and did something very unusual: Jesus washed His disciples' feet. This humble act was usually reserved for a servant. The foot washing symbolized a spiritual cleansing. The disciples were already positionally "clean" before God (John 13:10), but even redeemed people still sin and need daily cleansing (1 John 1:9). In this, Jesus also set forth an example of love and humility for His disciples to mirror in their own actions toward one another (John 13:15).

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As they ate the Passover meal, Jesus broke bread and gave it to His disciples. He shared the cup with them too, explaining that the bread and cup represented His body and blood. Jesus established a new covenant.

In the Old Testament, God made a covenant, or promise, with His people. He gave them commandments to follow so they could live in a right relationship with Him. But God's people broke the covenant. They didn't obey God, and they didn't love Him. By dying on the cross, Jesus brought forgiveness and made the way for people to know and love God again.

Jesus and the disciples ate the first Lord's Supper at Passover, a time when God's people remembered how God had rescued His people from the Egyptians—passing over the houses marked with the blood of a lamb. Jesus instituted a new memorial, to Himself—the Lamb of God whose blood would bring salvation to the world. Believers take the Lord's Supper to remember what Jesus did for us in His death and resurrection. We remember God's faithfulness, and we look forward to the day He will return.

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Not all the students you teach will be ready to take the Lord's Supper at church. Gently explain that the Lord's Supper, like baptism, is an ordinance of the church and is a celebration for those who have repented of their sin and trusted in Jesus for salvation.

The events leading up to His death did not surprise Jesus. Each step was part of God's established plan (Isa. 53:10; Acts 2:23). But knowing God's plan didn't lessen Jesus' suffering as He was betrayed by His friends, arrested, falsely accused and beaten. As you teach your students about the arrest of Jesus, help them understand the gravity of the events.

The Pharisees and other Jews in Jerusalem did not like Jesus. He didn't play by their rules (Matt. 12:1–14), He claimed to be God (John 8:58–59; 10:22–33), and He extended salvation beyond the Jewish people (Luke 4:29). So, they plotted several times how they might kill Him.

Jesus wanted to do God's plan. Jesus came to Earth to rescue people from sin. He was committed to doing the Father's will (Matt. 26:39, 42). When Judas showed up with a crowd, Jesus didn't run. He didn't even allow Peter to stand in His defense (Matt. 26:52). Jesus willingly gave Himself up for us because He loves us (Eph. 5:2).

Jesus was betrayed and arrested even though He did nothing wrong. The Jews tried to find a legitimate reason to kill Jesus, but they couldn't find one (Matt. 26:59–60). Jesus did what we failed to do: He perfectly obeyed the law. His arrest was not just. The trial was not fair. But this had to happen. Only a sinless, perfect sacrifice could take away sin (Heb. 9:11–14).

Jesus is who He says He is. After Jesus' arrest, the high priest asked Jesus if He was the Son of God. Jesus affirmed that He is (Matt. 26:64). The high priest accused Him of blasphemy (speaking against God), but Jesus always told the truth. Jesus felt the pain of betrayal and the agony of His imminent suffering and death. He came to do His Father's plan no matter what in order to bring salvation to the world.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

By this time, Jesus had lived on Earth for about 30 years. The time had come for Him to carry out God's plan to save sinners. We have heard stories about Jesus' last week before His death. On the way to Jerusalem, Mary anointed Jesus with oil. He said Mary anointed Him for burial. Then, Jesus cleansed the temple. Do you remember why Jesus needed to clean up the temple? (*People were buying and selling things and using the temple grounds as a shortcut instead of as a place to worship God.*) How did He do it? (*He turned over the money changers tables and chairs and made people misusing the temple leave.*) Today's Bible story is about Jesus' last supper with His disciples before His death.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Can't Say No (Older Students)

- Make a list of simple tasks on a piece of paper and cut them apart. Put the slips in a bag. Allow volunteers to take turns drawing a task to perform. Suggested tasks: tie a friend's shoe, sing the ABCs with a friend, high five two people, turn around three times and then sit down, sing "Jesus Loves Me," do three jumping jacks, count backward from 10 to 1.
- Do you think Jesus ever said no to doing what God wanted Him to do? Jesus never said no to following God's plan. He wanted to do God's plan. Jesus always said no to sin but yes to God.

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Would You Do That? (Older and Younger Students)

- Tell the class you will read a list of tasks. Any student who would like to do a task should stand up. Read the tasks one at a time. Between tasks, instruct all students to be seated.

  - Scrub the bathroom.
  - Wash smelly clothes.
  - Serve food at a busy restaurant.
  - Repaint a house.
  - Clean your room.
  - Take out the trash.
  - Do the dishes for your grandma.
  - Walk the dog.
  - Wash other people's dirty feet.

- Most of those tasks do not sound very fun! How about that last one—wash other people's dirty feet? I'm not sure I would want to wash anyone's feet. I'm not sure I would even let someone else wash my feet! But in the Bible story we will hear today, Jesus washed His disciples' feet. Let's find out more.

Play Dough Meal (Older and Younger Students)

- Provide a lump of play dough or clay for each student. Allow the class to work together to sculpt items for a dinner, including cups, plates, flatware and various foods. As they work, ask them to describe what they are creating.

- Do you ever have a special meal to celebrate a holiday or event? What kinds of foods are served at that meal? Today, we are going to hear about a meal Jesus ate with His disciples. We will also learn why believers still celebrate that meal today when we share the Lord's Supper.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Pass The Ball (Older and Younger Students)

- Instruct the class to stand in a circle. Show the key passage poster and read it aloud together. Then, remove or cover the poster. Give one student a ball and challenge him to say the first word of the key passage and pass the ball to his left. The next student will say the second word and pass the ball. Continue passing the ball around the circle and saying the key passage one word at a time. If a player forgets a word, allow others to assist. Avoid eliminating players. The class will learn the key passage through participation. Play again if time allows.

Key Passage Doodle (Older and Younger Students)

- Give each student something to draw with and a piece of paper with John 3:16 printed on it. Read the verse aloud together. Invite students to add illustrations, sketches or doodles to represent elements of the verse.

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Big Picture Q&A

Q: Why do believers share the Lord's Supper?

A: *Believers share the Lord's Supper to remember Jesus' life and death and to proclaim Him until He returns.*

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BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Jesus' Last Supper and Arrest | Matthew 26:26–30, 36–27:2; John 13:1–15

Jesus' disciples went into the city to prepare the Passover meal. When the meal was ready, Jesus and His disciples reclined at the table. Jesus knew His time on Earth was almost over and He would soon return to the Father in Heaven.

Jesus got up from the table, laid aside His outer robe and wrapped a towel around His waist. Then, He poured water into a basin and began washing His disciples' feet. In Bible times, a servant would wash someone's feet when he entered a house. Jesus—the King of kings—was doing what a servant would do! **Peter did not want Jesus to wash his feet. "You will never wash my feet—ever!" Peter said.**

Jesus replied, "If I don't wash you, you have no part with Me."

Peter said, "Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head." Jesus told Peter that one who has bathed only needs to wash his feet because he is already clean. Jesus wasn't talking about physical cleanliness. He was talking about someone who has been forgiven of his sins by repenting and trusting in Jesus. A Christian should repent when he sins, but he only needs to receive salvation once.

When Jesus had washed His disciples' feet and put on His robe, He reclined at the table and said, "Do you understand what I have done? You call Me Teacher and Lord. **I have given you an example to follow. You should wash one another's feet."** Jesus was telling the disciples to serve one another.

While they were eating, Jesus took the bread, blessed and broke it and gave it to the disciples. Jesus said, "Take and eat it; this is My body." Then, He took a cup and gave thanks. He gave it to His disciples and said, "All of you drink from it; this is My blood of the covenant, which is shed for many for the forgiveness of sins."

After the supper, Jesus and His disciples sang psalms and went to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus came with His disciples to a place called Gethsemane (geth SEM uh nih)**. He said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." Jesus became very sad and troubled.** Jesus went a little farther. **He fell face-down and prayed, "Father! If it is possible, spare Me from this. But I want to do Your plan."**

Jesus came back and found the disciples asleep. He asked Peter, "Couldn't you stay awake with Me for one hour?" Jesus went away and prayed. Then, He found His disciples sleeping again. **He said, "**Are you still asleep? **Get up, for it is almost time. Someone is going to betray Me."**

Suddenly, Judas arrived. A large crowd carrying swords and clubs **was with him. Judas kissed Jesus so the crowd would know who Jesus was. The men grabbed Jesus and arrested Him. Peter pulled out his sword and tried to fight the men, but Jesus told Peter to put away his sword.** Jesus said, "Isn't this what God planned all along?" Jesus' followers ran away, but Peter stayed nearby to watch.

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The men who arrested Jesus led Him to the house of Caiaphas the high priest. The religious leaders were trying to find a reason to kill Jesus, but they could not. **The high priest asked, "Do You have anything to say? Are You the Messiah, the Son of God?"**

Jesus replied, "Yes, that's right."

The high priest said, "Aha! He has spoken against God." **Caiaphas and the religious leaders did not want to believe that Jesus is God's Son. They said Jesus was lying, but Jesus was telling the truth!**

The crowd said, "He deserves to die!" They spit in Jesus' face and hit Him.

A servant saw Peter and asked, "Aren't you one of Jesus' disciples?"

"No, I'm not!" Peter said. Twice more as Peter watched what was happening to Jesus, someone asked him if he was a follower of Jesus. Peter said no.

The next morning, the religious leaders decided how they would kill Jesus. Then, they **took Him to Pilate, the governor.**

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JESUS CONNECTION

God forgives the sins of those who trust in His Son, Jesus. Jesus knew that His death was God's plan to save people from sin. Jesus' friends turned against Him, and He was arrested and put on trial, but Jesus followed His Father's plan in order to bring salvation to the world.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

COMMITMENT – Doing what I say I'll do.

Living LifeWise

Because we can trust God in everything, we can choose to keep our commitments.

Character Connection

When a big activity is a long way off, it's easier to commit to it. But when it's right in front of us, it is a much bigger deal. Sometimes, even though we said we would, we back out at the very last second. Keeping our commitments is a very big deal.

In our story today, Jesus is a day away from the cross. It's right in front of Him, and He even prayed that God would find another way if it was possible. But He was also willing to keep going if that's what God wanted ("Your will, not Mine"). He was committed because it was the only way that we could be saved. So, even though it was hard and hurtful and it cost Him everything, He did what He said He would do. Even in the last hours, He didn't turn away.

Sometimes, we will be tempted to turn away at the last minute instead of doing what God has asked of us. But God will help us keep our commitments. He will provide the strength to do whatever He asks of us because He is perfectly good, no matter how we feel in that moment.

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What would it look like to keep your commitments in these situations?

- You want to play a fun game at recess, but later, you remember you said you'd help the teacher during recess.
- You agreed last time to let your friend choose the movie "next time," but now they've picked one you don't like.
- You told the neighbor you would help him fix his leaking sink after school, but you just want to go home and rest.

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BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- **Which disciple did not want Jesus to wash his feet?**

  Peter, Jn. 13:8

- **Why did Jesus wash His disciples' feet?**

  To model how they should serve one another, Jn. 13:14–15

- **Jesus said the bread and cup represented what?**

  His body and blood, Mt. 26:26–28

- **Where did Jesus go with His disciples after supper?**

  The garden of Gethsemane, Mt. 26:36

- **What did the disciples do instead of praying?**

  Fell asleep, Mt. 26:40–45

- **How did Judas show the soldiers who Jesus was?**

  Judas kissed Jesus, Mt. 26:47–49

- **Why did Jesus tell Peter to stop fighting?**

  It was God's plan, Mt. 26: 54

- **Which disciple denied knowing Jesus three times?**

  Peter, Mt. 26:70–75

- **Why do you think Jesus was willing to follow God's plan?**

  He came to save sinners, 1 Tim. 1:15

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Upside-Down Puzzle (Older Students)

- Challenge the class to put together a puzzle with the pieces turned face down. Have them work the puzzle on a piece of poster board. When they finish, sandwich the puzzle with a second piece of poster board so you can carefully turn over the picture.

- Ask students why completing a puzzle face down is harder. Point out that in the Old Testament, the people could not see the big picture of what God was doing. They didn't understand that the Passover sacrifice pointed to a greater sacrifice—the true sacrifice of God's own Son, Jesus.

- The stories in the Old Testament make more sense to us when we see how Jesus was God's plan to rescue people from sin. Every year, the Jews ate the Passover meal to remember how God rescued His people from slavery in Egypt. Jesus and the disciples ate the first Lord's Supper at

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Passover. At the Passover meal, Jesus prepared His disciples to celebrate a new meal—the Lord's Supper—where they would remember how God rescued His people from sin through the death of His Son, Jesus. Jesus is the Passover lamb who can truly save people from sin and death.

Supper Symbols (Older Students)

- Instruct the class to stand with enough room to move around a bit. Display five objects. Explain that each object will remind them of an action. Hold up the objects one at a time, identify the action for that object and allow students to practice the action. When you set the object down, they should stand still. Some examples are below:
  - Cup—clap three times.
  - Plate—stomp three times.
  - Fork—wiggle your arms.
  - Spoon—do a jumping jack.
  - Napkin—turn around.
- To play, hold objects up one at a time in random order. The class should do the correct action. Vary the pace and the order of the objects for an added challenge.
- At the Passover meal, the Jews used special foods and drinks to help them remember the first Passover when God rescued His people from the Egyptians. God brought them out of slavery and into a new life of freedom. Jesus and the disciples ate the first Lord's Supper at Passover. This was Jesus' last supper before He died on the cross. Jesus died to rescue people from slavery to sin and give us a new life of freedom with Him. Why do believers share the Lord's Supper? Believers share the Lord's Supper to remember Jesus' life and death and to proclaim Him until He returns.

Olive Tree Prayers (Older Students)

- Give each student an "Olive Tree Prayer Page" and a pencil or pen. Instruct the class to list names of people they want to pray for on the leaves. Encourage students to think about friends or family members who might need God's help or healing or people for whom they are thankful. Lead them to consider listing people who might need to hear and receive the good news about Jesus. Direct them to take home their prayer pages and display them in their rooms or on the family's refrigerator. Throughout the week, students can pray for the people listed. When they pray for someone, they may color in the leaf with that person's name. Challenge the class to pray for and color in all of the leaves.
- Jesus knew that His death was God's plan to save people from sin. When Jesus went into the garden with His friends, He went away to pray. Then, Jesus' friends turned against Him. Jesus was betrayed and arrested. He was put on trial, but Jesus followed His Father's plan in order to bring salvation to the world. Following Jesus won't always be easy, but we can always pray to God and ask for strength, comfort and courage to follow His plan. We can pray for others to faithfully follow Jesus too.

True or False (Older and Younger Students)

- Ask the class how many books are in the New Testament Gospels. (*Four.*) Challenge students to name the book that comes before Matthew. (*Malachi.*) Lead them to refer to the Bible story passages as you read the following true/false statements. If a statement is true, students should say, "Yes, that's right!" If it is false, they should remain silent.

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- Jesus and His disciples were gathering to celebrate Passover. (*True, Jn. 13:1*)
- Jesus wrapped an apron around Himself. (*False; towel, Jn. 13:4–5*)
- Jesus washed the disciples' head, hands and feet. (*False; just their feet, Jn. 13:5, 10*)
- Peter at first refused to let Jesus wash his feet. (*True, Jn. 13:8*)
- Jesus said that the bread He passed out was His body. (*True, Mt. 26:26*)
- Jesus said that the cup contained His blood of the new covenant. (*True, Mt. 26:28*)
- After supper, Jesus and His disciples went to bed early. (*False; to the Mount of Olives, Mt. 26:30*)
- Jesus came with His disciples to a place called Gethsemane. (*True, Mt. 26:36*)
- Jesus' disciples stayed awake while Jesus prayed. (*False; fell asleep, Mt. 26:40–45*)
- Peter kissed Jesus so the crowd would know who Jesus was. (*False; Judas kissed Jesus, Mt. 26:47–49*)
- Jesus was arrested and taken to the high priest. (*True, Mt. 26:57*)
- Peter denied knowing Jesus three times. (*True, Mt. 26:70–75*)

Hard to Remember (Older and Younger Students)

- Cover 10 random objects with a sheet on a table. Remove the sheet, give the class 10 seconds to look at the items, then cover them back up. Then, students will write down all the items that they can remember. After they have attempted to write down all 10 objects, give them another 10 seconds to look at the objects. Repeat this process until most students have written down all the objects.

- It was hard to remember all 10 objects after only looking at them once, wasn't it? The more we do something, the easier it is to remember. That's why the church continues to celebrate the Lord's Supper: because it helps us remember what Jesus did for us.

Trace Feet (Younger Students)

- Instruct the class to take off their shoes, stand on a piece of paper and trace their own feet. Tell them that the best and most accurate tracing will win. Students will struggle to trace their feet in various ways. The hope is that a student will think to ask someone else to trace her feet, and offer to trace the other person's feet in return. If no one thinks of this, leaders should hint that there are no rules against tracing someone else's feet.

- It was hard to trace your own feet, wasn't it? The only way to get a good foot tracing was to ask someone else to help you. Jesus served His disciples by washing their feet, and He wants us to serve others as well. This all happened when Jesus and the disciples ate the first Lord's Supper at Passover.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- The Lord's Supper (Older Students)

- Friend or Foe (Older Students)
  - Answers: *1. Jesus Was Anointed; 2. Jesus Cleansed the Temple; 3. The Last Supper; 4. Jesus Was Arrested.*

- Last Supper Word Search (Younger Students)

- Path to Caiaphas (Younger Students)

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Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Lord Jesus, thank You for Your example of how we as believers should treat each other. When we hear the story of Your arrest and think about what it was like to be abandoned by Your friends and mistreated, we are in awe of Your willingness to do the Father's plan. You obeyed and suffered so that we—sinners who have disobeyed—would not have to suffer the punishment for our sin. You died the death we deserve even though You did nothing wrong. Jesus, give us open hearts to understand the importance of what You did for us. Help us to remember that when we were sinners, You died on the cross to rescue us from sin and rose again to give us the promise of new life with You. We love You. Amen.

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Journal Page

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- How else did Jesus serve people?
- What are some ways we can serve others?
- How does the Lord's Supper help us remember Jesus?

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JESUS' LAST SUPPER AND ARREST

MATTHEW 26:26-30, 36-27:2; JOHN 13:1-15

MAIN POINT: JESUS AND THE DISCIPLES ATE THE FIRST LORD'S SUPPER AT PASSOVER.

Jesus' disciples went into the city to prepare the Passover meal. When the meal was ready, Jesus and His disciples reclined at the table.

Jesus got up from the table, laid aside His outer robe and wrapped a towel around His waist. Then He poured water into a basin and began washing His disciples' feet. Peter did not want Jesus to wash his feet. "You will never wash my feet—ever!" Peter said.

Jesus replied, "If I don't wash you, you have no part with Me."

When Jesus had washed His disciples' feet and put on His robe, He reclined at the table and said, "Do you understand what I have done? I have given you an example to follow. You should wash one another's feet."

While they were eating, Jesus took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples. Jesus said, "Take and eat it; this is My body." Then, He took a cup and gave thanks. He gave it to His disciples and said, "All of you drink from it; this is My blood of the covenant, which is shed for many for the forgiveness of sins."

Jesuss Connection: *At the Passover, Jesus shared His last meal with the disciples before His death and resurrection. Jesus said that His death would establish a new covenant. God's people had broken the old covenant, and God promised to make a new covenant to forgive sins. God forgives the sins of those who trust in His Son, Jesus.*

Key Passage: *John 3:16 – For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

DISCUSSION GUIDE

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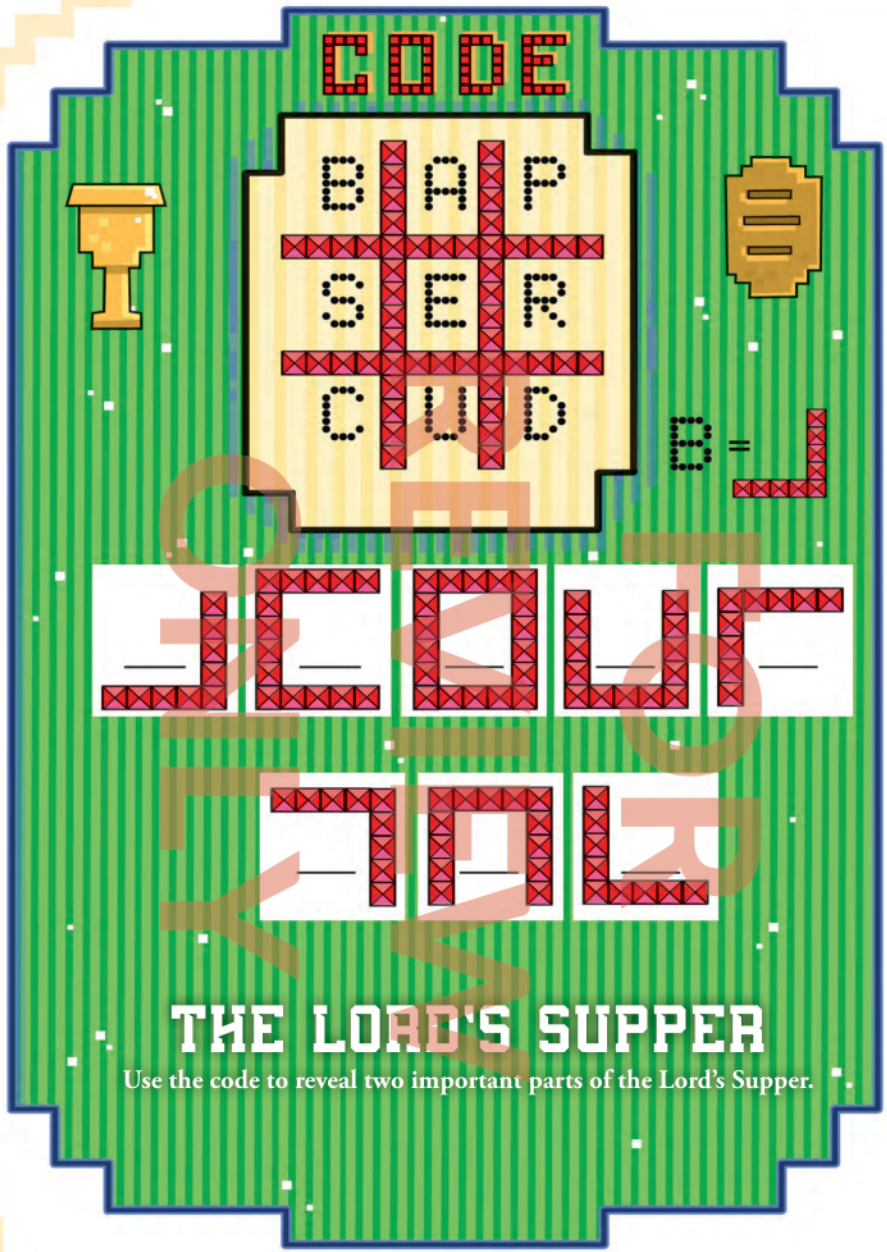

THE LORD'S SUPPER

Use the code to reveal two important parts of the Lord's Supper.

REMEMBER ME

Use the words in the word list to fill in the blanks.

WHY DO BELIEVERS SHARE THE LORD'S SUPPER?

_____ share the _____ _____ to

_____ Jesus' _____ and _____ and to

proclaim Him until He _____ .

WORD LIST:
believers,
death, life,
Lord's Supper,
remember,
returns



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FRIEND OR FOE?

These people could be friends or foes (enemies).
Fill in the speech bubbles to show how friends might respond.





HOLY WEEK TIMELINE

Number the events in the order they happened.

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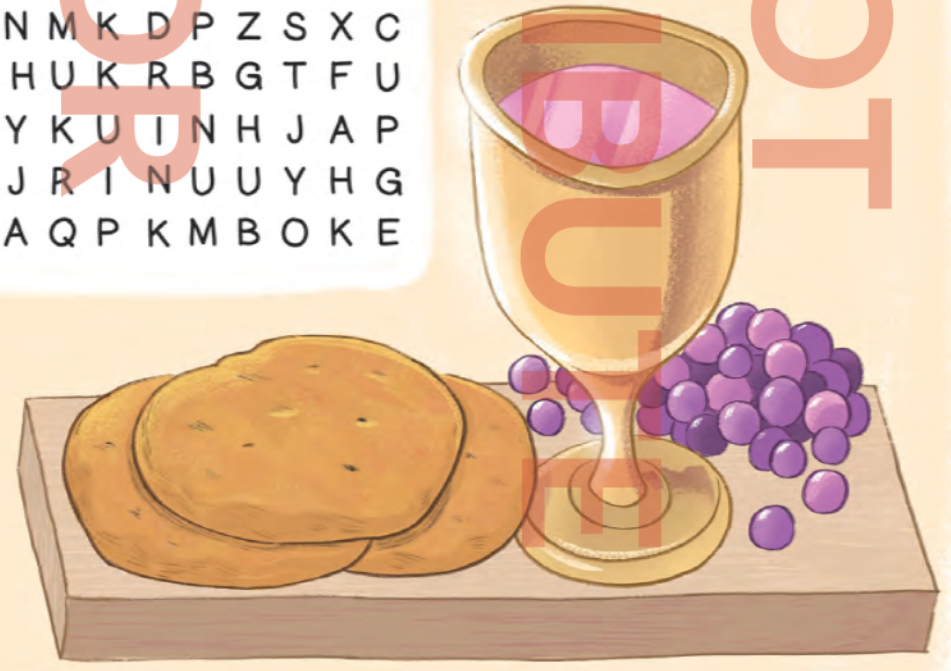
LAST SUPPER WORD SEARCH

INSTRUCTIONS: Use the word bank to find all the words hidden in the grid of letters below.

covenant	bread	eat	wash
new	cup	drink	feet

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



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KEY PASSAGE:
John 3:16 – For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:
- Why do believers share the Lord's Supper? Believers share the Lord's Supper to remember Jesus' life and death and to proclaim Him until He returns.

BIBLE STORY:
JESUS' LAST SUPPER AND ARREST
- Jesus and His disciples prepared for the Passover.
- Jesus served His disciples by washing their feet.
- Jesus was giving them an example of how to serve others.
- Jesus and the disciples ate the first Lord's Supper at Passover.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:
- How else did Jesus serve people?
- What are some ways we can serve others?
- Whom can we serve?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:
- Work with your family to make a chore chart. Explain what different chores need to be done and why it is important to serve each other by sharing the burden of housework.

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JESUS AND THE DISCIPLES ATE THE FIRST LORD'S SUPPER AT PASSOVER.

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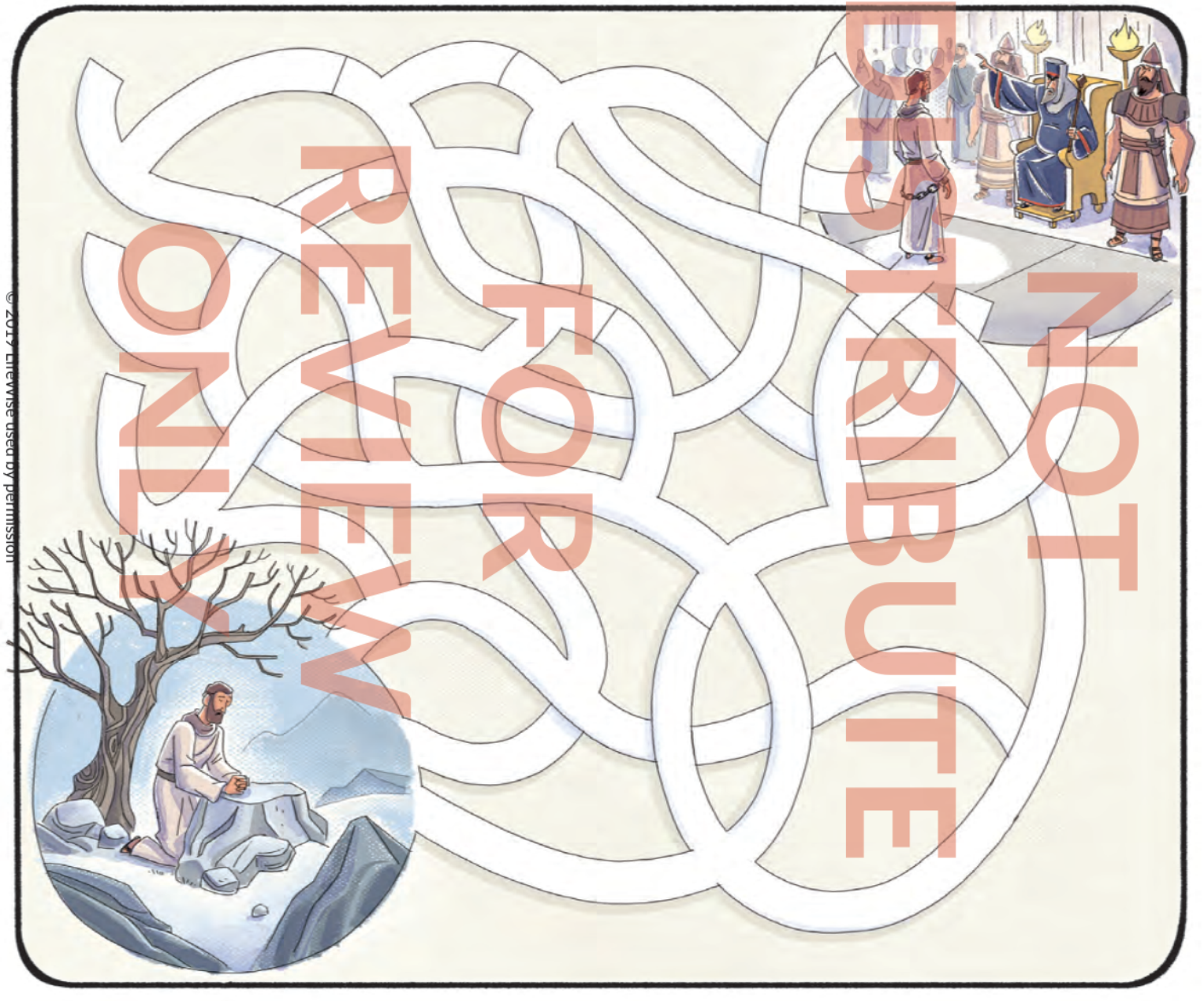
PATH TO CAIAPHAS

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete the maze leading Jesus to Caiaphas.



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KEY PASSAGE:
John 3:16 – For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- Why do believers share the Lord's Supper? Believers share the Lord's Supper to remember Jesus' life and death and to proclaim Him until He returns.

BIBLE STORY:
JESUS' LAST SUPPER AND ARREST

- Jesus went to pray in a garden with His disciples.
- Jesus prayed to God about the difficult things to come.
- Jesus was betrayed and arrested.
- Jesus was given an unfair trial before the high priest.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Why do you think Judas betrayed Jesus?
- Why do you think Peter denied Jesus?
- What made Jesus' trial unfair?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Play a game like "Cops and Robbers" with your kids. Talk to them about how it feels to get caught doing something wrong. Remind them that Jesus never did anything wrong but was still arrested and sentenced to die.

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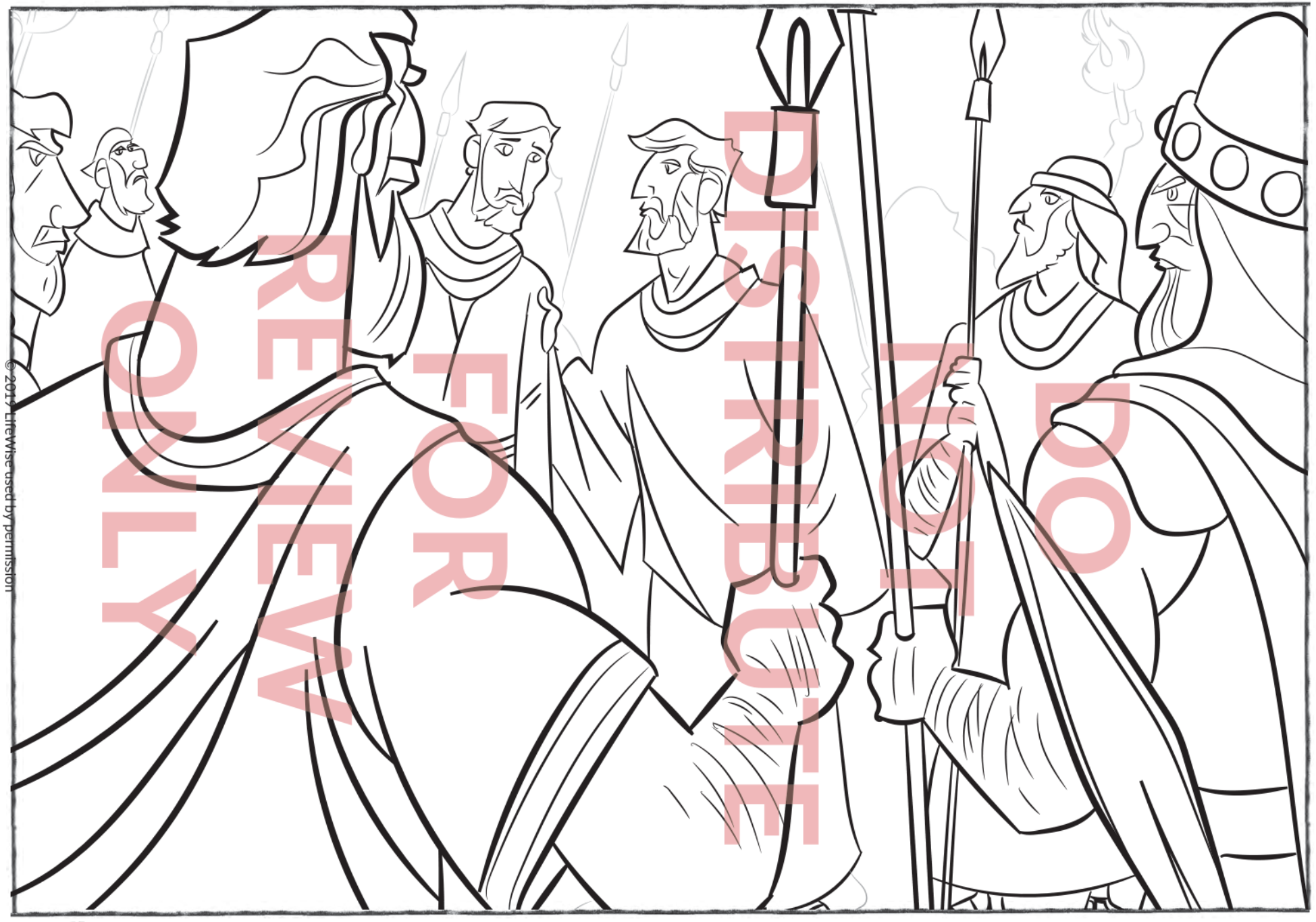

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JESUS WAS BETRAYED AND ARRESTED.

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Olive Tree Prayer

Instructions: Print and use as directed in the leader guide.

L 86 Jesus' Last Supper and Arrest | COMMITMENT

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LESSON 87: SACRIFICE

JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS

Matthew 27:11–66

JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS

- Matthew 27:11–66
- Big Picture Q&A: Why did Jesus die on the cross? Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins and came back to life to show we are forgiven.
- Key Passage: 1 Corinthians 15:3–4 – For I passed on to you as most important what I also received; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

JESUS CONNECTION

We deserve to die because of our sin, but God loves us and kept His promise to send a Savior. Jesus never sinned, but He died in our place. He was the blood sacrifice made once and for all for the forgiveness of sin. Jesus rose from the dead on the third day, and those who trust in Him have forgiveness and eternal life.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

SACRIFICE – Giving of myself to help someone else.

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LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Jesus' crucifixion, burial and resurrection are the center of the gospel. Jesus accomplished the plan God had been working out throughout the Old Testament to bring salvation to sinners, and it happened in such an unlikely way.

In the book of Acts, Peter testified to the Israelites about Jesus' death: "Though He was delivered up according to God's determined plan and foreknowledge, you used lawless people to nail Him to a cross and kill Him" (Acts 2:23). Crucifixion was a horrific way to die. As you teach students, rather than focus on the graphic details of how Jesus died, emphasize why He died. Two primary reasons stand out: God is loving, and God is just.

First, God is loving. He sent His Son to be the Savior of the world because He loves us (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; 1 John 4:10). Jesus submitted to the Father's will; He humbled Himself and came to Earth as a man, and He laid down His life because He loves us (Eph. 5:2).

Jesus lived the perfect life we failed to live and died the guilty death we don't want to die. Those who trust in Him receive forgiveness and eternal life.

Second, God is just. God's law for the people was plain (Deut. 6:5). But God's people, and all people, broke the law. We have loved other things more than we love God. That is sin. So, why did Jesus have to die? Why couldn't He just say, "You are forgiven"? Because God is just, He requires due payment for sin. To simply forgive sin without requiring a payment would be unjust.

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Jesus was our substitute, taking our place on the cross and absorbing God's wrath on our behalf so we can be forgiven and declared righteous (Rom. 3:25–26; Col. 2:13–15). Jesus died to release sinners from slavery to sin, and when we trust in Him, we are free indeed.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

During our last lesson, we learned about the Last Supper and Jesus' arrest. What new commands did Jesus give His followers at the Last Supper? (*Love one another, take communion in remembrance of His death.*) Jesus was arrested and tried. What difficult things did Jesus go through? (*He was betrayed, arrested, deserted, denied by Peter three times.*) Why was Jesus willing to go through this very difficult part of God's plan? (*He knew He must be the sacrifice for our sins so we could be forgiven by God.*)

From the beginning of the Gospels, back through the Old Testament prophets and back all the way to Genesis in the beginning, everything that happened fits together to tell a bigger story of God's plan to rescue people from sin. The promise God made at the very beginning finally comes true in today's story.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Role Play (Older Students)

- Choose three students to act out a scene. Two students will play the part of siblings and one will be the parent. In the skit, the younger sibling breaks the toy of the older one, and the parent must decide what to do.

- Imagine that your younger brother or sister broke your favorite toy. How would you feel? What would you want your parents to do? When we do something wrong, we get punished, right? That's how it is with our sin. Sin is when we disobey God, and we deserve to be punished. But instead of punishing us, God sent Jesus to take the punishment for us! It was all part of God's rescue plan that we'll hear about today.

Impossible Task (Older Students)

- Give the class an impossible task to do, such as picking up a lot of confetti off the floor in thirty seconds or wrapping 10 boxes in wrapping paper in one minute.

- How did you feel when you were unable to complete the task? [*Invite responses.*] Have there ever been other things that were impossible for you to do? Just like it was impossible for you to pick up all that confetti (or other task), it's also impossible for us to save ourselves from our sin. Only Jesus Christ can do that! Today, we're going to learn that Jesus died on the cross for us.

Let the Crowd Decide (Older and Younger Students)

- Form two groups of students and have them stand at opposite sides of the room. Explain that you are going to give them an option between two things. Group members must agree on an option and then shout it out together. Alternate between the groups each time.

- Give the following options or offer your own:
  - Peanut butter and jelly sandwich or macaroni and cheese?
  - Basketball or soccer?
  - Chocolate cake or strawberry ice cream?
  - Morning or evening?
  - Science or math?

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- Cats or dogs?

- Today, we are going to hear a Bible story about a time when a crowd had to choose between Jesus and a criminal named Barabbas (buh RAB uhs). Let's find out whom they chose.

Snake Stomp (Younger Students)

- Give each student a copy of the snake template. Allow a couple of minutes for the class to color the snakes and cut them out along the solid lines. Guide students to stand in a circle and set the snakes on the floor. Remove one snake and lead them to walk around the snakes in a circle. When you shout, "Look out!" they should each stomp on a snake. The player without a snake is out. Play several rounds, removing a snake each time.

- Today, we are going to hear about when Jesus died on the cross. What might a snake have to do with Jesus' dying on a cross? You might remember in Genesis 3 when sin entered the world, God promised that He would send someone to crush the head of the snake. God had a plan all along to put an end to sin and death. We will find out how He did that in our story.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

1 Corinthians 15:3–4

For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

Gift Pass and Order (Older Students)

- Before class, write a word or phrase of the key passage on separate slips of paper. Place the slips in a gift bag. One at a time, students will pull out one of the strips. Invite the class to work together to put the passage in the correct order as they draw out a slip. Plan to have enough slips for every student to have one or repeat the activity with small groups. God saves us through faith in Jesus. There is nothing that we can do to earn our salvation. The Bible tells us it is a gift from God. Let's work on memorizing our Key Passage this week!

Echo (Older and Younger Students)

- Show the key passage poster and read it aloud together. Split the class into two groups (boys and girls, etc.). Read it again several times, one phrase at a time, having the first group of students echo you and the second group echo the first group.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: Why did Jesus die on the cross?

A: *Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins and came back to life to show we are forgiven.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Jesus Died on the Cross | Matthew 27:11–66

Jesus stood before Pilate, the governor. Pilate asked Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?"

Jesus answered, "Yes, that's right." Then, the religious leaders made accusations against Jesus, but Jesus did not say anything. Pilate was surprised that Jesus was silent.

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Every year at Passover, the governor would free a prisoner—whichever prisoner the people chose. At that time, there was a prisoner named Barabbas (buh RAB uhs) **who was very bad. So, Pilate asked the crowd, "Who do you want me to set free? Barabbas or Jesus, who is called the Messiah?"**

The crowd answered, "Barabbas!"

Pilate asked, "Then what should I do with Jesus, who is called the Messiah?"

The crowd answered, "Crucify Him!"

Pilate asked, "Why? What has He done wrong?"

But the crowd kept shouting, "Crucify Him!" **Pilate's soldiers took Jesus to the governor's palace and gathered around Him. They took off His clothes and put a scarlet robe on Him. They made a crown of thorns and put it on His head. Then, they hit Jesus and mocked Him.** "Hail, King of the Jews!" they said.

The soldiers nailed Jesus to a cross. Then, they cast lots to decide who would get His clothes. **They put a sign above His head that said: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Two criminals were crucified next to Him.**

As Jesus was on the cross, people mocked Him. "He saved others, but He cannot save Himself!" they said.

From noon until three in the afternoon, darkness covered the land. Then, Jesus cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Jesus shouted again with a loud voice, "It is finished!" Then, Jesus died.

Suddenly, the curtain in the temple sanctuary split in two, from top to bottom, and there was an earthquake. One of the soldiers near the cross said, "This man really was God's Son!"

Jesus was buried in a rich man's tomb cut into a rock. **A stone was sealed in front of the tomb and Roman soldiers stood guard so that no one could steal Jesus' body.**

JESUS CONNECTION

We deserve to die because of our sin, but God loves us and kept His promise to send a Savior. Jesus never sinned, but He died in our place. He was the blood sacrifice made once and for all for the forgiveness of sin. Jesus rose from the dead on the third day, and those who trust in Him have forgiveness and eternal life.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

SACRIFICE – Giving of myself to help someone else.

Living LifeWise

Because God sent Jesus as a sacrifice for our sins, we can willingly sacrifice for others.

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Character Connection

All of us can fill in for someone else. But we usually don't volunteer for it. Why? Because sacrifice is hard. We mostly sacrifice if we get something out of it, like payment or praise. Also, we tend to fill in or substitute for people we like or have to help (like friends or siblings). Most of us don't willingly sacrifice for someone we don't like, do we?

Today's story, though, shows us a different way. Jesus was a willing substitute for us. He chose to sacrifice His own life on the cross so that we could be saved. He took God's anger for sin on Himself and chose to die for *His enemies* (Rom. 5:8). His blood, shed on the cross for us, shows that God's way means willingly giving of ourselves for others. That is God's way. Because Christ has died for us, He will give us the strength and desire to sacrifice for others.

What would it look like for you to sacrifice in these situations?

- Giving your warmest coat to someone you know does not have one
- Picking the name of your team for a school-wide kickball game
- Choosing teams in gym class or at recess

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BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- **Which prisoner did the people want Pilate to release?**

  Barabbas, Mt. 27:20–21

- **What did the people want to do with Jesus?**

  Crucify Him, Mt. 27:22

- **Who was crucified next to Jesus?**

  Two criminals, Mt. 27:38

- **What incredible things happened as soon as Jesus died?**

  An earthquake, the temple curtain was torn in two from top to bottom, people who had died came out of their tombs and appeared to many in the city, Mt. 27:51–53

- **Where was Jesus buried?**

  A tomb cut into a rock, Mt. 27:59–60

- **Why would it have been difficult for someone to get into Jesus' tomb?**

  It was sealed with a large stone and Roman guards were posted outside the entrance, Mt. 27:66

- **Why did Jesus die on the cross?**

  Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins and came back to life to show we are forgiven.

- **Why was Jesus' sacrifice enough to pay for our sins?**

  He is our sinless substitute, 1 Jn. 3:5, 1 Jn. 4:10

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Frozen Scenes (Older and Younger Students)

- Briefly review the points of the story with the class. Divide the class into four groups. Challenge each group to create a scene that represents one of the events of the story (the trial, Jesus being mocked, Jesus being crucified between two criminals and Jesus' death). Then, retell the story in more detail, inviting each group to freeze in their scene when you reach that event.

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Free the Captives (Older and Younger Students)

- Form two teams. Choose two students, one from each team, to face off in a game of "Rock, Paper, Scissors." The winner stays in the game while the other player goes to his team's "prison" (have them sit against a wall at the front of the room) while the next player from his team plays. If the players tie, the first student to call out, "It is finished!" frees her teammates from prison. The team that sends all of the other team's players to prison wins.

- Jesus was crucified on the cross. His death and resurrection freed people from something much worse than prison. Jesus died on the cross to save people from sin, and He is alive. When we trust in Jesus, we are freed from the power of sin and receive eternal life with God.

Curtain Torn in Two (Older and Younger Students)

- Display a sheet or a large sheet of paper or poster board in the front of the classroom. An adult helper will stand behind the sheet so the class can't see him.

- In the temple, there was a large, thick curtain. Behind that curtain was the ark of the covenant, where God's Presence dwelt above the mercy seat. The curtain separated people from God because we are sinful and we can't stand in front of the holy God! When Jesus was crucified on the cross, something strange happened. The curtain separating us from God was torn in two from top to bottom!

- Guide another leader or student to cut the sheet from top to bottom, and let it fall away so the students can see the leader behind it. Jesus' death makes it possible for us to be near to God. We aren't separated from Him by a curtain or anything else! We can come to Him freely because our sin is forgiven when we trust Jesus!

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Search and Rescue Match (Older Students)

- Mystery Picture (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Lord God, as we think about Jesus dying a death He didn't deserve, we realize that we deserve death for our sins. Thank You for sending Your Son to rescue us from sin and death. We want to remember Jesus' great sacrifice and live in a way that brings glory to our Savior. We love You, God. Amen.

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Journal Page

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why didn't Jesus fight back against the people who hurt Him?
- Why is it strange that the soldiers made fun of Jesus for saying He was a King?
- What happened when Jesus died? How did the disciples feel?

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JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS

MATTHEW 27:11–66

MAIN POINT: JESUS WAS CRUCIFIED ON THE CROSS.

Jesus stood before Pilate, the governor. Pilate asked Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?"

Jesus answered, "Yes, that's right." Then, the religious leaders made accusations against Jesus, but Jesus did not say anything.

Every year at Passover, the governor would free a prisoner—whichever prisoner the people chose. At that time, there was a prisoner named Barabbas who was very bad. So Pilate asked the crowd, "Whom do you want me to set free? Barabbas or Jesus, who is called the Messiah?"

The crowd answered, "Barabbas!"

Pilate asked, "Then, what should I do with Jesus, who is called the Messiah?"

The crowd answered, "Crucify Him!"

Pilate's soldiers took Jesus to the governor's palace and gathered around Him. They took off His clothes and put a scarlet robe on Him. They made a crown of thorns and put it on His head. Then, they hit Jesus and mocked Him.

The soldiers nailed Jesus to a cross. They put a sign above His head that said: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Two criminals were crucified next to Him.

From noon until three in the afternoon, darkness covered the land. Then, Jesus cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Jesus shouted again with a loud voice, "It is finished!" Then, Jesus died. Jesus was buried in a rich man's tomb. A stone was sealed in front of the tomb and Roman soldiers stood guard so that no one could steal Jesus' body.

Jesus Connection: *We deserve to die because of our sin, but God loves us and kept His promise to send a Savior. Jesus never sinned, but He died in our place. He was the blood sacrifice made once and for all for the forgiveness of sin. Jesus rose from the dead on the third day, and those who trust in Him have forgiveness and eternal life.*

Key Passage: *1 Corinthians 15:3-4 – For I passed on to you as most important what I also received; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.*

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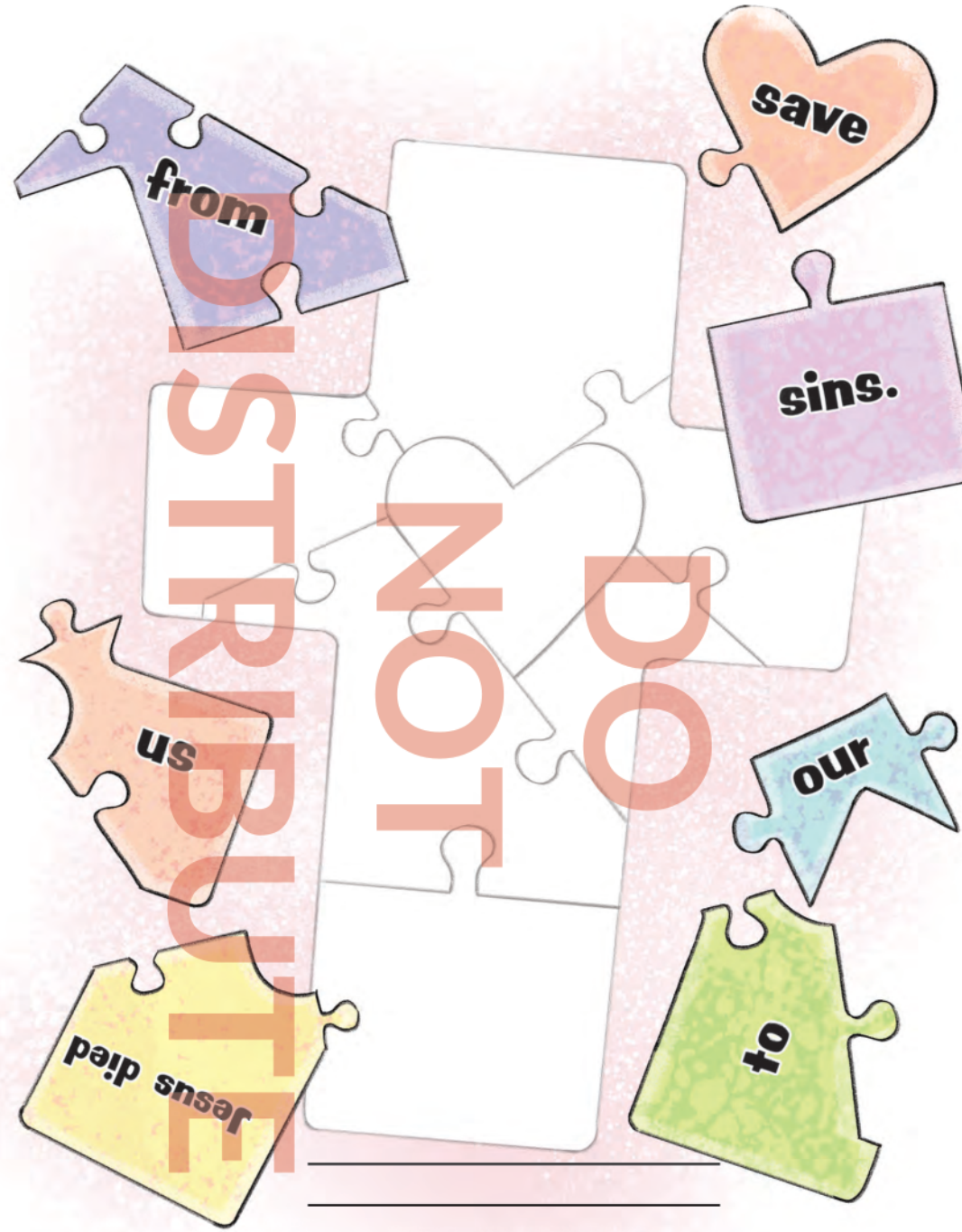
SEARCH AND RESCUE MATCH

Cross out the items that do not have a match. Then, share with a friend how the remaining items fit in the Bible story.





PUZZLE PIECES

Copy the words from the puzzle pieces into their correct places.

Why did Jesus die on the cross?

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MYSTERY PICTURE

INSTRUCTIONS: Color each section labeled *2* black. Color all other sections red.



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KEY PASSAGE:
1 Corinthians 15:3–4 – For I passed on to you as most important what I also received; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:
- Why did Jesus die on the cross? Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins and came back to life to show we are forgiven.

BIBLE STORY:
JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS
- Jesus went before the governor, Pilate.
- Pilate offered to release Jesus or Barabbas.
- The people chose Barabbas and shouted for Jesus to be killed.
- Jesus was crucified on the cross.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:
- Why were the people so angry about Jesus?
- Why is Jesus' death so important?
- Who can be saved by Jesus' sacrifice?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:
- Use dulled nails, jewelry wire and twine to make cross necklaces. Talk to your kids about the importance of Jesus' death. Encourage them to wear their necklace as a reminder to themselves and a conversation starter with friends.

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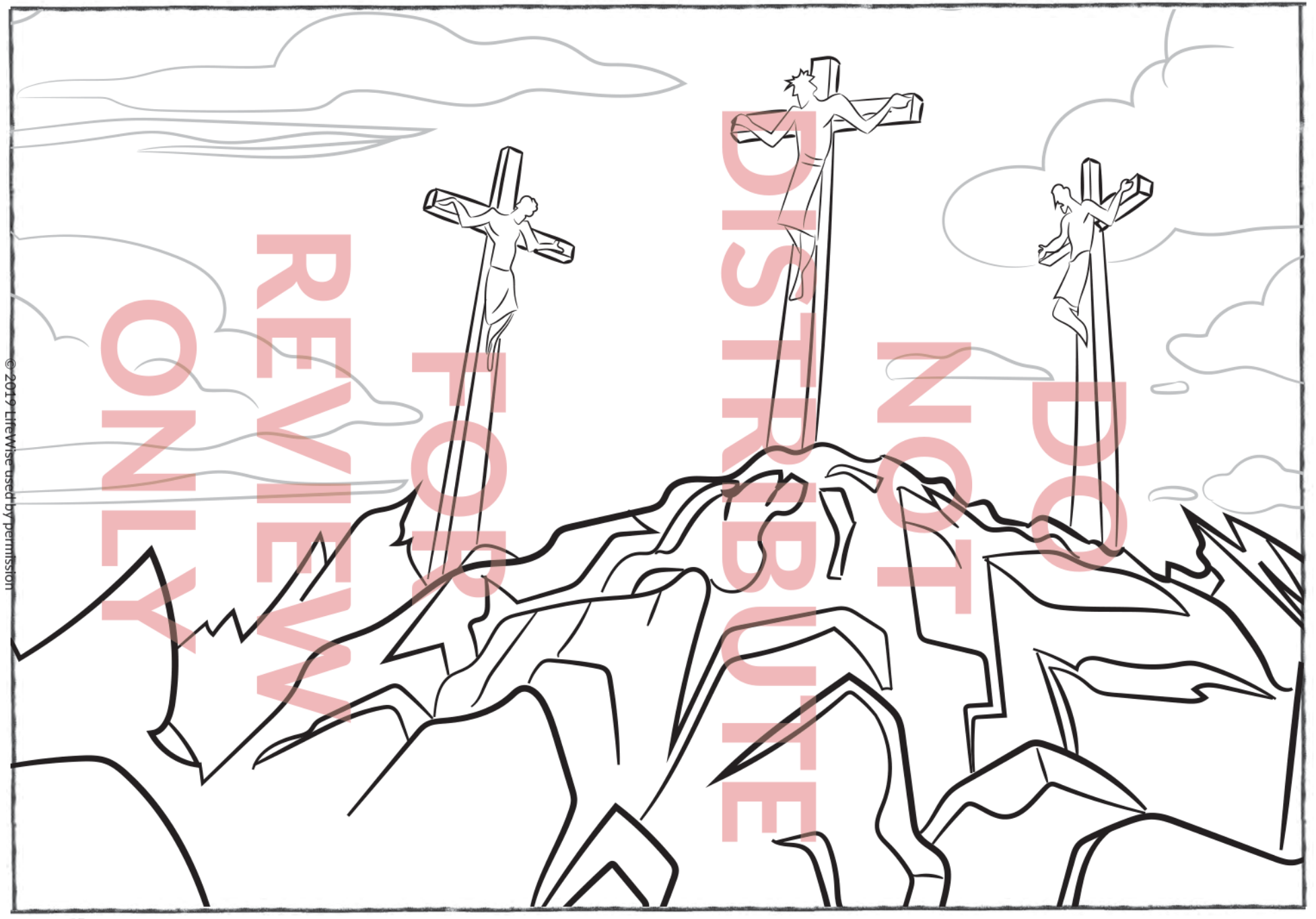

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JESUS WAS CRUCIFIED ON THE CROSS.

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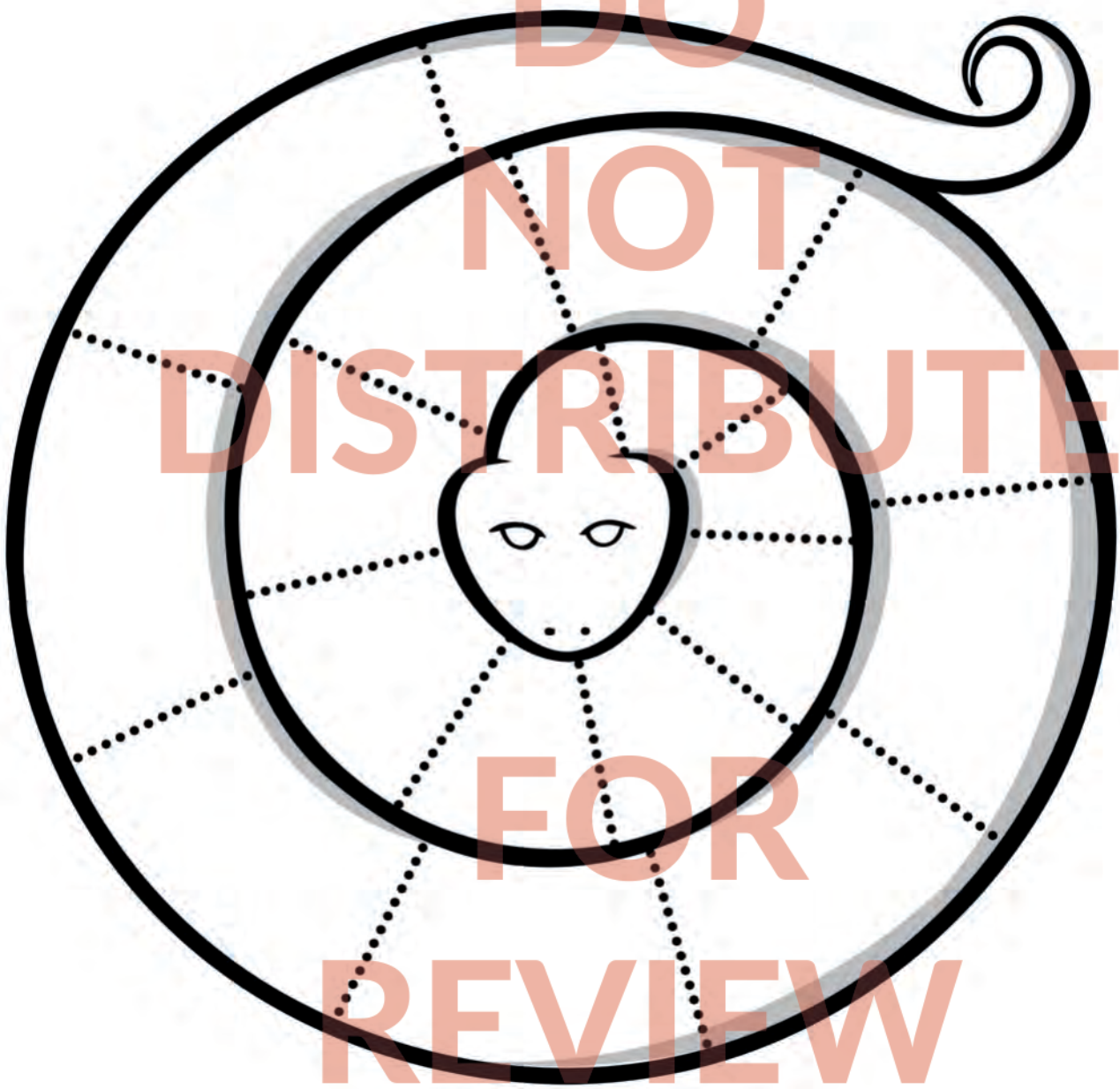
Snake Template

Instructions: Print and use as directed in the leader guide.

L 87 Jesus Died on the Cross | SACRIFICE



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LESSON 88: FORGIVENESS

JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD

Matthew 28:1–15; John 20:1–18

JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD

- Matthew 28:1–15; John 20:1–18
- Big Picture Q&A: Why did Jesus die on the cross? Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins and came back to life to show we are forgiven.
- Key Passage: 1 Corinthians 15:3–4 – For I passed on to you as most important what I also received; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

JESUS CONNECTION

Jesus died on the cross for our sins, but He didn't stay dead. God was pleased with Jesus' sacrifice and raised Jesus from the dead to reign as King over all creation. Jesus provides salvation from sin and the promise of eternal life.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

FORGIVENESS – Letting go of a grudge against someone who has wronged me.

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LEADER BIBLE STUDY

The time between Friday afternoon and Sunday morning must have been dark hours for Jesus' disciples. Fear, doubt and confusion certainly overwhelmed their thoughts. Jesus, their Lord, was dead. He had been unjustly arrested, falsely accused and severely beaten. Even worse, He had been killed in a horrible manner—by crucifixion.

The story doesn't end there. Jesus' body was laid in a tomb. The tomb was sealed and guards watched over it. The Jews remembered Jesus' claim that He would rise from the dead (John 2:19–21), and they made sure no one could steal His body and insist He had risen. Imagine their surprise when Jesus did rise from the dead!

John and Peter saw the empty tomb. Jesus appeared to Mary. The disciples believed Jesus had risen from the dead. Even though the guards at the tomb were bribed to lie about what happened (they said the disciples stole Jesus' body), the truth spread. The disciples wouldn't have dedicated their lives and died for something they knew was a lie.

If Christ had remained dead, His death would have meant nothing more than yours or mine. Humanity would still be dead in sin. But God gives us victory over sin and death through His Son, Jesus. The resurrection gives us hope that we too will one day be raised and changed (Rom. 6:5, 8:11).

Paul addressed in 1 Corinthians 15:7 just how essential Jesus' resurrection is to the gospel: "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins." The resurrection is proof that God was satisfied with Jesus' sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins and that God's new covenant had begun.

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Emphasize to your students that Jesus is alive! We believe this by faith. Today, Jesus is seated at the right hand of God and reigns as King over all of creation (Phil. 2:9–10).

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Last week, we learned that Jesus had been arrested, beaten, mocked and then crucified. What does it mean to be crucified? (*Nailed to a cross.*) What happened after Jesus died on the cross to show that He was the son of God? (*There was an earthquake and the temple curtain was torn in two.*) Where was Jesus' body placed after He died? (*In a tomb.*) Why did the religious leaders have Jesus' tomb sealed and guards placed outside it? (*They thought Jesus' followers might steal His body and claim He rose from the dead.*) Today's Bible story happened shortly after Jesus' death—on the third day—and it shows us how we know Jesus has victory over sin and death. Our story is called "Jesus' Resurrection." *Resurrection* means "the act of rising from the dead."

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Whom Are You Looking For? (Older and Younger Students)

- Guide the class to stand. Explain that you are going to describe someone. Anyone who doesn't match the description should sit down. Begin with general descriptions such as, "I am looking for someone who is a girl." (*All the boys should sit down.*) Then, "I am looking for someone who is wearing red." Continue until only one student remains. Then, say, "I'm looking for [*student's name*]!" Allow that player to give the next set of descriptions as the class plays again.

- Today, we are going to hear a Bible story about something that happened a few days after Jesus died on the cross. Mary went to the tomb because she was looking for Jesus' body. We will find out what happened next!

Where's the Power? (Older and Younger Students)

- Before the session, hide flashlight batteries in the room. Show the class a flashlight without batteries. Try turning it on and show them how it doesn't work. Invite the class to search the room to find a source of power for the flashlight. Put the batteries in and turn on the light.

- This flashlight needs batteries for power; otherwise, it won't work. Today, we'll hear how Jesus was resurrected on the third day by God's power. Apart from God, nothing works. God showed His mighty power by raising Jesus to life, defeating death!

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

1 Corinthians 15:3–4

For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

Consonant Clues (Older Students)

- Before the session, write the key passage on a large piece of poster board or white board, leaving a space in place of each vowel. Show the key passage poster and read it aloud together. Hide the key passage poster and display the consonants-only key passage you prepared. Challenge students to take turns saying the key passage from memory, using the consonant poster as a help.

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Finish It Off (Older and Younger Students)

- Begin by saying the key passage all together. Then start students off and have them say the last few words on their own. Repeat, allowing them to say a longer portion at the end. Keep repeating the passage until they can say the entire verse on their own.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: Why did Jesus die on the cross?

A: *Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins and came back to life to show we are forgiven.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Jesus Rose From the Dead | Matthew 28:1–15; John 20:1–18

On the third day after Jesus' death, Mary Magdalene (MAG duh leen) **went to Jesus' tomb. It was still dark, and she saw that the large stone at the entrance had been moved away.**

Mary ran to Simon Peter and John. "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put Him!" she said.

Peter and John ran to the tomb. John looked inside and saw the linen cloths lying there. Then Peter went into the tomb and saw the linen cloths too. The cloth that had been around Jesus' head was folded up. **John believed that Jesus was alive. Then, Peter and John went back home.**

Mary stood outside the tomb and cried. When she looked inside, she saw two angels sitting there. They said to her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

"Because they've taken away my Lord, and I don't know where they've put Him," she said. **Then, Mary turned around. Jesus stood in front of her, but she did not recognize Him.**

Jesus said, "Woman, why are you crying? Whom are you looking for?"

Mary thought Jesus might be the gardener. She replied, "Sir, if you have taken Jesus away, tell me where you've put Him and I will go get Him."

Jesus said, "Mary."

Mary turned around and said, "Teacher!"

Jesus sent Mary to tell the other disciples that He was going back to the Father. Mary did what Jesus said, and she told the disciples, "I have seen the Lord!"

Meanwhile, some of the guards from Jesus' tomb went into the city and told the religious leaders everything that had happened. The leaders got together and made a plan. They gave the soldiers a lot of money and told them to lie about what they saw.

"Say that Jesus' disciples came in the night and stole His body while you were sleeping," they said. So, the guards took the money and lied about Jesus' resurrection.

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JESUS CONNECTION

Jesus died on the cross for our sins, but He didn't stay dead. God was pleased with Jesus' sacrifice and raised Jesus from the dead to reign as King over all creation. Jesus provides salvation from sin and the promise of eternal life.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

FORGIVENESS – Letting go of a grudge against someone who has wronged me.

Living LifeWise

Because God has forgiven us, we are free to show forgiveness to others.

Character Connection

Bridges link two sides of land that are so far apart we can't get between them. Or they cross a river or a steep drop. But bridges aren't just for roads or trains. People need bridges, too.

We can be separated from each other by unkind words, hurtful actions, angry responses or hard circumstances, and we don't always know how to repair a broken relationship. And all people are separated from God by the uncrossable divide of sin. We can't come near God on our own. We need a bridge. That's why Jesus came and died and rose again. He is our bridge. His sacrifice for our sins is sufficient so we can be forgiven for our sins and have a relationship with God.

That is very good news! When we receive forgiveness from God, He helps us to show that same forgiveness to others. He helps us to build a bridge over the hard things and the hurts that keep us from having good relationships with other people. Showing forgiveness isn't always easy. It's a choice we need God to help us make, sometimes over and over. But forgiveness is a big deal to God. He offers it to us, so He can and will help us show it to others.

How might you show God's forgiveness in these situations?

- Someone spills their drink all over the homework you just finished and you have to start over again.
- Your classmate cheated off your test/homework, but the teacher blames you instead.
- A friend promised to hang out with you, but made other plans without telling you.
- Your aunt shares something about you with her friends that's really embarrassing.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- Who went to the tomb early in the morning?

  Mary, Mt. 28:1; Jn. 20:1

- Which two disciples went into Jesus' empty tomb?

  Peter and John, Jn. 20:4–8

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- What did Peter and John discover at Jesus' tomb?

  Jesus' burial clothes, Jn. 20:6–7

- Before Mary recognized Jesus, who did she think He was?

  The gardener, Jn. 20:15

- What did Mary do after she saw Jesus?

  Went to tell the other disciples, Jn. 20:18

- What did the religious leaders do when they found out Jesus' tomb was empty?

  Bribed the guards to say the disciples stole Jesus' body, Mt. 28:12–13

- Why did Jesus die on the cross?

  Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins and came back to life to show we are forgiven.

- Why is it important that Jesus was raised from the dead?

  It shows that God accepted Jesus' sacrifice for our sin

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Resurrection Acrostic (Older Students)

- Write the word *resurrection* vertically on a dry erase board or a large sheet of paper. Invite the students to take turns coming up to the board and writing words that remind them of the resurrection story that begins with each letter listed. Help them spell words as needed.

- These are all great ideas! The true story of Jesus' death and resurrection is one of the most exciting stories in all of Scripture. God's plan to rescue the world from sin had finally come to pass, and Jesus defeated death.

Empty Tomb Game (Older and Younger Students)

- Create a tape circle on the floor. Place a ball in the center of the circle. Explain that the ball is the "door" of the tomb. Challenge students to answer questions about Jesus' life, death or resurrection. After answering a question correctly, students may roll one ball to try to knock the "door" to the tomb out of the circle.

- Jesus died on the cross, but He didn't stay dead. Jesus was resurrected on the third day. God was pleased with Jesus' sacrifice and raised Jesus from the dead to reign as King over all creation (Phil 2:9–11). Jesus provides salvation from sin and the promise of eternal life.

Gospel Plan Mosaic (Older and Younger Students)

- Before the session, cut various colors of construction paper into small rectangle or triangle shapes for the class to use as mosaic pieces. Collect the paper in a bin or basket. Form five groups of students. Give each group a gospel plan picture. Invite them to use the mosaic pieces to fill in their group's picture together. As students work, call attention to each shape and explain its significance to the gospel:

  - *Crown*—God gives. The Bible tells us God created everything, including you and me, and He is in charge of everything.
  - *X*—We sinned. We all choose to disobey God. The Bible calls this sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death.

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- *Cross*—God provided. God sent Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us.
- *Gift*—Jesus gives. Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever!
- *Hands*—We respond. Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

- The gospel is the good news about what Jesus has done for us through His life, death and resurrection. The gospel is not a list of things we must do in order to get to God. All we do is receive the gift of salvation from Jesus with empty hands, willing to turn away from ourselves and our sin and look to Him as Lord and Savior.

Empty Tomb Craft (Younger Students)

- Provide a variety of craft supplies, and invite students to create a scene of the empty tomb. Suggestions may include:
  - Cut a half-circle of gray construction paper then draw a doorway with marker.
  - Glue white tissue paper onto the doorway to represent the burial linens.
  - Cut a circle of gray construction paper to represent the stone in front of the tomb.
  - Use a brad fastener to attach the stone to the paper, so students can "roll" the stone away, revealing the empty tomb.

- The fact that Jesus' tomb was empty is really good news for us! Jesus is alive, which means He has defeated death and sin! God showed His power when Jesus was resurrected on the third day. When we trust in Jesus, His power defeats the sin in our lives, too.

Pantomime (Younger Students)

- Retell the Bible story using the bolded words. Invite the class to participate as you read by pantomiming the actions in each statement. Practice each action before telling the story.
  - Mary Magdalene went to Jesus' tomb. (Walk in place)
  - Mary ran to Simon Peter and John. (Run in place)
  - Peter and John ran to the tomb. (Run in place)
  - John looked inside and saw the linen cloths lying there. (Put hands around eyes as if using binoculars)
  - Mary stood outside the tomb and cried. (Pretend to cry)
  - Mary turned around. (Turn around 180 degrees)
  - Mary turned around and said, "Teacher!" (Turn around 180 degrees)

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- What's Different? (Older Students)
- Spot the Differences (Younger Students)

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Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Lord God, we celebrate because we know that we serve a living God. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead brings new life to all those who trust in You. Thank You for the gift of salvation through Your Son. We love You. Amen.

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Journal Page

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why is Jesus' resurrection so important?
- How do you think Peter, John and Mary felt when they learned Jesus was alive?
- Where is Jesus today?

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JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD

MATTHEW 28:1–15; JOHN 20:1–18

MAIN POINT: JESUS WAS RESURRECTED ON THE THIRD DAY.

On the third day after Jesus' death, Mary Magdalene went to Jesus' tomb. It was still dark, and she saw that the large stone at the entrance had been moved away.

Mary ran to Simon Peter and John. "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put Him!" she said.

Peter and John ran to the tomb. John looked inside and saw the linen cloths lying there. Then, Peter went into the tomb and saw the linen cloths too. John believed that Jesus was alive. Then, Peter and John went back home.

Mary stood outside the tomb and cried. Then, Mary turned around. Jesus stood in front of her, but she did not recognize Him.

Jesus said, "Woman, why are you crying? Whom are you looking for?"

Mary thought Jesus might be the gardener. She replied, "Sir, if you have taken Jesus away, tell me where you've put Him and I will go get Him."

Jesus said, "Mary."

Mary turned around and said, "Teacher!"

Jesus sent Mary to tell the other disciples that He was going back to the Father. Mary did what Jesus said, and she told the disciples, "I have seen the Lord!"

Jesus Connection: *Jesus died on the cross for our sins, but He didn't stay dead. God was pleased with Jesus' sacrifice and raised Jesus from the dead to reign as King over all creation. Jesus provides salvation from sin and the promise of eternal life.*

Key Passage: *1 Corinthians 15:3-4 – For I passed on to you as most important what I also received; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.*

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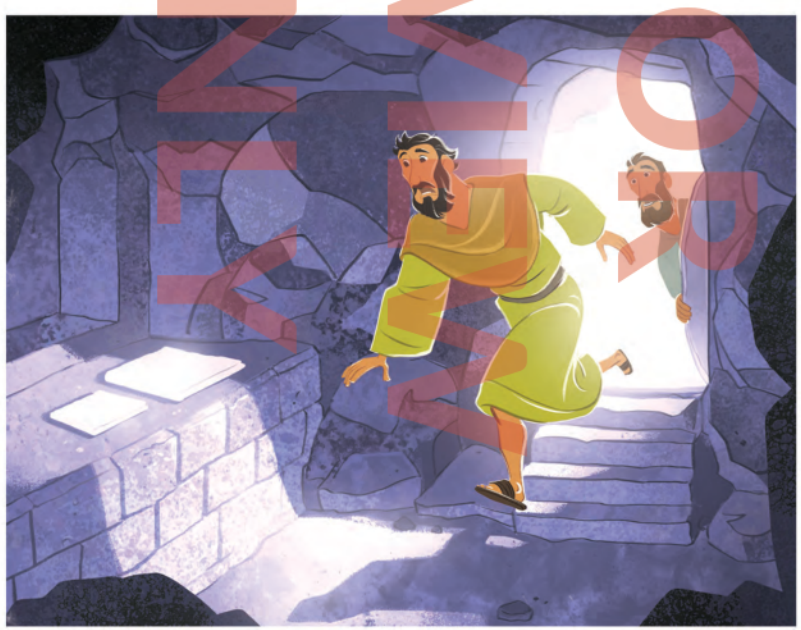

WHAT'S DIFFERENT?

Find the 10 differences between the two pictures.

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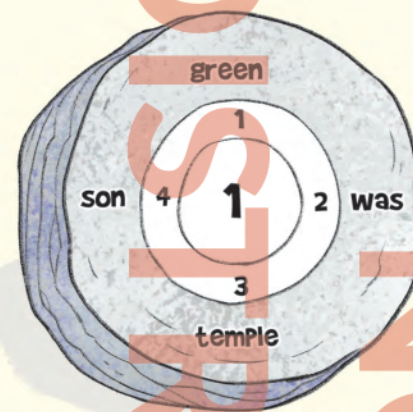
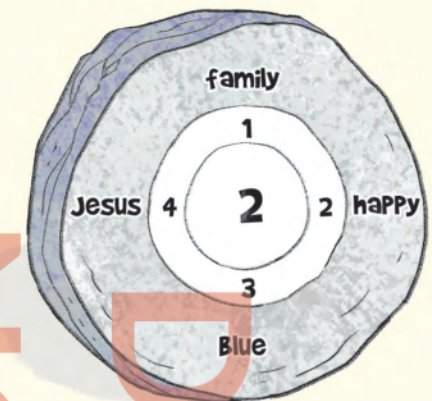
HE IS ALIVE!

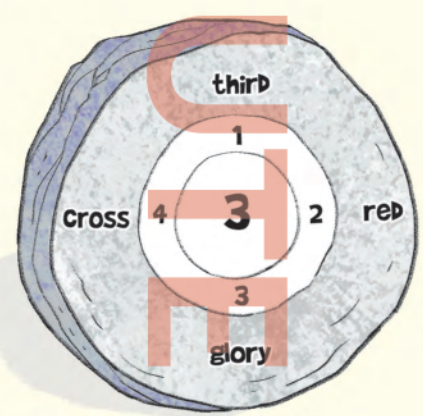
Use the code to fill in the missing words. (Hint 1–4 = first stone, fourth section)

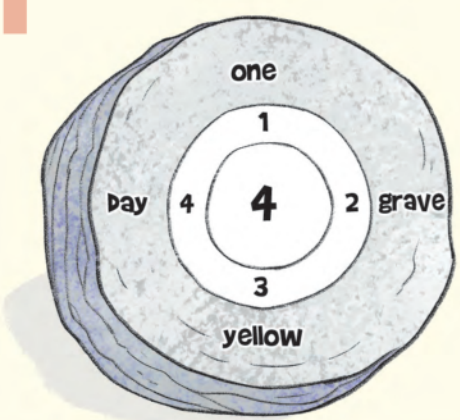




____ ____ resurrected on the ____ ____ .

2-4 1-2 3-1 4-4





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SPOT THE DIFFERENCES

INSTRUCTIONS: Look at the two pictures. Circle the six ways the second picture is different from the first.



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KEY PASSAGE:
1 Corinthians 15:3–4 – For I passed on to you as most important what I also received; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:
- Why did Jesus die on the cross? Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins and came back to life to show we are forgiven.

BIBLE STORY:
JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD
- Mary and two of Jesus' disciples went to see His body Sunday morning.
- When they arrived, His body was not there!
- Jesus was resurrected on the third day.
- Jesus sent Mary to tell the disciples that He is alive.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:
- Why is Jesus' resurrection so important?
- Whom can we tell about Jesus' resurrection?
- How do you feel knowing that Jesus is alive?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:
- Cover a balloon with papier-mache. When it dries, allow your kids to pop the balloon and show that the sculpture is empty, like Jesus' tomb.

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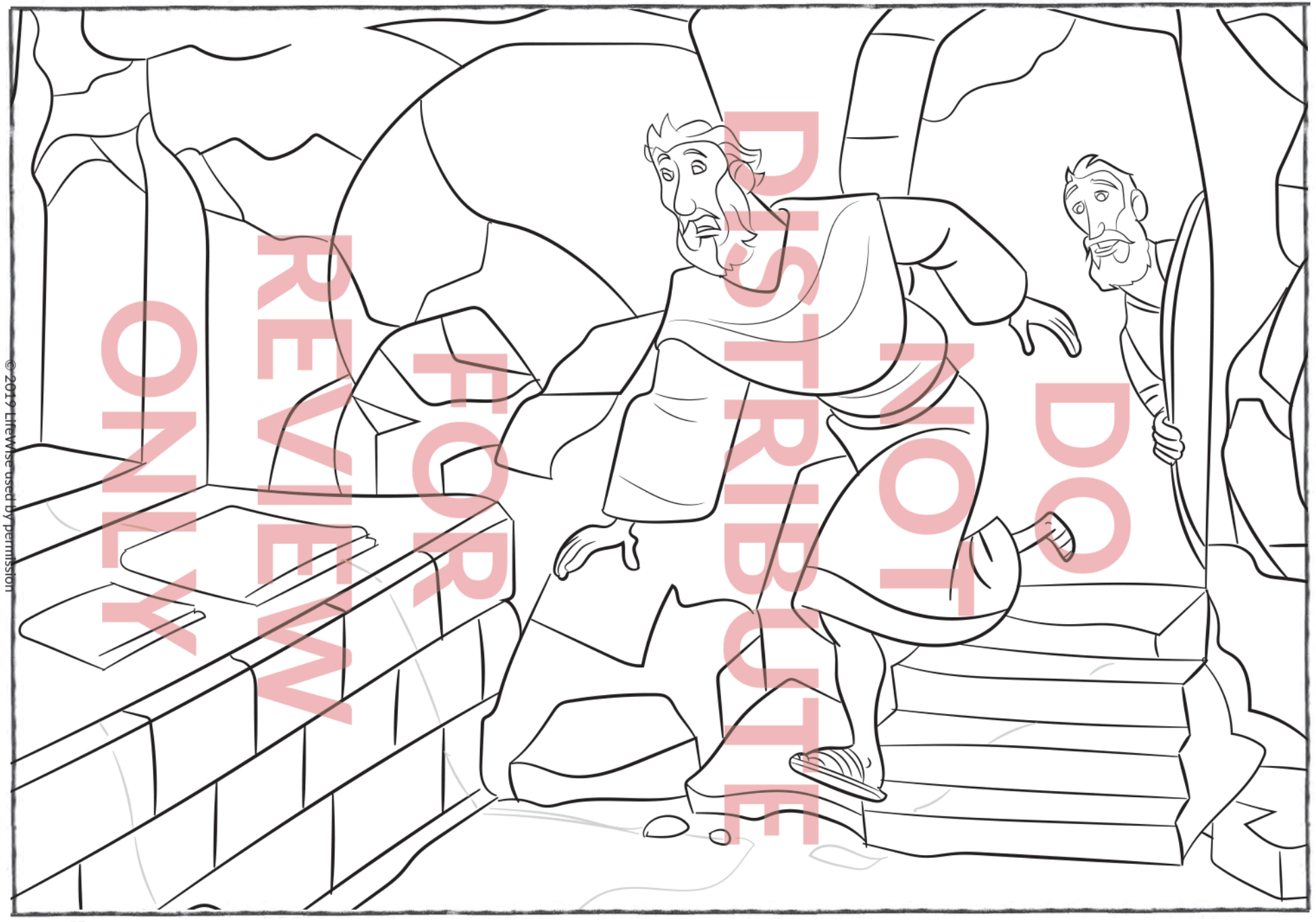

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JESUS WAS RESURRECTED ON THE THIRD DAY.

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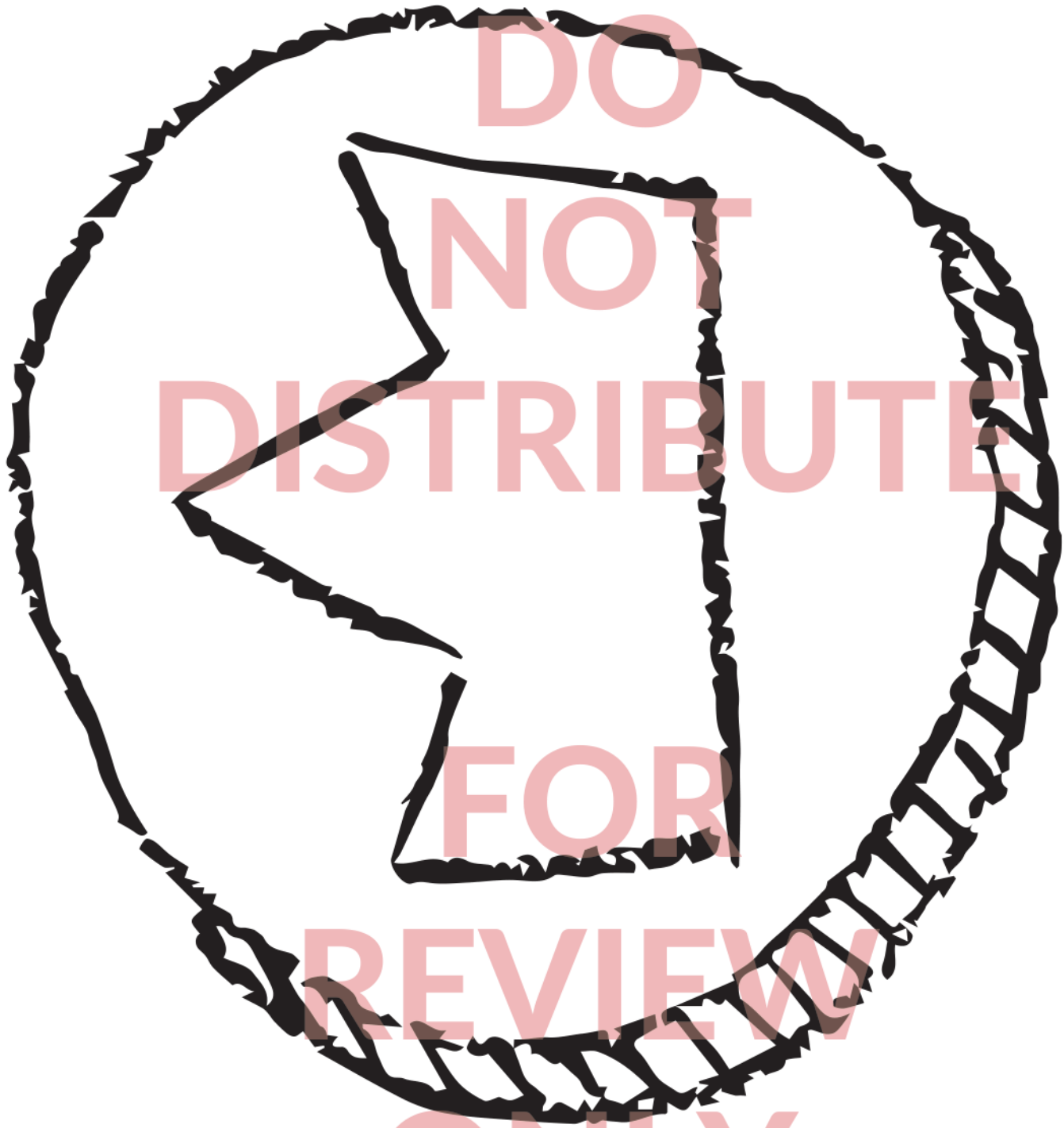
Gospel Plan Picture

Instructions: Print and use as directed in the leader guide.

L 88 Jesus Rose From the Dead | FORGIVENESS



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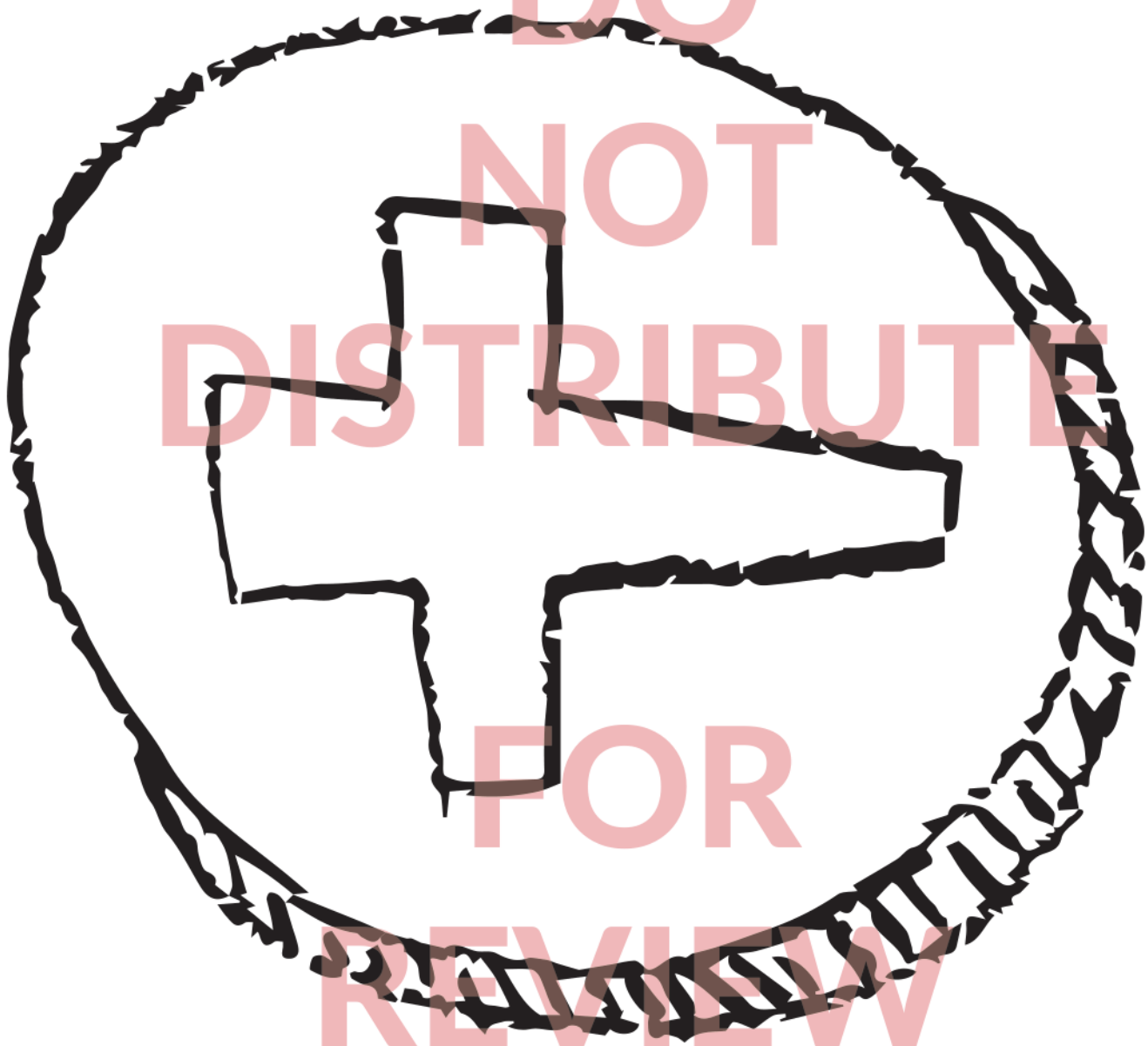

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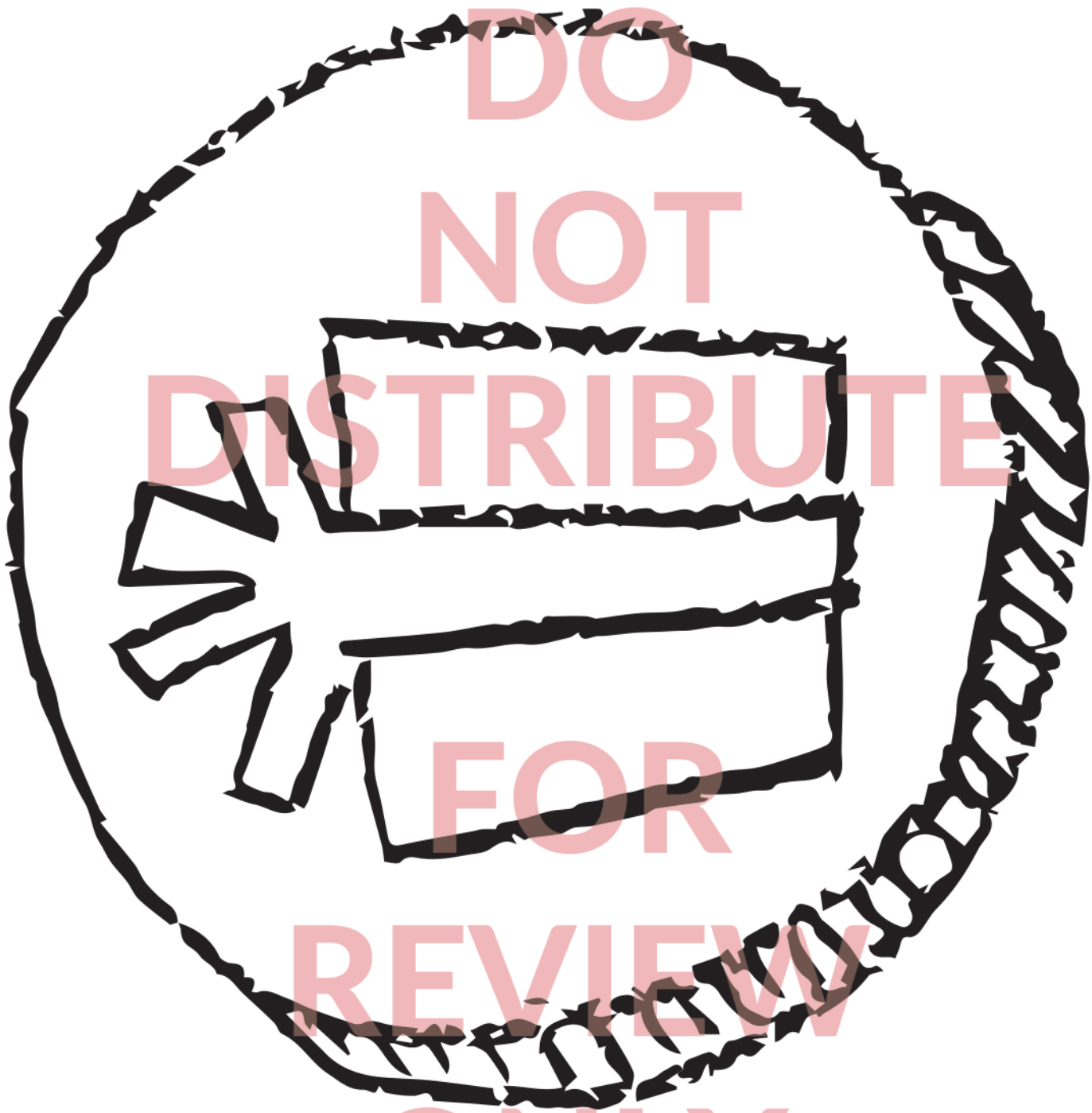

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LESSON 89: CONFIDENCE

JESUS APPEARED TO THE DISCIPLES

Luke 24:13–49; John 20:19–23

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JESUS APPEARED TO THE DISCIPLES

- Luke 24:13–49; John 20:19–23
- Big Picture Q&A: Why did Jesus die on the cross? Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins and came back to life to show we are forgiven.
- Key Passage: 1 Corinthians 15:3–4 – For I passed on to you as most important what I also received; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

JESUS CONNECTION

The whole Bible is about Jesus. When Adam and Eve sinned, God began working out His plan to send Jesus to rescue people from sin. All of the Old Testament points forward to Jesus' life, death and resurrection—the time when Jesus would bring God's promised salvation for sinners. For 40 days, Jesus presented Himself to at least 500 people and proved that He is alive (1 Corinthians 15:3–8). Jesus is still alive today. He sends out believers to tell others about Him and gives us power through the Holy Spirit.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

CONFIDENCE – Trusting in God's goodness and character no matter what.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Jesus' death and resurrection should not have surprised the disciples. Sometimes, Jesus spoke metaphorically about His death and resurrection (Matt. 12:39; Mark 14:58; John 2:19, 3:14–15). Other times, Jesus plainly told the disciples that He would be betrayed, crucified, buried and resurrected on the third day (Matt. 17:12; Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22). In fact, Jesus had spoken so frequently of His death and resurrection, the chief priests and Pharisees asked Pilate to place guards at the tomb in case the disciples stole Jesus' body (Matt. 27:62–66).

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On resurrection morning, the angel at Jesus' tomb asked the women, "Why are you looking for the living among the dead?" (Luke 24:5). Even when Peter and John ran to the empty tomb to see it for themselves, Peter was amazed but uncertain (Luke 24:12), while John believed (John 20:8).

That same day, two disciples were walking to Emmaus, arguing about recent events. Jesus began walking next to them, but God prevented them from recognizing Jesus (Luke 24:16). Jesus simply asked them what they were arguing about. They stopped walking. How could He not have heard about what had happened over the last three days?

The two disciples had hoped Jesus was the Redeemer of Israel. Their hopes were crushed when Jesus died. Now, Jesus explained to them why the Messiah had to die, starting with Moses and the Prophets.

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Jesus showed how the Scriptures point to His life, death and resurrection—and the time when Jesus would bring God's promised salvation for sinners (Luke 24:27; John 5:39).

A few days had passed since Jesus was arrested, beaten and crucified. His followers were afraid and confused. They met together in a house, locking the doors because they were afraid of the Jews. Would the Jews do to them what they had done to Jesus? They had believed that Jesus was the Messiah, but they had abandoned Him, and Jesus was killed. How could He save anyone if He was dead?

But now some people were reporting that Jesus was alive! Could it be true? The disciples were talking about these things when Jesus stood among them. They thought they were seeing a ghost.

"Peace to you!" He said. What good news. Imagine how Jesus' words might have calmed the disciples' anxious hearts. Their Lord, whom they had deserted, didn't show up to scold them for their failures or shame them for their lack of faith. He spoke peace to them.

Even though Jesus had foretold His death and resurrection (Matt. 20:17–19), Jesus showed His disciples physical proof that He was alive. He showed them His hands and His side. With His resurrection, Jesus' mission was accomplished. He paid the debt for sinners, and the transaction cleared. But the disciples' work was just beginning.

Jesus gave His followers a job to do: "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21). This verse contains the Gospel of John's version of the Great Commission. Jesus, the One sent from the Father, sent the disciples to be His messengers and representatives. Jesus equipped the disciples with the Holy Spirit to proclaim the gospel—the good news of what Jesus has done—to the world.

Emphasize to the students you teach that Jesus is alive today. We haven't seen Him for ourselves, but we believe this by faith. He sends out all believers to tell others about Him, and He gives us power through the Holy Spirit.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

All the stories we have heard from the Bible—all the way back to God creating the world—fit together to tell us the bigger story of God's plan to rescue sinners through His Son. Our timeline helps us understand what God's plan was all along, but when these things were happening, it wasn't so clear what God was up to.

We have learned about Jesus' death, that He was crucified on the cross. Why did Jesus choose to die on the cross? (*To pay the penalty for our sin.*) Last time, we learned that Jesus was resurrected on the third day, proving that His sacrifice was enough to forgive sin. Some of the women and Peter and John saw the empty tomb. After that, Jesus appeared to several people. Do you remember who they were? (*Mary Magdalene and a small group of women.*) These women told the disciples, but everyone was confused. Was Jesus really alive? Where was He? Today's story begins with two disciples traveling to a nearby city the same day Jesus rose from the dead. It's called "Jesus Appeared to the Disciples."

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Guess Who (Older Students)

- Pass out paper and pencils. Choose a student to be *It*. *It* will stand at the front of the room and write down the name of another student in the room. One at a time, the class will ask yes-or-no

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questions about the chosen person. For example, "Is this person wearing glasses?" or "Does this person have dark hair?" They may use their paper to take notes, if desired. A student who thinks they have guessed the identity of the chosen person may ask, "Is this person [*student's name*]?" on their turn. If the guess is correct, the player who guessed becomes *It*. Play multiple rounds as time allows.

- Great job, everyone. You collected hints about a person to determine who he or she was. In today's Bible story, two disciples were walking along the road. Jesus was with them, but they didn't recognize Him! We are going to hear how they figured out who He was.

Whose Voice? (Older and Younger Students)

- Choose a volunteer to come to the front of the class. Use a blindfold or have the volunteer turn around and close her eyes. Randomly choose students to read the key passage poster one at a time. The volunteer will try to guess who is speaking. If she guesses correctly, the reader will come to the front to be the next guesser.

- Was it hard to tell who was reading the key passage? [*Invite responses.*] When we know someone really well, we're better able to recognize his or her voice. Jesus appeared to the disciples on the way to Emmaus and taught them the Scriptures point to Him, but they were kept from recognizing Him at first.

Collect and Conclude (Older and Younger Students)

- Before the session, list pizza ingredients on separate index cards (or provide the actual ingredients for the class to touch): *flour, oil, tomatoes, cheese, sausage, green peppers, onions, pepperoni, black olives, etc.* Read one card (or show the ingredient). Prompt students to guess a possible recipe. Then, read another card and allow more guesses. Add ingredients one at a time. Challenge the class to guess a final result. (*Pizza.*)

- Great work! You collected the clues to figure out the food. In today's Bible story, Jesus' disciples collected clues about Jesus to figure out what was happening. Let's learn more.

Blind Pathway (Younger Students)

- Prior to the session, create a pathway around the room using masking tape on the floor. Invite students to find a partner, and blindfold one of them. The non-blindfolded player will guide his partner along the pathway using only his voice. Repeat, switching which partner is blindfolded.

- In our story, we'll learn that the disciples did not recognize Jesus when they walked along the road, but He opened their eyes to all that the Scriptures said about Him! Let's get ready to hear more!

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

1 Corinthians 15:3–4

1 Corinthians 15:3–4 – For I passed on to you as most important what I also received; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

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Passage Contest (Older and Younger Students)

- Form two teams. Show the key passage poster and say it aloud together. Have the first team read the passage and then the second. Challenge teams to say the verse in their softest voice, fastest voice, happiest voice, etc.

- God's Word reminds us what is true. A man named Paul wrote 1 Corinthians 15:3–4 to tell us the facts about Jesus' death and resurrection. Why did Jesus die? (*He took the punishment for our sins.*) What happened on the third day? (*Jesus rose from the dead, just like He said He would.*) Let's read 1 Corinthians 15:5–8 to learn the facts about who Jesus appeared to after rising from the dead. (*Read together.*) Whom did Jesus appear to? (*The twelve disciples, Peter, more than 500 believers, James, the 12 apostles and Paul.*) Why is it important that He appeared to so many people? (*All of these people told the same story about what they saw: Jesus was alive!*)

Big Picture Q&A

Q: Why did Jesus die on the cross?
A: *Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins and came back to life to show we are forgiven.*

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BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Jesus Appeared to the Disciples | Luke 24:13–49; John 20:19–23

On the day when Jesus rose from the dead, two of Jesus' disciples were walking to a village called Emmaus (eh MAY uhs). **The two disciples were talking about everything that had happened. As they talked, Jesus came and began to walk with them, but the disciples did not recognize Him.**

Jesus asked the disciples, "What are you talking about?"

The disciples stopped walking. They looked sad. **One of the disciples**, Cleopas, **answered, "Are you the only one in Jerusalem who hasn't heard what happened?"**

"What happened?" Jesus asked.

So, **they told Him, "Jesus of Nazareth was a Prophet.** He was powerful when He acted and spoke before God and all the people. **The religious leaders handed Jesus over to be sentenced to death, and they nailed Him to a cross.**

"We had hoped He was the One who would set Israel free. Besides, it's the third day since these things happened. **Early this morning, some women went to the tomb and did not find Jesus' body. They saw angels, who said that Jesus is alive.** Some of our friends went to the tomb, and they too saw that the tomb was empty."

Jesus said, "You are foolish to not believe what the prophets said! **Isn't this what had to happen to the Messiah?" Then, beginning with Moses and the Prophets, Jesus explained to them what all the Scriptures said about Him.**

Jesus and the two disciples arrived at Emmaus, and they asked Jesus to stay with them. So, Jesus joined them at the dinner table. He took the bread, thanked God for it and broke it into pieces. Then, He gave the pieces to the disciples. Right away, the men recognized Jesus! But Jesus immediately disappeared from their sight.

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The two disciples thought about their walk to Emmaus. They said, "When Jesus talked to us on the road and explained the Scriptures, didn't our hearts feel like they were on fire?"

The disciples immediately left Emmaus and went back to Jerusalem. They found Jesus' 11 disciples and others who gathered with them. They told them what happened. They said, "Simon saw Jesus too! **Jesus is alive!"**

On the first day of the week, in the evening, the disciples gathered together in a house. They locked the doors because they were afraid of the Jews. They didn't want to be killed like Jesus had been killed.

But wait ... Jesus had appeared to two disciples on the road, and Mary Magdalene had reported seeing Him alive too. Could it be true?

As the disciples talked, Jesus came, stood among them and said to them, "Peace to you!"

The disciples were afraid! They couldn't believe their eyes! Was this really Jesus? The disciples **thought they were seeing a ghost.**

"Why are you afraid? It's Me! Why do you doubt?" Jesus said. "Look at Me and touch Me. A ghost does not have flesh and bones, but I do. **I'm not a ghost."**

Jesus showed His disciples His hands and His side. They saw the holes in His hands and in His side. Jesus was alive? It seemed too good to be true. The disciples **rejoiced because they were so happy to see Jesus!**

The disciples gave Jesus some fish to eat. **Jesus talked to them and explained the Bible to them.** "The Bible is about Me," Jesus said. **He helped them understand how the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms told about Him. Then, Jesus told the disciples that they had a job to do. Jesus had died and was raised from the dead so that people could be forgiven for their sins. The disciples needed to tell other people to repent from their sin and be forgiven.**

"Peace to you!" Jesus said to them again. "God sent Me to Earth, and in the same way, I am sending you." **Jesus sent out the disciples to be His witnesses and to tell all the people that He is alive.**

JESUS CONNECTION

The whole Bible is about Jesus. When Adam and Eve sinned, God began working out His plan to send Jesus to rescue people from sin. All of the Old Testament points forward to Jesus' life, death and resurrection—the time when Jesus would bring God's promised salvation for sinners. For 40 days, Jesus presented Himself to at least 500 people and proved that He is alive (1 Corinthians 15:3–8). Jesus is still alive today. He sends out believers to tell others about Him and gives us power through the Holy Spirit.

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LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

CONFIDENCE – Trusting in God's goodness and character no matter what.

Living LifeWise

Jesus rose from the dead, so we can have confidence in every situation.

Character Connection

God promised, thousands of years ahead of time, that Jesus was coming. And one day, He was born. He lived a sinless life, died on the cross to pay for our sins and rose from the dead. Lots of people saw Him and testified that He was alive. That's the glorious story of the gospel!

God promised Jesus to us a long time ago. At just the right time, He came. He is also the answer to all our needs. Jesus saves us and makes us part of God's family. And because He rose from the dead, there is no situation that He can't handle.

Confidence in God doesn't erase hard situations. The disciples were still being watched by Jesus's enemies. There was a lot that was scary and unknown. But Jesus was there. Because He was alive, the disciples now had confidence. Because Jesus is alive, we can have the same confidence that He will be more than enough for every need or issue or problem that we face.

How might our confidence in God help us in these situations?

- A loved one might lose their job.
- One of your best friends moves away.
- You feel left out at school.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- **What had the disciples hoped Jesus would do for Israel?**

  Set Israel free, Lk. 24:21

- **What did Jesus ask them?**

  "What are you arguing about?" Lk. 24:17

- **When did the disciples recognize Jesus?**

  At dinner when He broke the bread, Lk. 24:30–31

- **What did Jesus say to His disciples when He appeared?**

  "Peace to you!" Lk. 24:36

- **Why did the disciples think Jesus was a ghost when He first appeared to them?**

  Jesus suddenly appeared in the room with a locked door, Lk. 24:37

- **How did Jesus show that He is alive?**

  Let them touch and see His hands and feet, ate fish with them, Lk. 24:39–43

- **What job did Jesus give His disciples?**

  Tell others that He died to rescue them from sin and God raised Jesus from the dead on the third day, Lk. 24:46–49

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- **What did Jesus say the disciples should tell people about?**

  Repentance and forgiveness of sins, Lk. 24:47

- **At least 500 people said they saw Jesus after His resurrection. Why do you think we can believe their testimonies?**

  All 500 gave the same account of what happened, 1 Corinthians 15:6

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Old Testament Pointers (Older Students)

- Jesus taught that all the Scriptures point to Him. He began with Moses, who wrote the first five books of the Bible, and the prophets. Can anyone name the first five books of the Bible? (*Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.*) For an added challenge, can anyone name any of the Old Testament prophets? (*Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, etc.*) Before the session, print and cut apart the "Old Testament Pointers" cards. Form two or three teams. Provide Bibles so students can use the table of contents as a reference. Read an Old Testament Pointers card about how an Old Testament book points to Jesus. The first team to correctly guess the book earns a point. One player from that team will shoot a ball toward a basketball hoop. If the player lands the shot, award another point.

Eyewitness Game (Older Students)

- Before the session, collect 15 to 20 small items and arrange them on a tray. [*Suggestions: tennis ball, fork, screwdriver, clothespin, leaf, paintbrush, wooden block, toothbrush, toy car, hair brush, etc.*] Provide paper and a pencil for each student. Display the tray for the class and play three rounds of an eyewitness game:

  - For the first round, encourage students to look at the objects for 30 seconds. Then, cover the tray. Challenge them to make a list of all the items they remember. Ask students to call out the items they saw. Award one point for each item remembered.
  - For the next round, allow students to look at and touch the objects for 30 seconds. Then, cover the tray. After they make their list, challenge the class to recall the items again. Award a point for each item remembered.
  - For round three, allow students to look at the objects, touch them and say their names. Then, cover the tray and repeat the challenge. Award points for remembered items.

- When Jesus appeared to His disciples, they saw Him and thought He was a ghost. But Jesus encouraged them to touch His hands and side. He spoke to them and ate with them. For 40 days, Jesus presented Himself to at least 500 people and proved that He is alive. Jesus is still alive today. He sends out believers to tell others about Him and gives us power through the Holy Spirit.

Bible Basketball (Older and Younger Students)

- Form two teams. Allow a player to shoot a mini basketball toward a hoop. If they make it, award a point. Ask the same student a Bible review question. If they get it correct, let them shoot a second time. If the player makes the shot, award a second point. Alternate teams and students when asking Bible questions to keep the game moving.

Closed-Eyes Drawings (Older and Younger Students)

- Give each student a piece of paper and a writing utensil. They should fold their paper in half and use only one half at a time. Blindfold students or instruct them to close their eyes. Explain that

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they will follow your instructions to draw a picture. Give the following commands, pausing after each one for students to draw.

- Draw an oval.
- Draw the letter *T* inside the oval.
- Draw the letter *V* on top of the oval.
- Add three short lines on the outside of each side of the oval.

- Allow students to open their eyes and compare their drawings. They should slightly resemble six-legged bugs with antennae. Play again, allowing the class to draw with their eyes open. Compare their drawings with the first drawings. If time allows, turn over the paper and play again with new instructions.

- Your pictures were so much clearer when your eyes were open! When Jesus met with the disciples, He taught them how all the Scriptures point to Him. He opened their eyes so they realized who He was. When we don't understand something about God, we can pray and ask God to open our eyes and help us understand.

Reverse Charades (Older and Younger Students)

- Assign one student to be the guesser. The guesser will step out of earshot with an adult helper. While the guesser is gone, whisper to the rest of the class a job title (police officer, firefighter, doctor, teacher, veterinarian, chef, etc.) and explain they will silently act out the kind of work that person would do. When the class is ready, the guesser will return and face them. The class will act out the tasks, and the guesser will identify who would perform those tasks. Play again as time allows.

- Sometimes, it can be easy to guess the type of work certain people do, but sometimes it can be hard. In today's lesson, Jesus appeared to His disciples to tell them they had a job to do. Their job was to tell others about Him. Jesus is still alive today, and His followers still have the job to tell others about Him.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- On the Road (Older Students)
  - Answers: *Jer. 31:31 & Mark 14:24; Isa 61:1–2 & Luke 4:17–21; Num 24:17 & Matt. 2:2; 2 Sam 7:12–16 & Luke 1:32–33.*

- Five Senses Observations (Older Students)

- Every Other Letter (Younger Students)

- Hidden Letters (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Father God, open our eyes. Give us eyes to see who You are. Give us eyes to see who we are. We need You, and we look to Jesus as our Savior and Lord. Amen.

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Journal Page

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why do you think Jesus appeared to the disciples after His resurrection?
- Do you believe in Jesus by faith? Do you have any doubts?
- Why do you think Jesus said, "Peace to you!" when He saw the disciples?

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FOLD



JESUS APPEARED TO THE DISCIPLES

LUKE 24:36–49; JOHN 20:19–23

MAIN POINT: JESUS APPEARED TO HIS DISCIPLES.

On the first day of the week, in the evening, the disciples gathered together in a house. They locked the doors because they were afraid of the Jews. They didn't want to be killed like Jesus had been killed.

As the disciples talked, Jesus came, stood among them and said to them, "Peace to you!"

The disciples were afraid! They thought they were seeing a ghost.

"Why are you afraid? It's Me! Why do you doubt?" Jesus said. "Look at Me and touch Me. I'm not a ghost."

Jesus showed His disciples His hands and His side. They rejoiced because they were so happy to see Jesus!

Jesus talked to them and explained the Bible to them. He helped them understand how the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms told about Him. Then, Jesus told the disciples that they had a job to do. Jesus had died and was raised from the dead so that people could be forgiven for their sins. The disciples needed to tell other people to repent from their sin and be forgiven.

Jesus sent out the disciples to be His witnesses and to tell all the people that He is alive.

Jesus Connection: *For 40 days, Jesus presented Himself to at least 500 people and proved that He is alive (1 Corinthians 15:3-8). Jesus is still alive today. He sends out believers to tell others about Him and gives us power through the Holy Spirit.*

Key Passage: *1 Corinthians 15:3-4 – For I passed on to you as most important what I also received; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.*

DISCUSSION

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ON THE ROAD

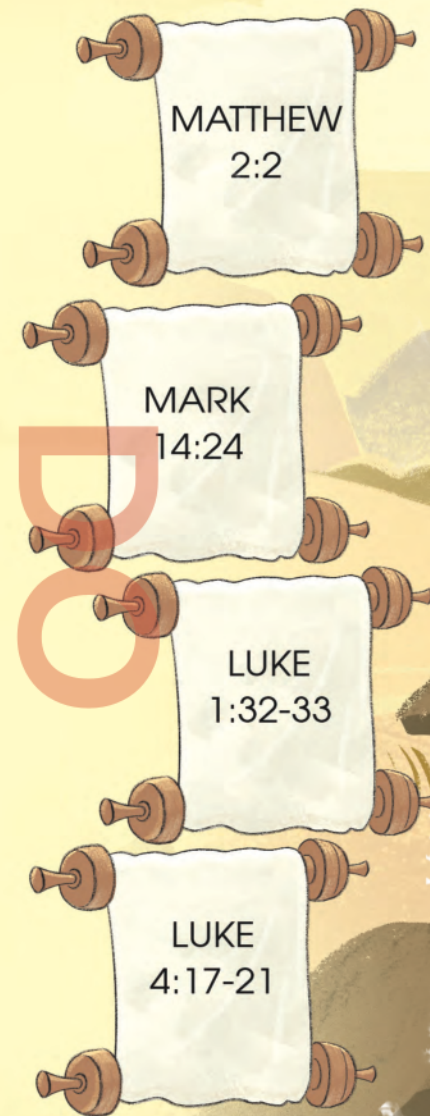
Connect the dots to discover who appeared to two disciples walking on the road.



ALL ABOUT HIM

Use your Bible to match each Old Testament Scripture with a New Testament Scripture.





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FIVE SENSES OBSERVATIONS

Think of a food item and list how it looks, sounds, smells, tastes and feels. Then, describe your observations to a friend. Can your friend guess the food?



SIGHT — What does it look like?



SOUND — What does it sound like?



SMELL — What does it smell like?



TASTE — What does it taste like?



TOUCH — What does it feel like?

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HE'S HERE!

Color the boxes marked with odd numbers to reveal a special name.



5	7	2	3	5	1	3	5	7	1	3	5	1	7	3	7	5	5	1
3	1	4	5	3	5	9	3	1	5	5	3	5	1	9	5	1	3	7
8	5	6	7	3	3	7	3	5	1	7	3	3	3	1	5	3	7	3
2	9	8	1	2	4	2	7	9	5	1	5	1	9	7	3	7	1	1
6	4	8	3	6	1	3	5	7	1	3	5	1	7	3	7	5	5	1
3	1	5	5	2	6	9	3	8	6	8	3	5	1	9	5	1	3	7
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9	7	3	7	1	1	9	7	9	5	1	5	4	8	2	3	2	6	4
3	7	3	5	1	7	3	5	7	1	3	5	1	7	3	7	5	5	2
5	9	7	9	5	1	9	3	1	5	5	3	5	1	9	5	8	4	2

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EVERY OTHER LETTER

INSTRUCTIONS: Cross out the first letter and every other letter after that to reveal what Jesus taught on the road to Emmaus.



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KEY PASSAGE:
1 Corinthians 15:3–4 – For I passed on to you as most important what I also received; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:
- Why did Jesus die on the cross? Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins and came back to life to show we are forgiven.

BIBLE STORY:
JESUS APPEARED TO THE DISCIPLES
- Jesus met two disciples while they walked to Emmaus.
- Jesus helped them understand the scriptures that pointed to His life, death and resurrection.
- When they realized it was Jesus, they returned to Jerusalem to tell others about Him.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:
- Why is it important to know God's Word?
- Which Bible stories are your favorites?
- How do those stories point us to Jesus?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:
- Take time with your family to review different Bible stories they have learned in the past. Consider using the big picture cards like flash cards to quiz your kids.

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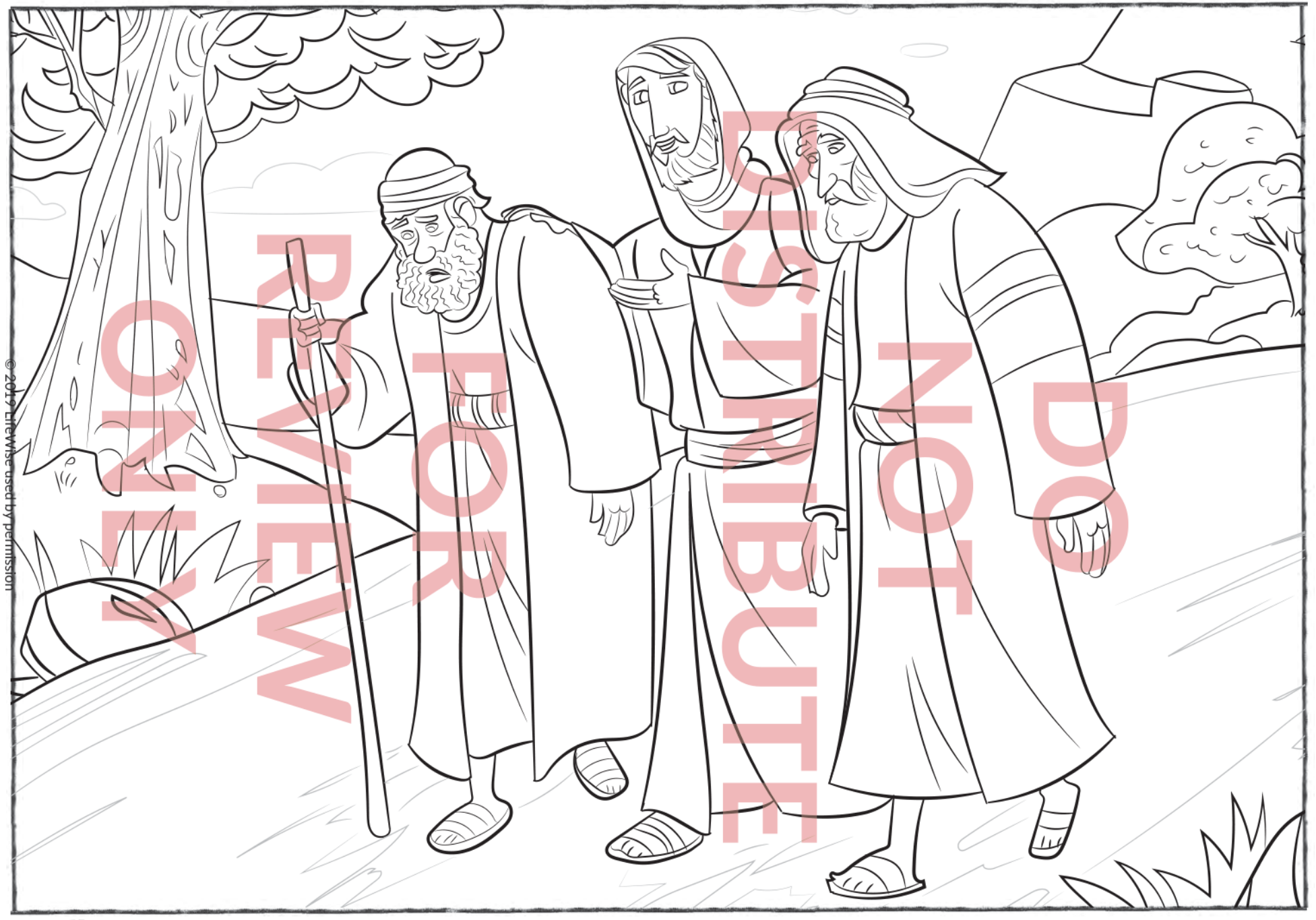

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JESUS TAUGHT THAT ALL THE SCRIPTURES POINT TO HIM.

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HIDDEN LETTERS

INSTRUCTIONS: Find the hidden letters and unscramble them to learn Jesus' message to His disciples. The words are color coded.



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KEY PASSAGE:
1 Corinthians 15:3–4 – For I passed on to you as most important what I also received; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:
- Why did Jesus die on the cross? Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins and came back to life to show we are forgiven.

BIBLE STORY:
JESUS APPEARED TO THE DISCIPLES
- Jesus' disciples were afraid, so they gathered together with the door locked.
- Jesus appeared to the disciples.
- Jesus told them He is alive and that He would send them out to tell the world about Him.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:
- Why do you think it was hard for the disciples to believe Jesus was alive, at first?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:
- Work with your kids to learn classic illusions where objects "pass through" other objects. Remind them Jesus appeared for real, not as an illusion.
- Give your kids copies of the house key to avoid accidental lock-outs.

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JESUS APPEARED TO HIS DISCIPLES.

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This book tells about the beginning of the world. When sin entered the world, God began His plan of rescuing people and redeeming creation through His Son, Jesus Christ.

GENESIS

This book tells the story of how God used Moses to free His people from slavery in Egypt. God sent Jesus to free people from slavery to sin.

EXODUS

This book's story includes Boaz, a family redeemer. He bought back what his relatives lost. Jesus is our Redeemer. He bought our salvation from sin by dying on the cross.

RUTH

This book tells us about leaders who saved people from the consequences of their sin, but not the cause of it. God sent a true Deliverer—Jesus—to save people from sin.

JUDGES

This book contains wisdom. God created the world and has a plan for how it works best. Jesus showed what wise living is like. We become wise by knowing and loving Jesus.

PROVERBS

Hundreds of years before it happened, a major prophet told of the coming Messiah. His words are recorded in this book. As Messiah, Jesus suffered and died to take away the sins of His people.

ISAIAH

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This book from the minor prophets shows that God's love never gives up. Even when His people are unfaithful, God keeps loving. God sent Jesus to give up His life to set sinners free.

HOSEA

This book is about a prophet sent to Nineveh. God's love and concern is for the whole world, not just His chosen people. God proved His love by sending Jesus to save all people—Jews and Gentiles alike.

JONAH

This book from the Minor Prophets told God's people about a messenger God would send. John the Baptist got people ready for a final Messenger—Jesus—who brought good news of salvation.

MALACHI

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Old Testament Pointers

Instructions: Print and use as directed in the leader guide.

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LESSON 90: TEACHABLE

JESUS FORGAVE AND RESTORED

John 20:24–29, 21:1–19

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JESUS FORGAVE AND RESTORED

- John 20:24–29, 21:1–19
- Big Picture Q&A: What is our mission as believers? Our mission as believers is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Key Passage: 1 Corinthians 15:3–4 – For I passed on to you as most important what I also received; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

JESUS CONNECTION

When Jesus first called the disciples to follow Him, Jesus had promised to make them fishers of men. Instead of catching fish, they would tell people about Jesus (Luke 5:1–11). The disciples had left Jesus when He was arrested and even denied Him, but Jesus still wanted to use them in God's plan. Jesus is the Lord who forgives us and makes things right again.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

TEACHABLE – Being willing to change my mind and actions as I learn.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Jesus' followers had seen Jesus alive! Two disciples met Jesus as they were walking to Emmaus, and then Jesus appeared to a group of His disciples as they met together in a locked room. But one of the disciples, Thomas, had missed out. He wasn't there when Jesus appeared. He hadn't seen Jesus for himself.

So despite his friends' claims that the Lord was risen, Thomas doubted. In fact, he refused to believe (John 20:25). Witnesses testified that they had seen Jesus, but Thomas wanted physical evidence. He lacked faith and was stubborn in his unbelief.

More than a week passed, and Thomas was with the other disciples in a room. Again, the doors were locked for their safety. Much like before, Jesus appeared before the disciples and said, "Peace be with you."

This time, Thomas was there. Jesus told Thomas to believe. He urged him not only to look, but to feel Jesus' wounds for himself. Here, Jesus gave grace to Thomas. He gave Thomas the physical proof he was looking for. Jesus was no ghost; Jesus was alive!

Thomas immediately believed, and Jesus said, "Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe" (John 20:29). The Bible says that God is pleased when we have faith (Heb. 11:6).

As you teach your students, explain the meaning of the word *faith*: "The reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen" (Heb. 11:1). Faith is believing without seeing. It is trusting that God is who He

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says He is, and He will do what He says He will do (Num. 23:19). Faith cannot be mustered up on your own; it is a gift from God (Eph. 2:8–9). Pray that God would grant the students you teach faith to believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

After Jesus' resurrection and His appearance to the disciples, seven of the disciples returned to Galilee, near the sea where Jesus had called four of His disciples to be fishers of men (Luke 5:1–11). The disciples went fishing. Perhaps they felt it reasonable to return to the fishing business since their stint as disciples was apparently over—or so they thought!

In Bible times, nighttime was the preferred time for fishing. Fish caught at night could be sold fresh in the morning at the market. But by daybreak, the disciples had caught nothing. Jesus stood at the shore, but the disciples did not know it was Him. He called to them, "Men, you don't have any fish, do you?" (John 21:5). Then, He urged them to cast their net on the right side of the boat. They obeyed, and they were unable to haul in the big catch!

John knew right away who He was. "It is the Lord!" John exclaimed. Peter immediately tied his outer garment around him and jumped into the sea, swimming 300 feet to shore. When the other six disciples arrived in the boat, they found Jesus sitting beside a charcoal fire with fish and bread. "Come and have breakfast," Jesus said. Jesus ate with His disciples; then, He turned to Peter.

John 21:15–19 describes Peter's restoration. The disciple who told Jesus that he would die for Him (Luke 22:31–34) had denied Jesus three times (Luke 22:54–62). Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved Jesus. Each time Peter responded "Yes," Jesus told Peter to feed His lambs. Jesus restored Peter to ministry.

Emphasize to the students you teach that Jesus' plan for the disciples did not end with His death and resurrection. When Jesus first called the disciples to follow Him, Jesus had promised to make them fishers of men. Instead of catching fish, they would tell people about Jesus (Luke 5:1–11). The disciples had left Jesus when He was arrested, but Jesus still wanted to use them in God's plan to rescue people from their sin. Jesus is a Lord who forgives us and makes things right again.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Last time, we learned how Jesus appeared to His disciples. Do you remember what the disciples were doing when Jesus appeared to them? (*Two disciples were on the road to Emmaus; the rest were hiding in a locked room.*) What did Jesus do so the disciples would believe He was alive? (*Showed them His scars, let them touch Him and ate food with them.*) One disciple, Thomas, was missing when Jesus appeared to them. Even though the women, the Emmaus disciples and the other disciples had seen Jesus and told Thomas that Jesus is alive, Thomas doubted. To *doubt* something means to be unsure if it is true or trustworthy. Soon we will learn how Jesus showed Thomas the truth.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

I Doubt It (Older Students)

- Invite the class to sit in a circle while one volunteer steps out in the hall with another adult. While that volunteer is away, perform a hidden talent (splits, back flip, 20 push-ups). When the volunteer returns, the class will tell the volunteer what you did while she was gone. The volunteer must decide if she believes the other students by saying "I doubt it" (if she does not believe) or "no doubt about it" (if she does believe). Perform it again to prove it to her.

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- Some things can be difficult to believe. You may hear about them from your friends, but until you see them for yourself, you have a hard time believing they are real. That's how the disciple Thomas felt. All of the other disciples had seen Jesus alive, but Thomas wasn't there, so he didn't believe. We'll learn what happened in our Bible story.

Forgiveness Letters (Older Students)

- Print and cut apart the Forgiveness Letter Tiles. Give a set to each student and challenge them to arrange the letters to form words. Invite the class to call out the words they make, and list them on a large piece of paper. Allow them to work until they cannot think of any more words or until time is up. Refer to the word list on the printable to reveal additional words.

- What words were you able to form with these letters? What is the longest word you could form? These letters fit together to spell the word *forgiveness*. *Forgiveness* is letting go of a grudge against someone who has wronged us. Jesus showed forgiveness to someone in today's Bible story. We are going to find out what happened.

"I Believe It!" (Older and Younger Students)

- Invite a volunteer to stand and announce something (it can be true or false) about himself. For example, "I visited New York City last summer." Choose another student (have them raise their hands) to guess if the statement is true or false. If she believes it is true, she should say, "I believe it." If she thinks it's false, she should say, "I doubt it." Ask the volunteer to reveal the truth. Allow each volunteer to say two or three things about himself. Then, invite another volunteer to make statements.

- Did you hear any true statements that were hard to believe? To *doubt* means "to be uncertain about," "to consider unlikely" or "to lack confidence in." Why do you think you doubted some of what your classmates said? Today, we are going to hear a Bible story about a man who heard something amazing, but he didn't believe it. He doubted. Let's find out what happened.

Obstacle Course (Younger Students)

- Set up a simple obstacle course in your room using tables, chairs or other items readily available. Assign each student a partner. Blindfold one partner (or let her cover her eyes with her hands) and direct the other partner to lead her through the obstacle course. Allow students to take turns leading and being blindfolded.

- Was it easy or hard to trust the person leading you? Sometimes, we like to see things for ourselves. In our Bible story today, one of Jesus' disciples would not believe Jesus was alive again until he saw Jesus for himself.

"Go Fish" (Younger Students)

- Form groups of four to eight players to play "Go Fish."
    - Give each player five cards. Stack the rest of the deck face-down on the table.
    - Players will take turns asking another player for a specific card. For example, "Do you have any 3s?"
    - If the player has the card(s), she must give them to the other player. If not, she should say, "Go fish," and the player will draw a card from the deck. The next player now takes a turn.

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- If a player collects a pair of cards, he should lay them face-up and replace them with cards from the deck. Then, he may take another turn.
- Play continues until all hands are empty. The player with the most pairs wins.

- Some of Jesus' disciples were fishermen before Jesus called them to follow Him. Today's Bible story is about Jesus' plan for them to fish for people!

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

1 Corinthians 15:3–4

For I passed on to you as most important what I also received; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

Shout It Out (Older and Younger Students)

- Before class, divide the key passage into five sections and write each section in large letters on a separate sheet of poster board. Divide the class into five groups. Invite each group to say or shout their portion of the verses at the right time. See how quickly they can do it, then mix up the posters and allow the students the chance to say another portion.

Fish Unscramble (Older and Younger Students)

- Write each word or phrase from the key passage on fish-shaped cutouts or separate index cards. See how quickly the class can put the cards in order and read the key passage. Mix up the fish shapes, scatter them and play again as time allows.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: What is our mission as believers?

A: *Our mission as believers is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Jesus Forgave and Restored | John 20:24–29, 21:1–19

Three days after Jesus died on the cross, He came back to life. More than once, Jesus appeared to His disciples and proved that He was alive.

Thomas was one of Jesus' disciples, but he **was not with the others when Jesus visited them. The other disciples kept telling him, "We have seen Jesus!"**

But Thomas doubted. He said, "I don't believe you! I want to see and touch the holes in His hands and His side, or I will never believe!"

Eight days later, the disciples were indoors again. This time, Thomas was with them. Even though the doors were locked, **Jesus came in and stood among them. He said, "Peace to you!"**

Then, He said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and look at My hands. Reach out and touch My side. **Don't be an unbeliever; believe!"**

Thomas did believe. "My Lord and my God!" he said.

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Jesus said, "Because you have seen Me, you have believed. Those who believe in Me without seeing Me are blessed."

One day, some time after His appearance to Thomas, Jesus met His disciples while they were fishing on the Sea of Galilee. Peter and the other disciples got into a boat and spent all night on the water, but they did not catch any fish. The next morning, as the sun was coming up, Jesus stood on the shore. He called out to the disciples, but they did not recognize Him. Jesus said, "Men, have you caught any fish?"

"No," they answered.

"Put your net in the water on the right side of the boat, and you will catch some fish," Jesus said.

The disciples did what Jesus said. So many fish were in their net that they could not pull the net back into the boat! One of the disciples said to Peter, "It is the Lord!"

Peter tied his clothing around himself and **jumped into the water so he could swim to shore. The rest of the disciples traveled in the boat back to the shore.** They pulled the net full of fish behind them.

When the disciples got out of the boat, they saw bread and a charcoal fire with fish on it. "Bring some of the fish you've caught," Jesus said. So, Peter pulled the net ashore. It was full of large fish—153 of them!

"Come and have breakfast," Jesus said. Jesus took the bread and gave it to them. Then, He gave them the fish. This was the third time Jesus appeared to the disciples after He was raised from the dead.

Jesus turned to Peter. "Do you love Me more than these?" He asked.

"Yes, Lord," Peter said. "You know that I love You."

"Feed My lambs," Jesus told him.

Jesus asked Peter again, "Do you love Me?"

"Yes, Lord," Peter said. "You know that I love You."

"Take care of My sheep," Jesus said.

Jesus asked Peter a third time, "Do you love Me?"

Peter was very sad that Jesus asked Him a third time. **Peter loved Jesus very much! "Lord, You know everything! You know that I love You!"**

"Feed My sheep," Jesus said. Jesus told Peter that he would bring honor to God. **Then, Jesus said to him, "Follow Me!"**

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JESUS CONNECTION

When Jesus first called the disciples to follow Him, Jesus had promised to make them fishers of men. Instead of catching fish, they would tell people about Jesus (Luke 5:1–11). The disciples had left Jesus when He was arrested and even denied Him, but Jesus still wanted to use them in God's plan. Jesus is the Lord who forgives us and makes things right again.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

TEACHABLE – Being willing to change my mind and actions as I learn.

Living LifeWise

Because God is a forgiving God, we can be teachable when we are wrong.

Character Connection

We don't like to admit we're wrong. Even with something as silly as an illusion, we want people to think we said or did or thought the right thing the first time. But that isn't how life works, is it? We all make mistakes. Sometimes we get things wrong.

Thomas needed proof to believe it was really Jesus. He wanted to see it for himself. Peter really messed up and deserted Jesus. You couldn't really get more wrong than Peter had been the night Jesus died.

But Jesus didn't scold either of them. He showed them the truth and helped them change their minds. They went from believing what they wanted to believing what He said. And they were willing to admit they'd been wrong.

God loves to work with teachable hearts. If we ask Him our honest questions, He always answers them. He gives us the Bible, His Spirit and other spiritual leaders to help us learn His truth and live by it. When we're wrong, He helps us admit it and live His way even better than before.

How could you show a teachable attitude in these situations?

- Another student gives you a few suggestions on how to play the game at recess, even though you've played before.
- You get almost every question wrong on your math homework.
- Someone points out that you keep talking over everyone.
- You say bad words when you are upset sometimes, but this week you read Ephesians 4:29 in the Bible. ("No foul language should come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need so that it gives grace to those who hear.")

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- What did Jesus show Thomas?

  His hands and side, John 20:27

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- What did Thomas say when he saw Jesus' hands and side?

  "My Lord and my God!" John 20:28
- Before they met Jesus, how many fish had the disciples caught?

  None, John 21:3
- What did Jesus tell the disciples to do to catch some fish?

  Cast their nets on the right side of the boat, John 21:6
- How did Peter get to Jesus first?

  He jumped out of the boat and swam to shore, John 21:7
- What was the job Jesus had for Peter?

  Feed My sheep; tell others about Him, John 21:17
- Can we ever mess up so badly that Jesus will not love us?

  No
- How does God offer us forgiveness?

  Through faith in Jesus Christ

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REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Story Sequencing (Older Students)

- Challenge students to name (in order) as many books of the New Testament as they can. Then, distribute Bibles and lead the class to find John 21. John is the fourth book and the fourth Gospel in the New Testament. The Gospels tell us about Jesus' life, death and resurrection. Today's Bible story happened after Jesus' resurrection. Let's review what happened.

- Mix up the sentence strips and distribute them. Call for students to read their strips one at a time. Then, instruct them to work together to arrange the sentences in order to retell today's Bible story. Compare their work to the Bible story script or to John 21:1–19.

Find The Truth (Older Students)

- Form two or more groups. Provide Bibles for each group. Explain that you will ask a question. Groups will use their Bibles to find the answer. If a Bible verse is needed to answer the question, write it on the board so students can refer back to the verse. Practice Bible literacy by encouraging students to find books of the Bibles. Award points for each correct answer.

  - How many books are in the Bible? (*66 books*)
  - What book comes after Hebrews? (*James*)
  - Which Bible division contains more books: The Old Testament or New Testament? (*Old Testament*)
  - What does the word *faith* mean? (*Hebrews 11:1: "Faith is the reality of what is hoped for and the proof of what is not seen"*)
  - What book comes before Ephesians? (*Galatians*)
  - What is grace? (*Ephesians 2:4–5: "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us, made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace!"*)
  - Which four books of the Bible tell us about Jesus' life, death and resurrection? (*The Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John*)

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- Thomas wanted proof of Jesus' resurrection, so Jesus showed His hands and side to Thomas. Sometimes, we might have questions about God, or other people might ask us questions. The Bible tells us everything we need to know and love God. Some things about God are a mystery to us. Some things we do not see, but we can trust in Him by faith.

Bible Trivia (Older and Younger Students)

- Distribute Bibles and guide the class to the New Testament. Ask students to name the four Gospels. (*Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.*) Challenge them to name the New Testament books in order. Remind the class that John was one of Jesus' disciples and witnessed the events of today's Bible story firsthand. Form small groups (3–4 students). Pass out mini dry erase boards or pieces of paper and pencils. Have each group choose a student to write the answer after each question.

1. Who did not believe Jesus is alive?
   a. Peter
   b. John
   c. Thomas

2. Who denied Jesus three times?
   a. Peter
   b. John
   c. Thomas

3. How many days had it been since Jesus appeared to the disciples?
   a. 1
   b. 8
   c. 7

4. What did Thomas say he needed to see and touch to believe that Jesus was resurrected?
   a. Jesus' hands and feet
   b. Jesus' side
   c. All of the above

5. What did Jesus say when He came into the house?
   a. Peace to you!
   b. Stop doubting
   c. Put your hands in my side

6. What did Jesus show Thomas?
   a. Evidence from the Bible
   b. That He could still eat fish
   c. His hands, feet and side

7. What did Thomas do when He saw Jesus' hands and His side?
   a. Confess that Jesus was Lord
   b. Touch Jesus' hands, feet and side
   c. Give Jesus a hug

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8. Did Thomas believe?
    a. No
    b. Yes

9. How many times did Jesus ask Peter, "Do you love me?"
    a. 2 times
    b. 3 times
    c. 1 time

10. What job did Jesus ask Peter to do?
    a. Feed Jesus' sheep
    b. Teach people about Jesus
    c. All of the above

Silent Theater (Older and Younger Students)

- Form small groups (3–4 students) and give them time to decide how they will act out the Bible story. Assign the following three stories to separate groups: Jesus appearing to Thomas, the disciples fishing and Jesus talking to Peter. They may pantomime actions and use facial expressions, but they may not speak or make a sound. Give each group a chance to act out today's lesson as you quickly retell it.
- You did a great job acting out today's lesson. I wonder what it would have been like to be with Jesus after He rose from the dead. What are some feelings the disciples may have experienced?

Modeling Clay Stories (Older and Younger Students)

- Form small groups (3–4 students). Give each group modeling clay and a scene in today's lesson. Encourage each group to work together to create their assigned scene. After a few minutes, share the designs and invite a member from each group to talk about their scene.
- You did great on your scenes. I bet this would have been an amazing story to see with your own eyes. Imagine Peter jumping in the water and the disciples bringing in all those fish. Picture how it would be to sit down and eat breakfast with Jesus on the beach. Jesus forgave Peter and gave him a mission. When we believe that Jesus died for our sin and rose from the dead, we are forgiven and get a mission too! What is our mission as believers? Our mission as believers is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Spirit.

Red or Green (Older and Younger Students)

- Give each student a red and a green paper. Read the following statements about the Bible. If it is a true statement, the students should hold up the green paper. If they believe it is false, they will hold up the red paper. Be sure to clarify the correct answer after each statement.
    - The Bible has 75 different books in it. (*False; 66 books*)
    - The Bible is a book of fairy tales. (*False; it is God's Word, 2 Tim. 3:16*)
    - The Book of John is in the Old Testament. (*False; New Testament*)
    - The Bible has everything we need to know to believe in Jesus. (*True; 2 Pet. 1:3*)
    - The Bible says faith is when we believe only in the things we see. (*False; faith is trusting in the things we do not see, Heb. 11:1*)
    - Believing something without seeing it is hard. (*Answers will vary.*)

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- You guys did a great job picking true or false for these statements. Sometimes knowing if something is true can be hard. It was hard for Thomas, but Jesus showed His hands and side to Thomas. Jesus also reminded us that those who believe without seeing are blessed.

What's in the Box? (Younger Students)

- Before the session, fill six boxes or gift bags with one strange or silly item each. Choose one and look inside, without allowing anyone else to see what the item is. Then, identify the item. You may identify the actual item or describe a made-up item. For example, "This item is a fork made of purple plastic and decorated with circles of various sizes." The students should decide whether or not they think that is the actual item. After they decide, hold up the item for everyone to see.

- Believing something without seeing it can be hard! But faith is a gift from God, and we can pray and ask Him to give us faith and help us believe. Jesus showed His hands and side to Thomas. Then, Jesus said that those who believe without seeing are blessed.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Can You Believe It? (Older Students)
- Forgiveness Quiz (Older Students)
- Do You Believe? (Younger Students)
- Fish Food (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Lord God, we admit that seeing without believing can be so hard! We want to believe; help our unbelief. Give us faith. We love You. Amen.

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Journal Page

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- How do you think Peter felt when Jesus forgave him?
- What mission did Jesus give Peter?
- How do you feel knowing that Jesus forgives you and gives you a mission?

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DISCIPLE BOOK

FOLD



JESUS FORGAVE AND RESTORED

JOHN 20:24–29; 21:1–19

MAIN POINT: JESUS FORGAVE PETER AND GAVE HIM A MISSION.

Three days after Jesus died on the cross, He came back to life. One day, Jesus met His disciples while they were fishing on the Sea of Galilee.

Peter and the other disciples got into a boat and spent all night on the water, but they did not catch any fish. The next morning, as the sun was coming up, Jesus stood on the shore. He called out to the disciples, but they did not recognize Him. Jesus said, "Men, have you caught any fish?"

"No," they answered.

"Put your net in the water on the right side of the boat, and you will catch some fish," Jesus said. The disciples did what Jesus said. So many fish were in their net that they could not pull the net back into the boat!

One of the disciples said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Peter jumped into the water so he could swim to shore. The rest of the disciples traveled in the boat back to the shore.

"Come and have breakfast," Jesus said.

Jesus turned to Peter. "Do you love Me more than these?" He asked.

"Yes, Lord," Peter said. "You know that I love You."

"Feed My lambs," Jesus told him.

Jesus asked Peter again, "Do you love Me?"

"Yes, Lord," Peter said. "You know that I love You."

"Take care of My sheep," Jesus said.

Jesus asked Peter a third time, "Do you love Me?"

Peter loved Jesus very much! "Lord, You know everything! You know that I love You!"

"Feed My sheep," Jesus said. Then, Jesus said to him, "Follow Me!"

Jesus Connection: *When Jesus first called the disciples to follow Him, Jesus had promised to make them fishers of men. Instead of catching fish, they would tell people about Jesus (Luke 5:1-11). The disciples had left Jesus when He was arrested and even denied Him, but Jesus still wanted to use them in God's plan. Jesus is the Lord who forgives us and makes things right again.*

Key Passage: *1 Corinthians 15:3-4 – For I passed on to you as most important what I also received; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.*

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CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?

Read each truth. Can you believe it? Find the matching reference in your Bible and write it below the correct Bible truth.

Romans 10:13 Ephesians 2:8 Colossians 1:17

Jesus holds everything together.

Salvation is a gift from God.

Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

STACK ATTACK

Fill in the missing letters from the New Testament book names. Which disciple doubted that Jesus is alive?

_ _ _ _ _ _



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FORGIVENESS QUIZ

Answer the questions and then compare your work with a friend.

1. WHAT DOES THE WORD FORGIVE MEAN?

A. to seek revenge against someone

B. to feel angry toward someone

C. to excuse or pardon someone who did wrong

D. to receive a gift from someone

2. WHY DID PETER NEED JESUS' FORGIVENESS?

A. Peter denied knowing Jesus three times.

B. Peter was a sinner.

C. Peter didn't need Jesus' forgiveness.

D. Both A and B

3. USE THESE WORDS TO FILL IN THE BLANKS: RIGHT, LORD, FORGIVES.

Jesus is the _____ who _____ us and makes things _____ again.



JESUS SAID . . .

Unscramble the words to discover what Jesus said to Peter.

"DO YOU _____ ME?" VELO

"FEED MY _____." PHSEE

"_____ ME!" LOWOLF

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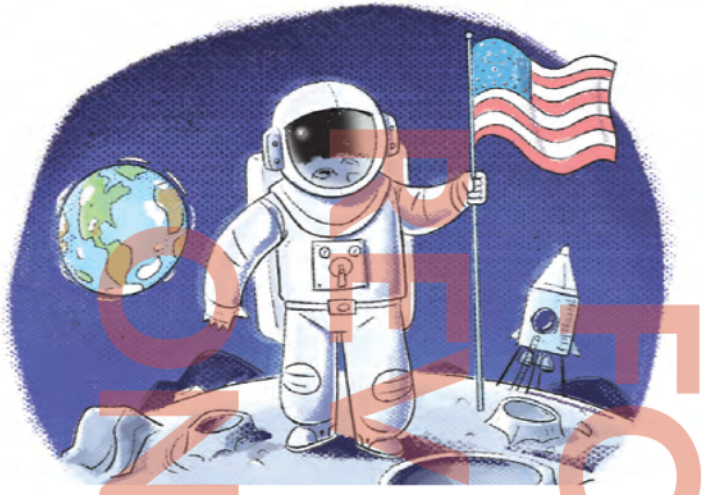
DO YOU BELIEVE?

INSTRUCTIONS: Answer each of the questions below with "yes" or "no." Compare your answers with a friend's.



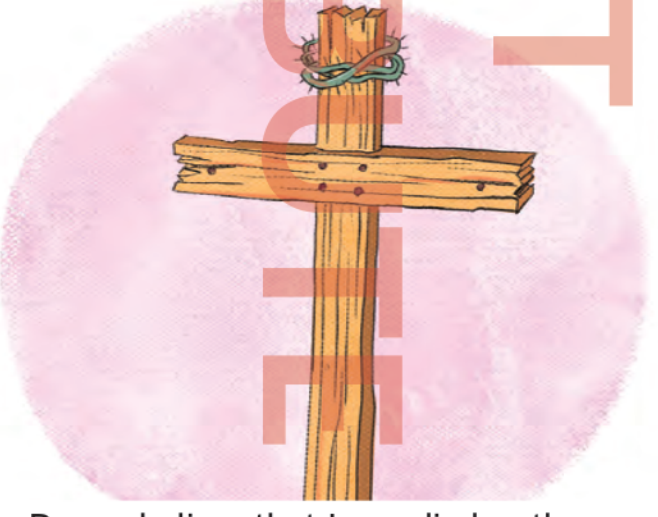
Do you believe that a man has walked on the moon? _____



Do you believe that electricity powers lightbulbs? _____



Do you believe that sharks exist? _____



Do you believe that Jesus died on the cross and rose again? _____

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KEY PASSAGE:
1 Corinthians 15:3–4 – For I passed on to you as most important what I also received; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:
- What is our mission as believers? Our mission as believers is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Spirit.

BIBLE STORY:
JESUS FORGAVE AND RESTORED
- Thomas was not around when Jesus appeared to His disciples the first time.
- Thomas refused to believe Jesus was alive without proof.
- Jesus showed His hands and side to Thomas.
- Jesus said people who believe without seeing are blessed.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:
- Is it wrong to have doubts?
- What is our evidence that Jesus is alive?
- Whom can we tell about out evidence?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:
- Host a storytelling contest. See who tells the most exciting and the most believable story. Remind them that the story of Jesus is both exciting and true.

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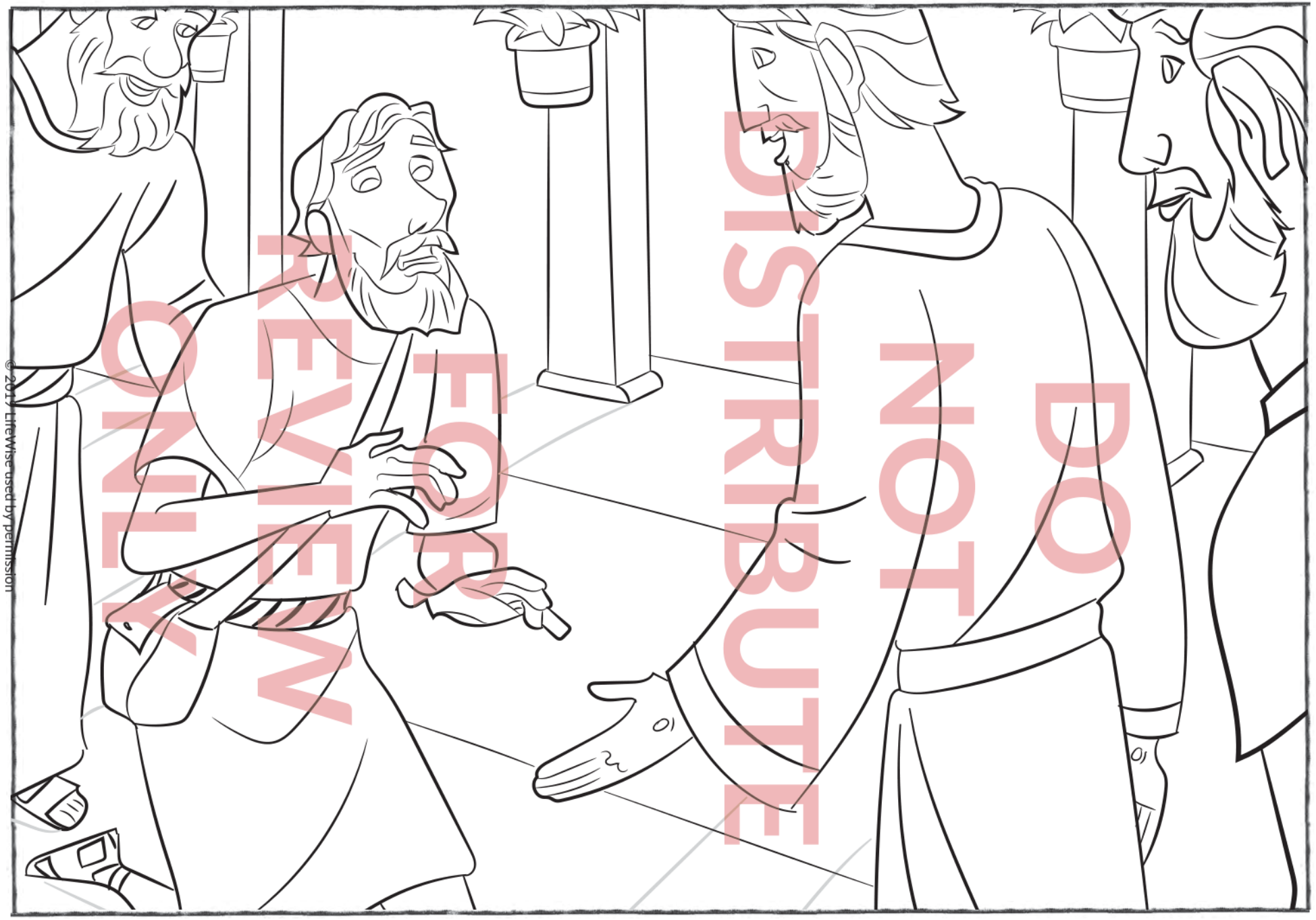

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JESUS SHOWED HIS HANDS AND SIDE TO THOMAS.

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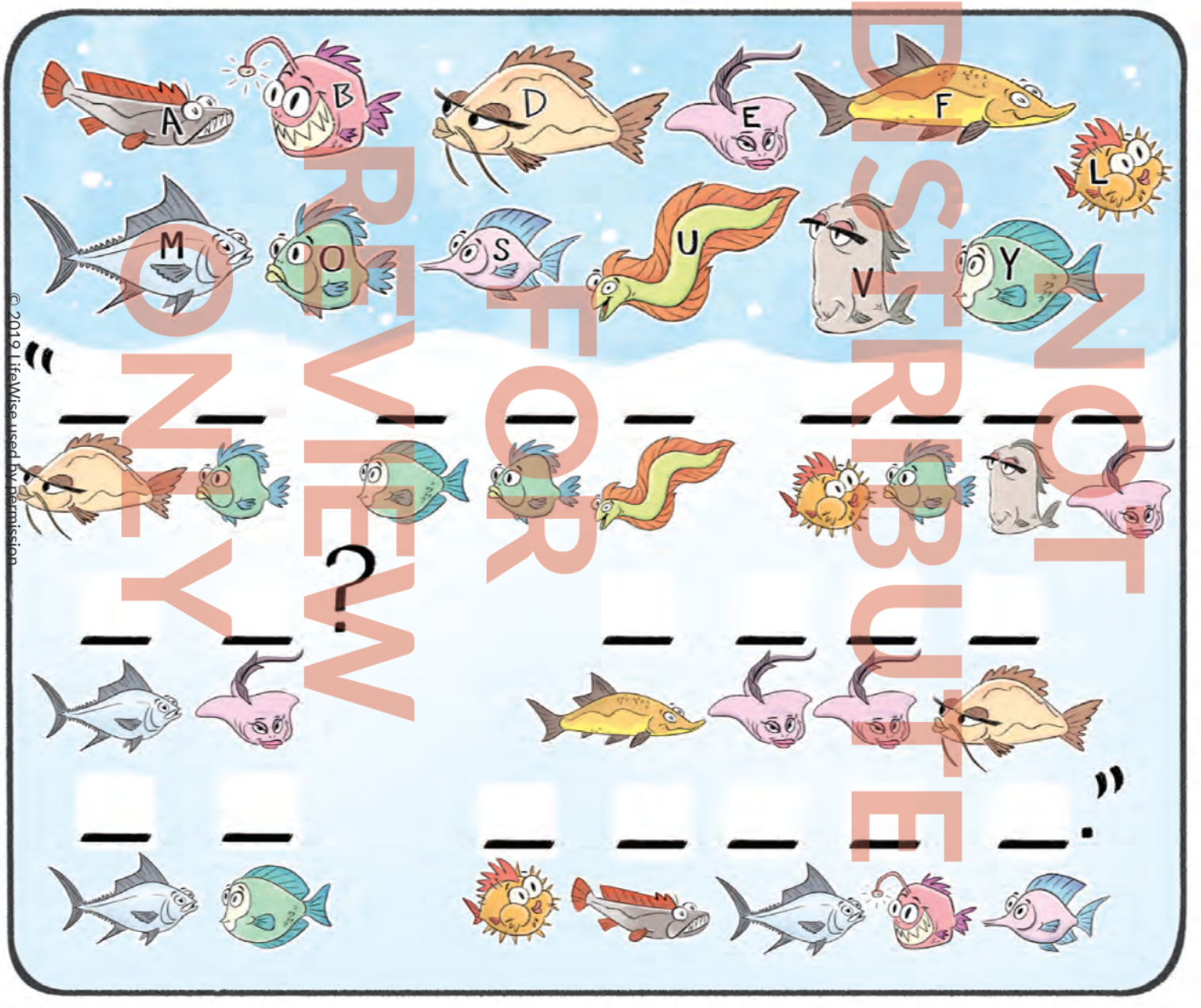
FISH FOOD

INSTRUCTIONS: Use the fish code below to figure out what Jesus said to Peter.



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KEY PASSAGE:
1 Corinthians 15:3–4 – For I passed on to you as most important what I also received; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:
- What is our mission as believers? Our mission as believers is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Spirit.

BIBLE STORY:
JESUS FORGIVES AND RESTORES
- Jesus told His disciples where to find fish.
- When they finished fishing, Jesus asked three times if Peter loved Him.
- Jesus forgave Peter and gave him a mission.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:
- Why did Jesus ask three times if Peter loved Him?
- How do you think Peter felt when Jesus asked him about his love?
- What mission did Jesus give Peter?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:
- Take your kids to a petting zoo where they can pet or even feed a sheep. Talk to them about the importance of Peter's mission from Jesus.

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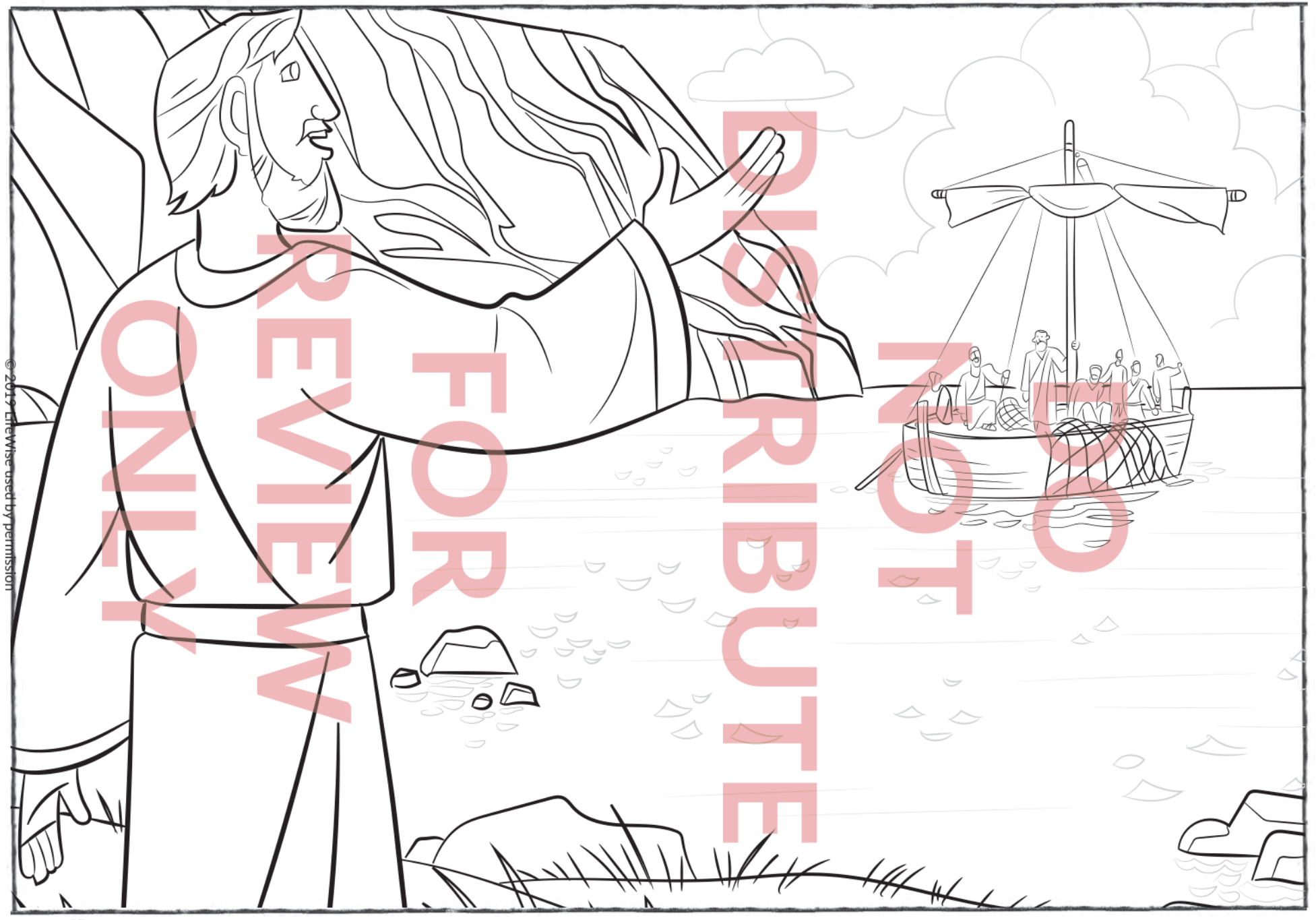

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JESUS FORGAVE PETER AND GAVE HIM A MISSION.

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Peter and the other disciples got into a boat and spent all night on the water, but they did not catch any fish.

The next morning, as the sun was coming up, Jesus stood on the shore. He called out to the disciples, but they did not recognize Him. Jesus said, "Men, have you caught any fish?"
"No," they answered.

"Put your net in the water on the right side of the boat, and you will catch some fish," Jesus said. The disciples did what Jesus said. So many fish were in their net, that they could not pull the net back into the boat!

One of the disciples said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Peter tied his clothing around himself and jumped into the water so he could swim to shore. The rest of the disciples traveled in the boat back to the shore. They pulled the net full of fish behind them.

When the disciples got out of the boat, they saw bread and a charcoal fire with fish on it. "Bring some of the fish you've caught," Jesus said. So Peter pulled the net ashore. It was full of large fish—153 of them!
"Come and have breakfast," Jesus said.

Jesus turned to Peter. "Do you love Me more than these?" He asked.
"Yes, Lord," Peter said. "You know that I love You."
"Feed My lambs," Jesus told him.

Jesus asked Peter again, "Do you love Me?"
"Yes, Lord," Peter said. "You know that I love You."
"Take care of My sheep," Jesus said.

Jesus asked Peter a third time, "Do you love Me?"
Peter was very sad that Jesus asked him a third time. Peter loved Jesus very much! "Lord, You know everything! You know that I love You!"
"Feed My sheep," Jesus said. Jesus told Peter that he would bring honor to God. Then Jesus said to him, "Follow Me!"

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E	E	F	G	I	N	O	R	S	S	V

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Word List

forgiveness, forgiven, singers, seniors, regions, ignores, forgive, freeing, fingers, sirens, seeing, noises, vines, serve, rinse, risen, reefs, noise, nerve, gross, given, frogs, fries, fever, fires, fines, sons, sins, sign, sing, rose, rise, ring, reef, nose, iron, grin, goes, gone, give, free, fine, sis, son, one, fog, eve, of, on, no, or

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LESSON 91: PERSEVERANCE

JESUS' GREAT COMMISSION AND ASCENSION

Matthew 28:16–20; Acts 1:4–14

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JESUS' GREAT COMMISSION AND ASCENSION

- Matthew 28:16–20; Acts 1:4–14
- Big Picture Q&A: What is our mission as believers? Our mission as believers is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Key Passage: 1 Corinthians 15:3–4 – For I passed on to you as most important what I also received; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

JESUS CONNECTION

The good news about what Jesus has done to rescue us from our sins is too great to keep to ourselves. Before Jesus went back to Heaven, He gave the disciples a job to do. Jesus wants His followers to teach people everywhere about Jesus so they will trust in Him as their Lord and Savior. Jesus did not leave us alone to share this message. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to be with us and help us do God's work. One day, Jesus will return to make all things new and to rule as Lord over all.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

PERSEVERANCE – Refusing to give up even when things are hard.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

After Jesus' death and resurrection, He appeared to His disciples over a 40-day period. At one point, He appeared to more than 500 people. During that time, Jesus taught about the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). Some disciples wondered if Jesus was going to restore the kingdom of Israel (Acts 1:6).

Jesus had a different plan for the disciples. He directed the Eleven to go to a mountain, where He appeared to them again. They worshiped Him, but some still doubted (Matt. 28:17). On the mountain, Jesus gave His disciples the Great Commission. First, Jesus stated that all authority had been given to Him. Through the resurrection the Father gave Jesus far more authority than Satan had tempted Jesus with (Matt. 4:8–9). Through Jesus' death and resurrection, God subjected everything to His beloved Son (Heb. 2:5–9).

Because of Jesus' authority, He commanded His disciples to go into the world and preach the gospel, the good news about Him. The Great Commission is not just for missionaries far from home. All believers are called to share the gospel with others, teach them to obey God's commands and baptize them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Jesus finished His commission with a profound promise: "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20).

Talk to the students you teach about the importance of living out the Great Commission. Because Jesus has authority over all places and all people at all times, we can take the good news about Jesus to all places

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and all people at all times. God has given us a mission and gives us power through the Holy Spirit to obey this calling.

After Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus showed His followers that He is alive. He taught them about Himself and about God's kingdom (Luke 24:25–27, 44–48). Jesus told them that He would soon return to the Father (John 20:17).

Jesus directed the Eleven to go to a mountain. When they arrived, Jesus appeared. Some of them wondered if Jesus was finally going to overthrow the Roman government and set up His kingdom on Earth.

Jesus said, "It is not for you to know times or periods that the Father has set by His own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:7–8).

Jesus told them to remain in Jerusalem until they received the Father's promise—the Holy Spirit. Those who repented of their sins and trusted in Jesus' death and resurrection would be baptized by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5). The Holy Spirit would give them power to live holy lives and take the gospel to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

After Jesus told the disciples these things, Jesus was taken up into the sky—right in front of their eyes (Acts 1:9)! Suddenly, two men stood on the mountain next to the disciples. "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into Heaven?" they asked. They said Jesus would return the same way (Acts 1:11).

Jesus is alive in Heaven, waiting to return for His people. Jesus told the disciples He was going to prepare a place for them, and when we die, we will be with the Lord (John 14:1–3). In the meantime, Jesus has not left us alone. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to be with us and help us do God's work. One day, Jesus will return to make all things new and to rule as Lord over all.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Take a look at all of these stories we have heard from the Bible. All of these shorter stories fit together to tell one greater story. Can anyone tell me what the Bible is about? [*Take responses.*] The Bible is about God's plan to send His Son into the world to rescue people from sin.

The Old Testament tells us about God's promises to His people. The people waited so long for God to send a Savior, and then He finally did! Jesus came into the world as a baby. He grew up and taught people about God. He died on the cross for our sins, and then rose from the dead on the third day! Then, Jesus appeared to His disciples and to many other people. Does anyone remember who Jesus appeared to after he rose from the dead? (*Mary and the other women, the two disciples walking to Emmaus, the 10 disciples, the 11 disciples, 500 believers, Paul.*) Jesus' disciples wondered what would happen now that Jesus had risen from the dead. Today's Bible story is about what Jesus told His followers to do right before He went back to Heaven.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Mirror Game (Older Students)

- Form groups of three. Number the students in each group 1, 2 and 3. Students 2 and 3 should stand back-to-back. Student 1 will face student 2. Prompt student 2 to strike a pose. [*Example:*

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smile and raise arms in the air.] Student 1 should study the pose for 10 seconds, then move around to face student 3. Student 1 should describe the pose, instructing student 3 to move in a specific way. Then, have students 2 and 3 face each other and compare poses. How similar are they? Allow them to switch roles, strike new poses and play again.

- Nice job, everyone! Was it hard to describe what you saw to someone else? Today, we are going to hear a Bible story about instructions Jesus gave to His disciples. Jesus told them to go and tell others about something very important.

A Job To Do (Older Students)

- Before class, write the names of various occupations (*doctor, firefighter, etc.*) on separate cards. There should be one index card for every student. Tape an index card to each student's forehead. Players will take turns asking each other yes-or-no questions to figure out the job on their cards. When everyone has figured out their jobs, say you have one more job for them to figure out. Give the following descriptions and challenge them to guess the job:
  - Go and make disciples of all nations.
  - Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
  - Teach them to observe everything Jesus commanded.
- Can anyone guess the job I described? It is *follower of Jesus*. Jesus told His followers that they had a special job to do. We will hear more in today's Bible story.

Categories Quiz (Older Students)

- Give each student a pencil and a copy of the "Categories" printable. Explain that the class will get one minute to fill out List #1 with answers that begin with the same letter. Put one minute on a timer, announce that *J* is the first round's letter, and when students are ready, say "go." When time is up, all players must immediately stop writing. Call on students, in turn, to read their answers. If anyone has a unique answer, he should circle it. If someone else wrote the same answer, both should cross it out. When all lists have been shared, award one point for each circled answer.

- That last category was tricky: something you might see in the sky. Did anyone write down *Jesus*? In today's Bible story, Jesus' disciples saw Jesus in the sky. How strange! We're going to find out what happened.

Pass It On (Older and Younger Students)

- Invite the class to stand shoulder to shoulder. You will whisper an exciting message to the first student, who will whisper it to the next person in line. The message will travel down the line until it gets to the last person. The last person will share aloud what he heard.

- You were given an important message to share with the person next to you. You had to be careful to share the right message. How do you think we did? Jesus gave His disciples an important job. He wanted them to tell everyone to trust Jesus as their Lord and Savior. That is one great message to share.

Promise Steps (Older and Younger Students)

- Before class, write down common promises that students make to others. During class, instruct the class to form a line, shoulder to shoulder, at the far side of the room. Read each promise, one

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at a time. Any student who has made that promise should take two steps forward. If they have ever broken that promise, they must take a step back. See who took the most steps forward at the end. Invite adult volunteers to do the activity if there is enough room so students know that adults have also broken promises.

- We make many promises to others. Some we keep, some we do not. Jesus keeps all of His promises. Today, we will learn about a promise Jesus made before going back to Heaven.

Commissioned (Younger Students)

- Create several slips of paper containing specific instructions for the class to follow. One student will choose a slip and then lead the rest of the class in the activity [*e.g., lead the class to bunny hop around the room, guide the class to arrange themselves by height or birthday, etc.*]. Continue as time allows.

- Leaders, what was easy or hard about the instructions you were given? Was it easy to share this information with the group? Why or why not? Jesus gave His followers instructions to follow in order to lead others to Christ.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

1 Corinthians 15:3–4

For I passed on to you as most important what I also received; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

Paper Pass (Older Students)

- Instruct the students to sit around a table or in a circle on the floor. Show the key passage poster and read it aloud together two or three times. Then, distribute paper and pencils. Students should write their names on the back of the paper and the first word of the key passage on the front of their paper. Then, they should pass their papers to the right. They will then write the second word and pass the papers again. The class should continue writing and passing until they complete the key passage. For classes that have difficulty writing, have them pass a ball instead. The first student will hold a ball and say the first word of the verse. Then, they will pass the ball to the next player who will say the second word and so on. After students have gone all the way around the circle and completed the verse, you can challenge them to try it faster.

Balloon Bop (Older and Younger Students)

- Before class, blow up a white balloon to represent a cloud. The class should form a circle. Instruct students not to move from their spot as they play. Toss the balloon up and have the class say the next word of the key passage every time someone bops the balloon. Challenge them to finish the verse before the balloon drops to the ground. If the balloon drops before the verse is finished, start the verse over.

Key Passage Line Up (Older and Younger Students)

- Write phrases from the key passage on one or two sets of index cards before class. During class, lead the students in saying 1 Corinthians 15:3–4. Then, give each student an index card. Guide the class to line up as quickly as possible in order of the key passage.

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Big Picture Q&A

Q: What is our mission as believers?

A: *Our mission as believers is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Spirit.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Jesus' Great Commission and Ascension | Matthew 28:16–20; Acts 1:4–14

After Jesus had been raised from the dead, He met with His disciples over the next 40 days. During that time, **Jesus told them even more about God's kingdom. Then, Jesus' 11 disciples went to a mountain in Galilee.** Jesus had told them to go there. When the disciples saw Jesus, some of them worshiped Him. But some of the disciples still doubted.

Then, **Jesus** went up to them and **said, "All authority has been given to Me in Heaven and on Earth."** Jesus is God the Son; He always had authority. But after Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, God gave Him all authority in Heaven and on Earth. Jesus is the King over all creation, and He rules over God's kingdom.

Jesus gave the disciples—and everyone who follows Him—a job to do. He said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel. Make disciples of people from every nation." A *disciple* is a follower. Jesus wants His followers to tell people all over the world how to be rescued from sin and death by trusting in Jesus' death and resurrection. Then, those people who believe would become disciples of Jesus too.

Jesus also said, "Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." New disciples are cleansed from sin by Jesus' blood. When believers are baptized, they show the world that they have turned away from sin and trusted in Jesus as their Savior.

Jesus continued, "Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you." Disciples who love Jesus will want to obey Him. **Then, Jesus said, "Remember this: I am always with you, until the very end of the age."**

Then, Jesus told them not to leave the city of Jerusalem. Jesus said the disciples should wait there until God kept His promise to give them the Holy Spirit.

Jesus reminded the disciples of John the Baptist. John had baptized people with water when they turned away from their sin and turned to God. **Jesus said that in a few days, the disciples would be baptized** too**. Not with water, but with the Holy Spirit.**

"Lord, are You giving the kingdom back to Israel now?" the disciples asked. God was with His people—the Jews—but they looked weak. The Romans ruled over them. The Jewish people wanted to have power over other nations.

Jesus did not say yes, but He did not say no. "The Father knows when the time is right," He said. Then, **Jesus said, "**But **you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you. You will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."**

As Jesus' witnesses, the disciples would tell people what they knew to be true. They would tell people the good news about Jesus in the city of Jerusalem, in the surrounding area of Judea and the nearby area of Samaria, and all over the world. The Holy Spirit would be with them to help them.

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After Jesus said these things, He went up into Heaven. The disciples watched Jesus until a cloud hid Him from their sight. All of a sudden, two men appeared. The men were wearing white clothes. These men asked the disciples, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into Heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken from you into Heaven, will come again. He will return in the same way that you have seen Him going into Heaven."

Then, they returned to Jerusalem, as Jesus had instructed them, to pray and wait.

JESUS CONNECTION



The good news about what Jesus has done to rescue us from our sins is too great to keep to ourselves. Before Jesus went back to Heaven, He gave the disciples a job to do. Jesus wants His followers to teach people everywhere about Jesus so they will trust in Him as their Lord and Savior. Jesus did not leave us alone to share this message. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to be with us and help us do God's work. One day, Jesus will return to make all things new and to rule as Lord over all.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

PERSEVERANCE – Refusing to give up even when things are hard.

Living LifeWise

Because God has given us His Spirit, we can persevere in every situation.

Character Connection

Big games are very exciting, and winning a big game is not easy. Teams have to work hard to prepare and play well. They play other teams and practice every day and learn to work together so the team can reach its goal.

When Jesus ascended into Heaven, He told His disciples His big goal for them. Until He came back, they were to go and tell other people about Him and help them become disciples, too. He promised that, along with a job to do, He would give them His Spirit to help them keep on working hard until He returned.

That's our assignment, too. We have the Holy Spirit, who helps us live God's way with perseverance so that we can be part of His big plan. Like a sports team striving to win the big game, it won't be easy. But God wants us to persevere *with His help* so others can see Him at work in our lives and want to know more about Him.

Having perseverance isn't easy. It's hard to stick it out, and it's easier to just give up. How can God help us to show perseverance in these situations?

- Your teacher says you need to get your language arts grade up.
- You are on a basketball team but do not like the coaching.
- You want to go to church but have no way to get there.

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BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- How many disciples traveled to Galilee?

  Eleven disciples, Matt. 28:16

- What did the disciples do when they saw Jesus?

  They worshiped Him, but some doubted, Matt. 28:17

- Jesus told His followers to baptize in the name of whom?

  The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Matt. 28:19

- Jesus said He is with His followers for how long?

  Always, Matt. 28:20

- John baptized people with what?

  Water, Acts 1:5

- Jesus said the disciples would be baptized with whom?

  The Holy Spirit, Acts 1:5

- What did Jesus say the Holy Spirit would give to the disciples?

  Power to share the gospel, Acts 1:8

- What hid Jesus from the disciples' eyes?

  A cloud, Acts 1:9

- How will Jesus come again?

  The same way He went into Heaven, Acts 1:11

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Digging Deeper (Older Students)

- Before class, write a few questions on index cards. Allow the class to take turns drawing cards and reading the questions aloud. Each time, answer the question simply. Encourage students to ask "Why?" after each answer you give. Invite them to help you answer each new "why." Continue until you or the students cannot answer any further, then draw the next question.

- Sample questions:
  - Why do you believe in Jesus?
  - Explain why Jesus died on the cross.
  - How did Jesus' death and resurrection pay for your sin?
  - Why do you read your Bible?
  - Why do you pray?
  - What is the reason people go to church?
  - Name someone you can tell about Jesus.

- Sometimes, we give quick answers about what we believe, but if we are going to share the gospel with the world, we have to really understand what we believe. Was it easy or hard to continue to answer questions? [*Allow students to share.*] This is a great practice for when we get the chance to share the good news about Jesus with our friends.

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Take the Gospel (Older Students)

- Post a world map on the board or a focal wall. Invite the class to sit in a circle with you. Start the game by saying, "Let's take the gospel to …" and then say the name of a country. [*For example, "Let's take the gospel to Bolivia."*] The student to your right should say, "Let's take the gospel to …" and then name another country and the country you chose. (*"Let's take the gospel to Algeria and Bolivia."*) Continue "traveling" around the circle, adding to the list of countries. When a student can't recall all the countries, encourage previous players to remind them of the countries they chose. You may also choose to start again.

- Everyone in the world needs to hear the good news about Jesus. Jesus gave the disciples the Great Commission, and Jesus calls all believers to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. More than seven billion people live on Earth. That's a big job! Some of us might travel as missionaries, and others of us might support missionaries or share the gospel right in our own neighborhoods. That might sound overwhelming, but Jesus gives us the Holy Spirit to help us on our mission of making disciples.

Cloud Toss (Older and Younger Students)

- Point out the five divisions of the New Testament. (*Gospels, New Testament History, Paul's Letters, General Letters, Prophecy.*) Explain that Acts is the only book of New Testament History and tells what the early believers did to spread the gospel after Jesus ascended to Heaven. It was written by Luke, who also wrote the Gospel of Luke. He collected eyewitness accounts and spent time traveling with the first missionaries.

- Divide into two teams and have the teams line up. Put a large bucket five feet from each team. Alternate between teams, asking one student at a time a review question. If he answers correctly, the team gets a point, and he gets a cotton ball to try and throw in the bucket. If it goes in, he gets a second point for his team. The team with the most points wins.

- Saying goodbye to a friend is never easy, but Jesus ascended to Heaven in a cloud for the good of those who followed Him. Jesus returned to Heaven to send the Holy Spirit down to us. The Holy Spirit fills us with power so we can make disciples. Our mission as believers is possible because of the Holy Spirit's power in our lives.

World Map Shapes (Older and Younger Students)

- Guide the class to cut a cross or heart shape from the world maps. Students may use glue and ribbon to create a hanger for their art or cut a small cross or heart that can be used as a bookmark. Lead them to read John 3:16 and Matthew 28:19–20. Talk about ways they can be involved in spreading the good news about Jesus throughout the world: by praying, giving time or money, telling others the gospel and so forth.

- Jesus' death and resurrection paid the penalty for sins and gave us the promise of new life. Jesus calls all believers to make disciples of all nations.

Tricky Timing (Older and Younger Students)

- Instruct the class to stand. Announce that you will start a timer for 15 seconds. Challenge them to sit down when they think 15 seconds have passed. Note which students sit closest to the actual time. When every student is seated, reveal the player with the most accurate timing. Play additional rounds. Increase increments of time to 30, 40 or 50 seconds. You may choose to allow

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students to take turns using the timer. For an added challenge, guide students to close their eyes as they wait. Award points to the players who sit closest to the actual elapsed time.

- Before Jesus ascended to Heaven in a cloud, He told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for God to send the Holy Spirit. Then, two men said that Jesus would come back for His people. The disciples had to wait. When we receive Jesus as our Lord and Savior, God gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit. As believers, we eagerly wait for the day Jesus will return to make all things new and to rule as Lord over all. The Bible says that no one knows when Jesus will return, so we should always be ready.

What Is Missing? (Younger Students)

- Gather about 15 items from around the room and place them in the middle of the floor. The class will sit in a circle around the items. Give the students a couple of minutes to really study the items. Choose one student to be the guesser and one to be the picker. Guide the guesser to close his eyes while the picker takes away one of the items and hides it. Allow the guesser to try to figure out which item is missing. If he guesses correctly, he becomes the picker and chooses another guesser. Play several rounds as time allows.

- An item went missing each round. Sometimes, it was difficult to tell which item was gone. Jesus' disciples had no trouble telling that He was gone! Jesus ascended to Heaven in a cloud, but He didn't leave them alone. He gave the gift of the Holy Spirit to help His followers complete His mission.

Pictionary (Younger Students)

- Divide into two groups. Write words from today's Bible story on slips of paper, fold them in half and put them in a bowl. Give each group large sheets of paper. Each group will designate a student to be the drawer for each round. The drawer will pick a slip from a bowl. She will draw the word or person for her team to guess. The first team to guess correctly wins a point. Suggestions for drawing cards: *Jesus*, *cloud*, *disciples*, *men in white*, *Heaven* and *baptize*.

- After Jesus ascended to Heaven in a cloud, His disciples were standing around looking into the sky. Maybe they were trying to figure out exactly what they had just witnessed, or maybe they were wondering if Jesus was really gone. But the angels reminded them that they shouldn't stand around waiting to see when Jesus would come back. Instead, they could trust His promise to return and obey His commands while they waited.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Let's Do This (Older Students)
- Ascension Maze (Older Students)
- Crossword Verse (Younger Students)
- What Goes Up (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Lord God, we thank You for Your Word. Thank You for calling us to join in Your purpose of making Jesus known to people of every nation. You give us power through Your Spirit. Give us courage as we wait for You to return. We believe You will come again in the same way You ascended. Amen.

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Journal Page

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What does it mean to "make disciples"?
- Why do you think Jesus wants disciples from every nation?
- How does God give us power to obey the Great Commission?

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FOLD



JESUS' GREAT COMMISSION AND ASCENSION

MATTHEW 28:16-20, ACTS 1:4-14

MAIN POINT: JESUS GAVE THE DISCIPLES THE GREAT COMMISSION.

After Jesus had been raised from the dead, He met with His disciples. Jesus told them even more about God's kingdom. Then, Jesus' 11 disciples went to a mountain in Galilee.

Jesus said, "All authority has been given to Me in Heaven and on Earth." Jesus gave the disciples—and everyone who follows Him—a job to do. He said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel. Make disciples of people from every nation."

Jesus also said, "Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Jesus continued, "Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you." Then Jesus said, "Remember this: I am always with you, until the very end of the age."

Jesus Connection: *The good news about what Jesus has done to rescue us from our sins is too great to keep to ourselves. Before Jesus went back to Heaven, He gave the disciples a job to do. Jesus wants His followers to teach people everywhere about Jesus so they will trust in Him as their Lord and Savior.*

Key Passage: *1 Corinthians 15:3-4 – For I passed on to you as most important what I also received; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.*

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LET'S DO THIS!

Cross out the letters **B, F, H, P, U** and **Y** to discover what Jesus gave to His followers.

GBHFRPUHEYBYAPYBT
CFBOMPYMUIFSYSBIOFN



OUR MISSION

Use the code to fill in the missing vowels and complete the secret message.

What is our mission as believers?

_ _r m_ss_ _n _s
b_l_ _v_rs _s t_ m_k_
d_sc_pl_s _f _ll
n_t_ _ns by th_ p_w_r
_f th_ Sp_r_t.

CODE

A	
E	
I	
O	
U	

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ASCENSION MAZE

Complete the maze from the disciples to Jesus.



MAKE IT RIGHT

Circle the correct words and then fill in the blanks.

Jesus left _____ (Earth / home)

and returned to

_____ (school / Heaven),

but He did not leave us

_____ (alone / hungry).

Jesus sent the

_____ (mail carrier / Holy Spirit)

to be with us and help us do God's

_____ (work / creation).

One day _____ (Jesus / Moses)

will return to make all things

_____ (old / new)

and to rule as Lord over

_____ (a few / all).

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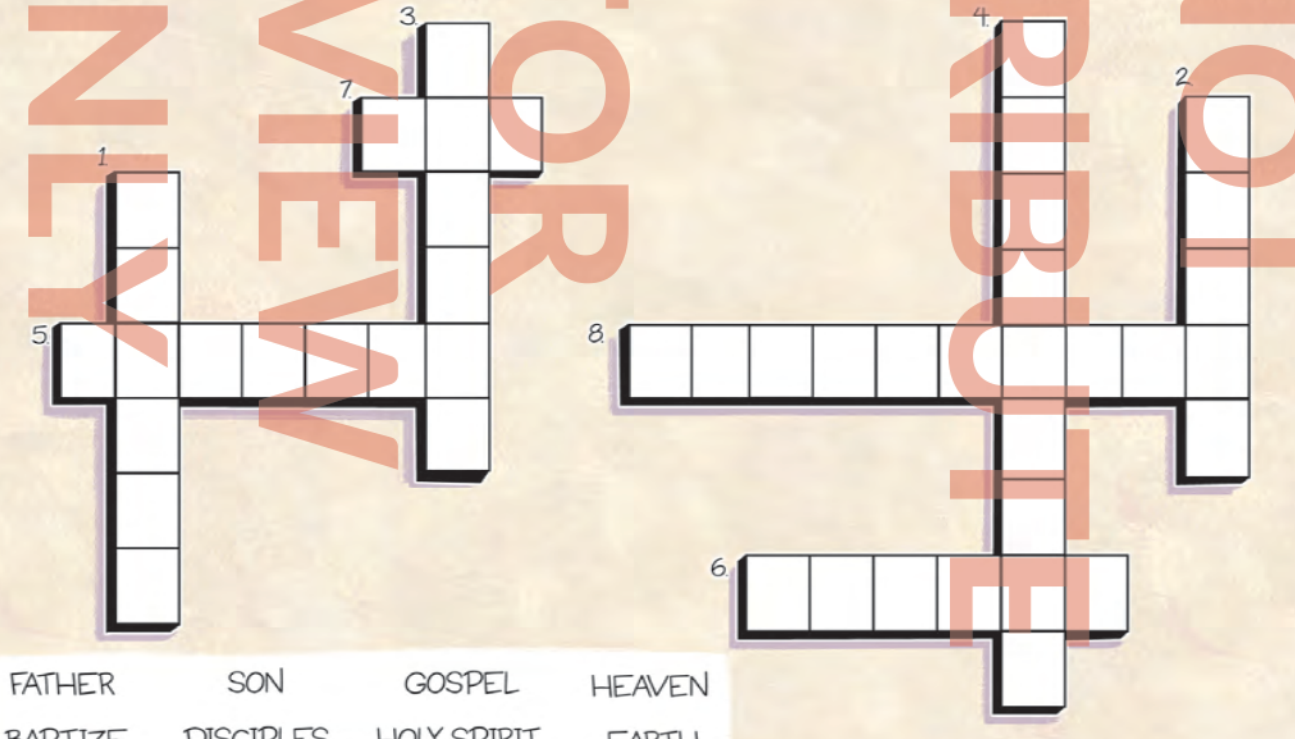
CROSSWORD VERSE

INSTRUCTIONS: Use the missing words from the Bible verse to complete the crossword puzzle.

DOWN: "All authority has been given to Me in [1] _____ and on [2] _____.
Go into all the world and preach the [3] _____.
Make [4] _____ of people from every nation,

ACROSS:
[5] _____ them in name of the [6] _____
and of the [7] _____ and of the [8] _____."



FATHER	SON	GOSPEL	HEAVEN
BAPTIZE	DISCIPLES	HOLY SPIRIT	EARTH

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KEY PASSAGE:
1 Corinthians 15:3–4 – For I passed on to you as most important what I also received; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:
- What is our mission as believers? Our mission as believers is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Spirit.

BIBLE STORY:
JESUS' GREAT COMMISSION AND ASCENSION
- Jesus and His disciples met on a mountain.
- Jesus gave the disciples the Great Commission.
- Jesus told them they would make disciples and teach them to obey Jesus.
- They would also baptize in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:
- Who else is called to make disciples?
- What does it mean to be a "disciple"?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:
- Take your kids to a mall or public park to share the gospel with someone they have never met.

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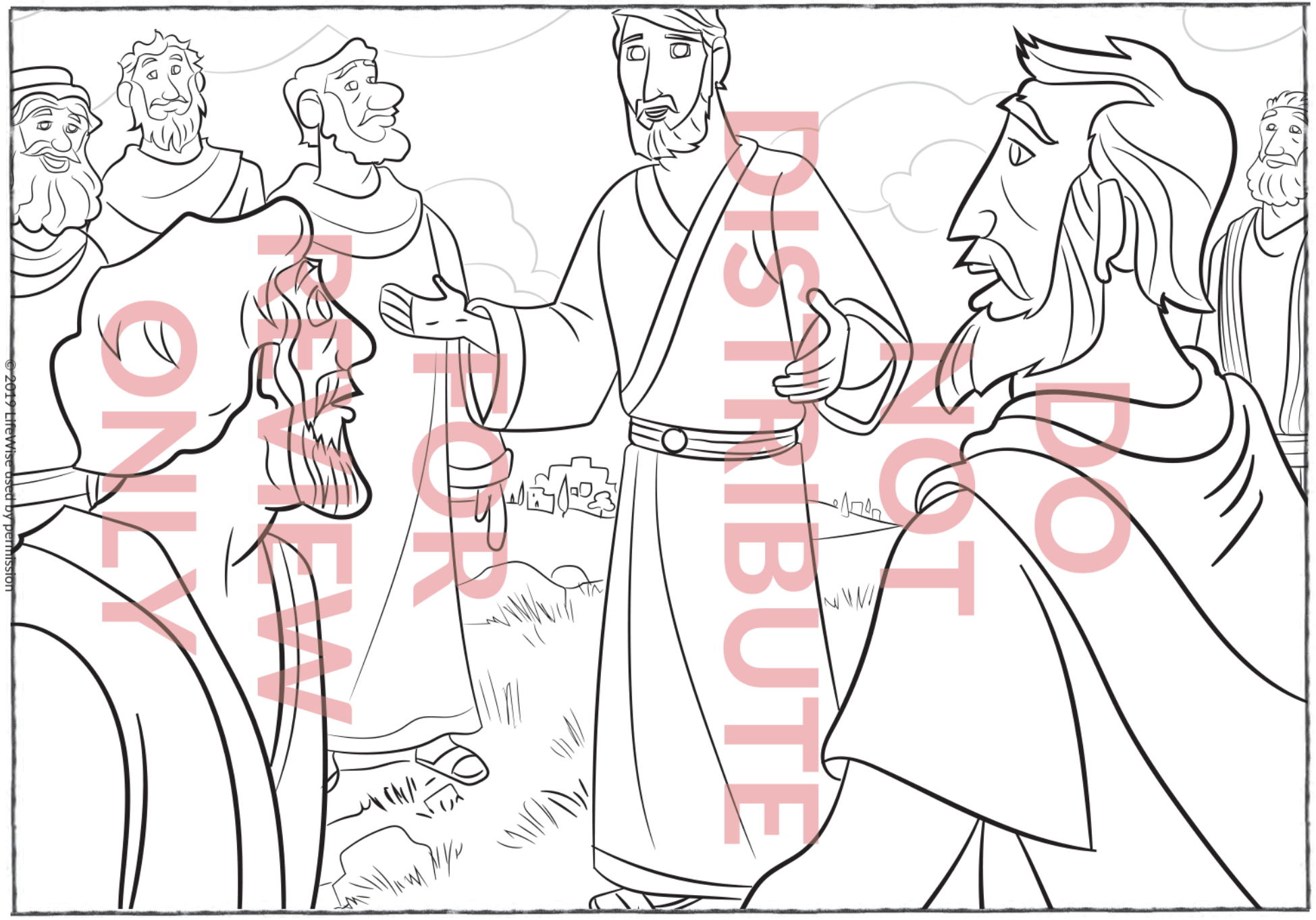

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JESUS GAVE THE DISCIPLES THE GREAT COMMISSION.

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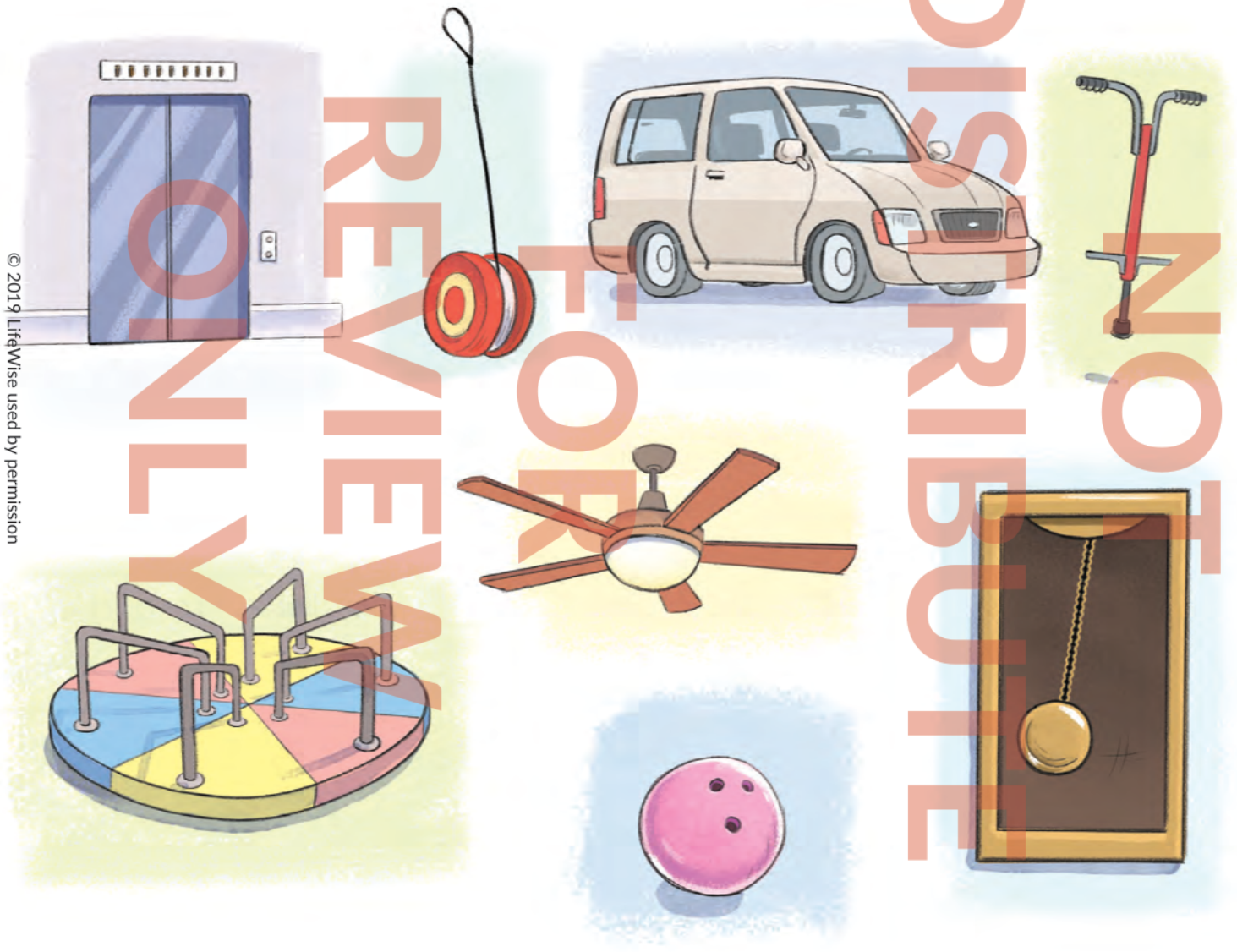
WHAT GOES UP ...

INSTRUCTIONS: Circle the things that tend to move up and down. Cross out things that move in other directions.



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KEY PASSAGE:
1 Corinthians 15:3–4 – For I passed on to you as most important what I also received; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:
- What is our mission as believers? Our mission as believers is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Spirit.

BIBLE STORY:
JESUS ASCENDED TO HEAVEN
- Jesus gave His disciples important instructions.
- Jesus told them to wait until the Holy Spirit came.
- Jesus told them they would receive power and be His witnesses all over the world.
- Jesus ascended to Heaven in a cloud.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:
- What does it mean to be a "witness" for Jesus?
- Who can be a "witness" for Jesus today?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:
- Schedule a family outing to a trampoline park. As you jump up and down, talk about Jesus, who came down from Heaven to save us, then went back up to Heaven to be with God.

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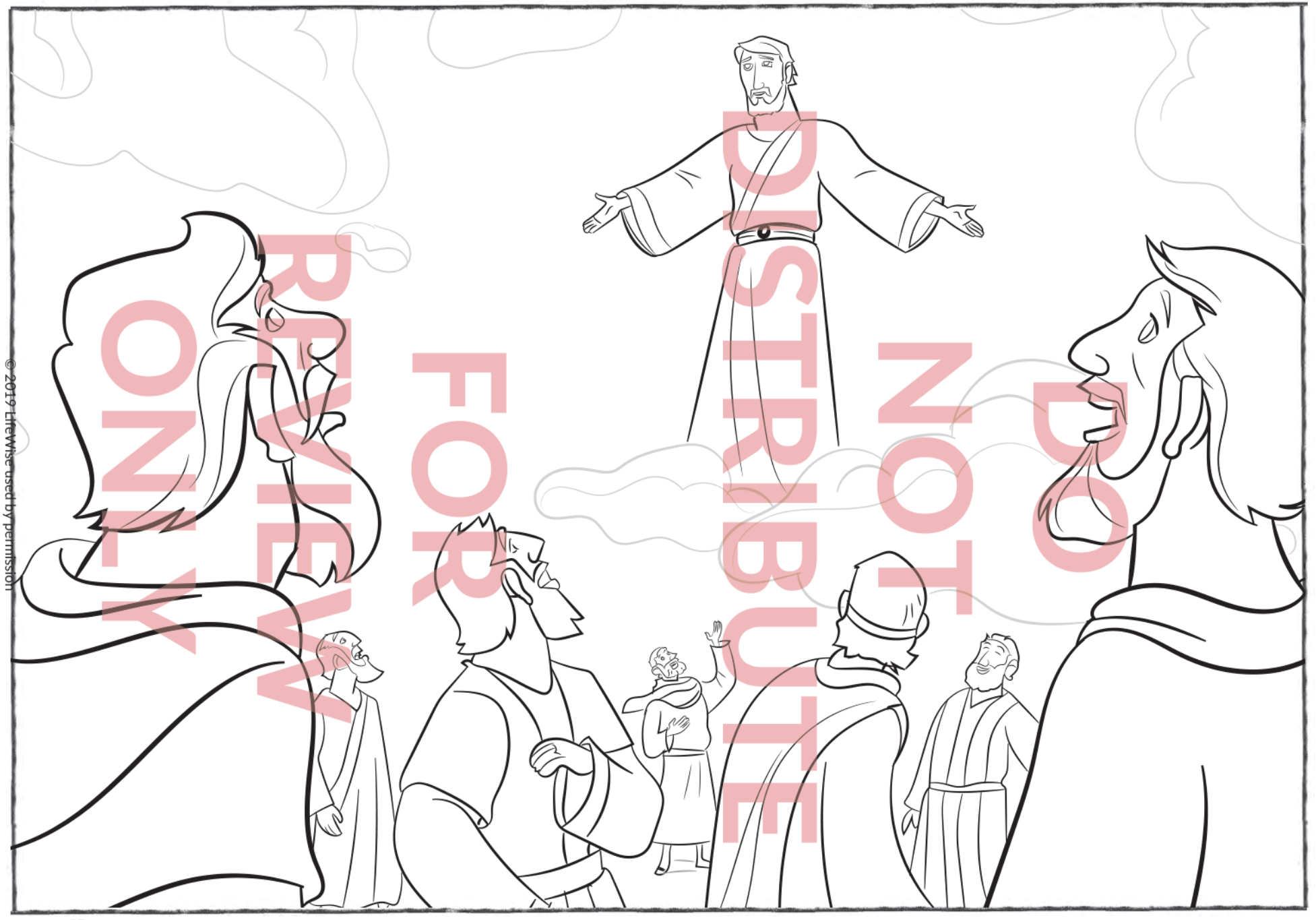

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JESUS ASCENDED TO HEAVEN IN A CLOUD.

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CATEGORIES	LIST #1	LIST #2
1. Movie title	1. _____	1. _____
2. A person in the Bible	2. _____	2. _____
3. Something sweet to eat	3. _____	3. _____
4. A toy or game	4. _____	4. _____
5. A girl's name	5. _____	5. _____
6. A boy's name	6. _____	6. _____
7. The title of a book	7. _____	7. _____
8. An adjective (word that describes)	8. _____	8. _____
9. A city, state, or country	9. _____	9. _____
10. Something you might see in the sky	10. _____	10. _____

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10. Something you might see in the sky	10. _____	10. _____

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Categories

Instructions: Print and use as directed in the leader guide.

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LESSON 92: RELIABILITY

THE HOLY SPIRIT CAME

Acts 2:1–4, 22–42

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THE HOLY SPIRIT CAME

- Acts 2:1–4, 22–42
- Big Picture Q&A: What does the Holy Spirit do? The Holy Spirit helps Christians follow Jesus.
- Key Passage: Acts 1:8 – But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

JESUS CONNECTION

God kept His promise to send the Holy Spirit. With the Holy Spirit's help, Jesus' disciples could begin their work to share the gospel with the entire world. God gives the Holy Spirit to those who trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior. The Holy Spirit gives us power to do God's work, and He changes us to be more like Jesus.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

RELIABILITY – Living so that others can depend on me.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Forty days after Jesus rose from the dead, He ascended to Heaven. He had instructed the disciples to go to Jerusalem and wait. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would come upon them. So, the disciples went back to Jerusalem, where they waited and prayed.

Ten days after Jesus returned to Heaven, the time came for the Jewish festival called Pentecost, or the Feast of Weeks. As with the Passover festival, Jews from all over the Roman Empire would be at the temple in Jerusalem. During this festival, the Holy Spirit came to believers in Jerusalem. They heard a sound like a violent, rushing wind. When the Holy Spirit filled the disciples, they were able to speak in foreign languages. They went out into the city and began to preach, and the Jews from all over the world were amazed. These disciples were from Galilee, but they were speaking in languages the Jewish visitors could understand.

The disciples told people about God's plan. The Holy Spirit helped Peter teach: Jesus is the Messiah; Jesus was killed, but He is alive (Acts 2:22–36)! The Holy Spirit convicted the crowd, and they asked, "Brothers, what must we do?" Peter told them to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:37–38). That day, 3,000 people received salvation!

God kept His promise to send the Holy Spirit. With the Holy Spirit's help, Jesus' disciples could share the gospel with the entire world. God gives the Holy Spirit to those who trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior. As you teach your students, emphasize that the Holy Spirit gives us power to do God's work, and He changes us to be more like Jesus.

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BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Let's take a quick look back at our recent Bible stories. Jesus was crucified, or killed on a cross, and rose from the dead on the third day. For 40 days, He appeared to His followers. When Jesus was ready to return to Heaven, He gave the disciples a job to do called the Great Commission. Does anyone remember Jesus' last commands to the disciples? (*Make disciples of all nations, baptize them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, teach them to obey God's Word.*) Where did Jesus go after He gave the Great Commission? (*He ascended, or went up to Heaven.*) Before Jesus returned to Heaven, He told His disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit to be sent to them in Jerusalem. Our story today picks up after Jesus' ascension. The disciples obeyed Jesus' command to wait. They were waiting and praying together in Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit came.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Quick Reactions (Older Students)

- Have the class stand and spread out around the room. Stand at the front of the room and challenge them to listen carefully to your instructions. Emphasize that no matter what you do, they should follow your words—not your movements. Begin by saying "right hand" while raising and then lowering your right hand. Then, say "left hand" as you raise and lower your left hand. The class should follow your words. Alternate slowly between hands and feet. As the players catch on, pick up the pace. After several movements, say "left hand" but raise your right hand. Any students who raise the wrong hand should sit down. Every few rounds, invite students who are seated to rejoin the game.

- That was difficult! You had to listen to me closely to know what to do. In today's Bible story, we will hear about some people who listened to Jesus' followers and asked, "What should we do?"

Robot Helper (Older and Younger Students)

- Prompt students to imagine they could invent a robot helper. Invite them to share what types of tasks their robot would do. What kind of helper would the robot be?

- Today, we are going to hear about someone whom Jesus called "the Helper." This helper knows what you need before you ask.

Follow-The-Leader (Younger Students)

- Select one student to be the leader. She will parade around the room, and the class must follow her and mimic her actions. Encourage the leader to do silly walks, make hand motions or gestures, or even whistle, hum or sing as she leads. Play again, with different leaders, as time allows.

- We can also be disciples, or followers of Jesus. Being a disciple means you follow someone closely. Sometimes, it's difficult to follow where Jesus leads, and we need help to obey Him. Today, we will learn about the time when Jesus sent the Helper to His disciples.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

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Key Passage Motions (Older and Younger Students)

- Break the key passage up into phrases and have the students repeat the verse several times. Work with your class to develop hand motions to help them remember the key passage and practice them all together. Suggested motions:
  - You will receive power [*Flex arms.*]
  - when the Holy Spirit [*Point upward.*]
  - has come on you [*Move hands down to touch your heart.*]
  - and you will be My witnesses [*Hold up four fingers in front of your lips.*]
  - in Jerusalem [*Use your hands to make a small circle in front of you with your hands.*]
  - in all Judea and Samaria [*Make a larger circle with your arms.*]
  - and to the ends of the earth [*Spread arms out wide.*]

Big Picture Q&A

Q: What does the Holy Spirit do?
A: *The Holy Spirit helps Christians follow Jesus.*

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BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

The Holy Spirit Came | Acts 2:1–4, 22–42

On the day of Pentecost, Jesus' disciples were gathered together in Jerusalem. All of a sudden, a sound came from Heaven. It was like a strong rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where Jesus' disciples were staying. **Then, tongues appeared like flames of fire, and they rested on each of the disciples. The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit gave them the ability to speak in different languages!**

Jews from every nation under Heaven had traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in great surprise and confusion. Although each one came from a different part of the world, they heard their own language being spoken by the disciples. Completely amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these men who are speaking Galileans? We hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own languages! What does this mean?"

Peter spoke to the crowd that had gathered. "God pointed out to you Jesus the Nazarene," he said. "You saw the miracles, wonders and signs God did through Jesus. **Even though God planned for Jesus to die, you used lawless people to nail Him to a cross and kill Him. But death did not keep hold of Jesus; God raised Jesus from the dead."**

Then, Peter said, "You have seen the truth: Jesus is alive! He went up to Heaven to be with God the Father. Do not doubt this." Peter continued, "When you killed Jesus, you killed the Messiah!"

The Holy Spirit convinced the people that Peter was telling the truth. "What must we do to be saved?" they asked.

Peter told the people to repent, to turn away from their sins and to turn to God. "God will forgive your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Be baptized in the name of Jesus," he said. **Everyone who believed Peter's message was baptized. That day, about 3,000 people joined Jesus' followers.**

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The believers learned what Jesus' disciples taught, and they met with other believers every day. They ate meals together in their homes with hearts that were glad and sincere. They prayed and praised God. Every day, God called more people to believe in Jesus and be saved from sin.

JESUS CONNECTION

God kept His promise to send the Holy Spirit. With the Holy Spirit's help, Jesus' disciples could begin their work to share the gospel with the entire world. God gives the Holy Spirit to those who trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior. The Holy Spirit gives us power to do God's work, and He changes us to be more like Jesus.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

RELIABILITY – Living so that others can depend on me.

Living LifeWise

Because God keeps His promises, we can trust Him to help us be reliable too.

Character Connection

Being reliable means others can depend on us to do our part or keep our promises. When someone else isn't reliable, all our hope and expectation for this great *thing* turns into *no*thing. When we aren't reliable, others feel this way, too. We let others and ourselves down.

God is reliable. He always keeps His promises, and He never, ever asks us to do something without providing everything we need to do it. We don't have to work to please Him or beg Him for more. He said He'd give us His Spirit and He did. He promised the Spirit would help us live His way, and He does. We can trust God for everything, and through the Spirit, He will help us be reliable like He is so that others can depend on us the way we depend on Him.

What does it look like when we aren't reliable in these areas? How can God help us to be reliable in these areas?

- In class
- With our siblings
- On a team

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- What type of sound filled the house where the disciples were staying?

  A sound like a strong rushing wind, Acts 2:2

- Who filled the disciples?

  The Holy Spirit, Acts 2:4

- What amazing thing happened after the disciples received the Holy Spirit?

  They spoke many languages, even ones they did not know, Acts 2:4

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- **What nations were the people in Jerusalem from?**

  Every nation, Acts 2:5

- **How do we know the disciples were speaking real languages?**

  People who spoke those languages could understand what the disciples were saying, Acts 2:6

- **What did Peter say happened to Jesus?**

  He was crucified and then resurrected, Acts 2:22–25

- **What did Peter say the people needed to do?**

  Repent and be baptized, Acts 2:38

- **How many people believed that day?**

  About 3,000, Acts 2:41

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Loopy Languages (Older Students)

- Before the session, write each set of words below on separate index cards. Do not include the answers. Choose a volunteer to stand up front. Give her a card to read aloud. Encourage her to read slowly the first time. Challenge the class to guess what the words really mean. Instruct the volunteer to read faster. This may help the other students better hear the true meaning of the words. Allow about two minutes per word set. If they can't figure it out, reveal the answer. Call for a new volunteer to read the next set of words.

  - Tea whole Ye spear hit (*The Holy Spirit.*)
  - Shh hair tea gush pull (*Share the gospel.*)
  - Cheese us row strum tea crave (*Jesus rose from the grave.*)
  - Team aid we son moo nan stirs (*He made the sun, moon and stars.*)
  - Hee when chop chew hay been (*He went up to Heaven.*)

- How did you feel when you couldn't understand the language someone was speaking? Is there a language you would like to learn? How could you start? In our Bible story, the Holy Spirit gave Jesus' disciples the ability to speak in such a way that everyone who listened—even people who didn't speak the same language—could understand. The Holy Spirit came to the apostles on the Day of Pentecost, and God sends the Holy Spirit today to anyone who repents and trusts in Jesus.

Promise or Command (Older Students)

- Remind students that the Book of Acts is the fifth book in the New Testament, after the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. It was written by Luke, who also wrote the Gospel of Luke.

- Write two categories on the board or a large sheet of paper: "Promises of Jesus" and "Commands of Jesus." Help students find John 14:15–20 and Acts 2:38–39 in their Bibles. Read each passage aloud. Allow the class to name the instructions Jesus gave. After every instruction, ask them to raise a hand if it was a promise and stomp their feet if it was a command. Write the instruction in the correct spot on the board.

- John 14:15–19
  - Promises
    - God will give you the Holy Spirit to help you (v.16)
    - The Holy Spirit is our advocate, or the one who fights to defend us (v.16)

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        - The Holy Spirit will be with each believer forever (v.16)
        - The Holy Spirit lives in each believer (v.17)
        - Jesus will come back to us (v.18)
        - Because Jesus lives forever, every believer also will live forever (v. 19)
    - Commands
        - If you love Jesus, keep His commands. (v.15)

- Acts 2:38–39
    - Promises
        - Repent and confess that Jesus is Lord, and your sins will be forgiven (v. 38)
        - After you repent and confess that Jesus is Lord, you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (v. 38)
    - Commands
        - Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (v. 38)

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Tic Tac Toe (Older and Younger Students)

- Remind students that the Book of Acts is in the New Testament. It follows the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The Book of Acts was written by Luke, who also wrote the Gospel of Luke.
- Before class, write nine of the Bible review questions on large colored cards. Hang them on a white board or wall. Make five *X* and five *O* cards. Form two teams. Teams will take turns choosing a question to answer. Students may choose any question on the board. If they answer correctly, they will cover that question with their *X* or *O*. If they are incorrect, play passes to the other team. Each team will attempt to get a tic tac toe by covering three questions in a row—up, down or across.

Rushing Wind Circle (Older and Younger Students)

- Guide the class to form a circle and lay on their stomachs with their feet away from the circle. Give each student a drinking straw. Designate one half of the circle as Team 1, and the other half as Team 2. Mark a line on the floor across the middle of the circle. Set several table tennis balls along the line. Using the straws, students should try to blow the balls across the line to the other team's side. They may not move from their spots and may only move the balls by blowing through their straws. After a few minutes, count down from 10 and then call for students to stop blowing. Count the balls on each side of the line and declare a winner.
- In our game, you used your breath to make a sort of wind to move your balls. You couldn't see your breath, but you could easily see the effect it had on the balls. When the Holy Spirit came to the apostles on the Day of Pentecost, it came with a sound like a rushing wind. In some places in the Bible, the Holy Spirit is compared to wind. One way the Holy Spirit is like wind is that we cannot see Him, but we can certainly see the work He does in our lives and the lives of believers all over the world.

Pass the Present (Younger Students)

- Before class, fill a gift box with a lid with surprises (candy, new pencils, bookmarks, etc.) Invite the class to sit in a circle on the floor. Give one student the gift box and instruct him to pass it to his right when you start playing music. When the music stops, whoever is holding the box may open it, take one of the surprises and then go sit in the middle of the circle.

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- It was really hard to wait for the box to come back around. You weren't able to hold on to it, but once you let it go, you wanted it to come back quickly so you could have a gift. Waiting can be hard. Today, we learned about the disciples waiting for the "helper" Jesus would send. How is the Holy Spirit like a gift to all disciples of Jesus?

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Spot It (Older Students)
- Spirit Switch (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

God, thank You for all You do to bless us. Thank You for sending us the Holy Spirit to live inside us. Thank You that He helps us obey Jesus. We pray that He will enable us to know and understand Your word and how we can live for Jesus. Amen.

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Journal Page

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- How did the disciples behave before the Holy Spirit came?
- How did they behave after the Holy Spirit came?
- How does the Holy Spirit help us today?

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THE HOLY SPIRIT CAME

ACTS 2:1–4, 22–42

MAIN POINT: THE HOLY SPIRIT CAME TO THE APOSTLES ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

On the day of Pentecost, Jesus' disciples were gathered together in Jerusalem. All of a sudden, a sound came from Heaven. Then tongues appeared like flames of fire, and they rested on each of the disciples. The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit gave them the ability to speak in different languages!

Peter spoke to a crowd that had gathered. "God pointed out to you Jesus the Nazarene," he said. "Even though God planned for Jesus to die, you used lawless people to nail Him to a cross and kill Him. But death did not keep hold of Jesus; God raised Jesus from the dead."

The Holy Spirit convinced the people that Peter was telling the truth. "What must we do to be saved?" they asked.

Peter told the people to repent. Everyone who believed Peter's message was baptized. That day, about 3,000 people joined Jesus' followers.

Jesus Connection: *God kept His promise to send the Holy Spirit. With the Holy Spirit's help, Jesus' disciples could begin their work to share the gospel with the entire world. God gives the Holy Spirit to those who trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior. The Holy Spirit gives us power to do God's work, and He changes us to be more like Jesus.*

Key Passage: *Acts 1:8 – But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

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SPOT IT!

Can you spot the differences between the two pictures? There are 10!





WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Follow the paths to discover the meanings of these words.

apostles

Day of Pentecost

Holy Spirit

the Spirit of God who comes to lives within those who trust Jesus as Savior and Lord

Those who are sent on a mission, especially each of the 12 men whom Jesus called and sent out to tell people about Himself

Major Jewish feast, also called the Feast of Weeks

The _____ came to the _____ on the _____.

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SPIRIT SWITCH

Instructions: Find and circle the twelve differences between the top and bottom picture.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Acts 1:8 – But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:
- What does the Holy Spirit do? The Holy Spirit helps Christians follow Jesus.

BIBLE STORY:
THE HOLY SPIRIT CAME
- Jesus' disciples were waiting for the Holy Spirit.
- The Holy Spirit came to the apostles on the Day of Pentecost.
- With the Holy Spirit, Peter spoke bravely about Jesus.
- The church grew and obeyed Jesus' commands.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:
- How did the disciples behave before the Holy Spirit came?
- How did they behave after the Holy Spirit came?
- How does the Holy Spirit help us today?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:
- If weather permits, fly a kite with your family. Talk about the Holy Spirit: we can see His work but cannot see Him.
- Work with your family to develop a "generosity plan" to bless the local church.

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THE HOLY SPIRIT CAME TO THE APOSTLES ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

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LESSON 93: TRUTHFULNESS

PETER HEALED A BEGGAR

Acts 3:1–10, 4:5–31

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PETER HEALED A BEGGAR

- Acts 3:1–10, 4:5–31
- Big Picture Q&A: What does the Holy Spirit do? The Holy Spirit helps Christians follow Jesus.
- Key Passage: Acts 1:8 – But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

JESUS CONNECTION

After Jesus returned to Heaven, the Holy Spirit gave the disciples power to begin working. With the power of Jesus' name, Peter healed a man who was lame. Not even the religious leaders could stop Jesus' followers from sharing the good news about Jesus.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

TRUTHFULNESS – Choosing not to lie or deceive others.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

With the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Jesus' disciples were empowered to carry out Jesus' mission for them—to take the gospel to all the nations. More and more people believed in Jesus. They met together at the temple to praise and worship God, and the first church began.

One afternoon, two of Jesus' disciples—Peter and John—went to the temple to pray. They encountered at the gate a man who could not walk. Rather than give the man money, Peter gave him something much more valuable: immediate physical healing in Jesus' name. As you teach this Bible story to students, affirm three truths to them.

First, Peter's healing the beggar was not magic; it was a miracle. Beginning in Acts 3:12, Peter responded to the people who were amazed at what had happened. "Why are you amazed at this ... as though we had made him walk by our own power?" The man wasn't healed because Peter was a super-believer. Peter explained that it was by Jesus' power the man was healed.

Second, the man's healing made him happy and thankful. He entered the temple and rejoiced! Consider the wonderful miracle of salvation. We are dead in our sin, and God makes us alive in Christ! When we truly understand this we will rejoice and give thanks to the Lord!

Finally, Peter and John were bold in their witness. When confronted by the religious leaders, they did not shy away. Peter and John preached about the salvation found in Jesus. In fact, they said they were "unable to stop speaking about what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20).

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The same power that enabled Peter to heal the man who was lame—the power of the Holy Spirit—enables believers today to live on mission for Jesus. Pray that God would give the students you teach a willingness to be used by Him for His glory and for the fame of Jesus' name.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

Last time, we heard how the Holy Spirit came to the apostles on the Day of Pentecost. Does anyone remember what the disciples heard and saw when the Holy Spirit came? (*Strong wind, flames of fire resting on each disciple.*) What did the disciples do after the Holy Spirit came that they were not able to do before? (*Speak in other languages.*) The coming of the Holy Spirit happened just like Jesus had promised. Now that the believers had the Holy Spirit, they could go out and live on mission for Jesus, telling others the good news of the gospel. The church was set up, and the number of believers grew. Today, we are going to hear a story about how the Holy Spirit worked through a disciple named Peter.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Partner Puppets (Older Students)

- Choose two volunteers. The first student will sit at a table. The partner will hide behind him. The first person will tuck his arms behind himself, and the partner will insert his arms under the first student's arms. Set morning routine supplies on the table. Guide the partner using his arms to perform a morning routine even though he cannot see. The partners should brush their teeth, comb their hair, wipe their face and tie the laces on a tennis shoe.

- [*First player's name*]'s morning routine was completed by the power of his partner. Today, we will hear how one of Jesus' followers did something amazing, not by his own power but by the power of Jesus.

Sickness Charade (Older and Younger Students)

- Gather the class and ask for volunteers to come to the front and act out different sicknesses. One at a time, whisper an ailment or symptom to each volunteer. They must act out the symptom until a classmate guesses it correctly. [*Example symptoms: a cough, a stomachache, a headache, sneezing, dizziness, chills, etc.*]

- The world we live in is broken by sin. Sickness is an example of that brokenness. We all face sickness sometimes. In our story today, we will hear about a time Peter showed God's power is greater than sickness.

Would You Rather? (Older and Younger Students)

- Use tape to mark a line down the center of the room. Provide the class with different choices, designating a side of the room for each option. Students will move to the side of the room that corresponds with their chosen option. Have them return to the middle before you offer the next choice. [*Suggestions: Would you rather have $1,000,000 now or $10,000 dollars a year for 100 years? Would you rather be good at soccer or be good at dancing? Would you rather have to sing all your words or never be able to sing?*]

- Those were some silly choices to find out what you would rather have. Today, we will learn about a man who asked for one thing, but got something else that he was much happier with.

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Jump for Joy (Younger Students)

- Form two teams. Instruct the teams to line up at one side of the room. Stand at the other side of the room and explain that you will give a command. [*For example, "Hop like a frog."*] The first player on each team will begin hopping like a frog across the room. Say, "Freeze!" The players must stop and wait for the next command. When the player reaches the other side of the room, another player on her team may begin crossing. Call for various actions. When all players have moved across the room, say "Jump for joy!" as they move back to the other side together.

- Today, we will hear a story from the Bible about a man who hadn't been able to move very well his whole life. Then, something happened that made him jump for joy.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Key Passage Order (Older Students)

- Write the words of the key passage on separate index cards and mix them up. Display the key passage poster and guide those with a birthday in January–June to read the passage together. Then, guide those with a birthday in July–December to read the passage together. Give the index cards to the students and challenge them to arrange the words in the correct order. If your group is large, make multiple sets and form smaller groups.

- This verse contains the last recorded words Jesus spoke to His disciples before returning to Heaven to be with God the Father. Jesus was telling His disciples their mission. They would go to the end of the earth as Jesus' witnesses. A *witness* is a person who has seen, heard or experienced something firsthand and tells others about it. To be Jesus' witness means to tell others about the wonderful things Jesus has done in your life and through you!

Key Passage Acceleration (Older and Younger Students)

- Read the key passage aloud with the class, encouraging them to read the words slowly and carefully. After each full read, encourage them to read the verse again faster. Continue reading the verse faster and faster each time. Consider using a stopwatch to time the students and see how fast they can read the verse.

- This verse contains the last recorded words Jesus spoke to His disciples before returning to Heaven to be with God the Father. Jesus was telling His disciples their mission. They would go to the end of the earth as Jesus' witnesses. A *witness* is a person who has seen, heard or experienced something firsthand and tells others about it. To be Jesus' witness means to tell others about the wonderful things Jesus has done in your life and through you!

Big Picture Q&A

Q: What does the Holy Spirit do?

A: *The Holy Spirit helps Christians follow Jesus.*

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BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

The Holy Spirit Came | Acts 3:1–10, 4:5–31

One afternoon, Peter and John—two of Jesus' followers—**went to the temple.** It was time to pray. **When they got there, Peter and John saw a man sitting by the temple gate called Beautiful. The man could not walk.** Every day, the man's friends carried him to the temple, where he sat outside. **As people entered the temple, they walked by the man, and the man asked them for money since he could not work.**

Peter said to the man, "Look at us." The man looked at Peter and John, expecting them to give him something.

Peter said, "I don't have any silver or gold for you, but I will give you what I do have." Then, **Peter said, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk!"**

Peter reached out and helped the man up. All of a sudden, the man's feet and ankles were strong. He could walk! In fact, the man leaped around! **He went into the temple with Peter and John, and he praised God.**

While the man was holding on to Peter and John, and all the people ran toward them, completely amazed. The people asked, "Wasn't this the man who sat by the gate outside the temple every day? The man who asked for money because he couldn't walk? Yes, it was the man! And he was healed! How could such a wonderful thing happen?"

Peter spoke to the crowd saying: "Why are you amazed at this? We did not make this man walk by our own power. It was through faith in Jesus' name that this man has been made strong."

As Peter spoke to the people about Jesus, the religious leaders confronted Peter and John. They had them arrested until the following day. The next day, the religious leaders got together. They asked Peter and John, "How did you heal this man? By what power or in what name did you do this?"

Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit. He said, "We want all of you to know that this man was healed by the power of Jesus Christ from Nazareth. You nailed Jesus to a cross, but God raised Him from the dead. It is because of Him that this man is healed!"

Peter told the religious leaders that they rejected Jesus because they thought He was not important, but He is the most important One of all. Peter declared, **"There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under Heaven given to people by which we must be saved."**

The religious leaders saw the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and untrained men, and they were amazed; they recognized that Peter and John had been with Jesus. They **realized the crippled man had been healed and didn't know what to say. They ordered Peter and John to never preach or teach in the name of Jesus again.**

Peter and John said, "We cannot be quiet. We must tell people about what we have seen and heard." The religious leaders had no reason to punish Peter and John, so they let them go. Peter and John met with other believers and prayed that God would give them power to speak boldly and without fear. When they had prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken, **and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God boldly.**

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JESUS CONNECTION

After Jesus returned to Heaven, the Holy Spirit gave the disciples power to begin working. With the power of Jesus' name, Peter healed a man who was lame. Not even the religious leaders could stop Jesus' followers from sharing the good news about Jesus.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

TRUTHFULNESS – Choosing not to lie or deceive others.

Living LifeWise

Because God deserves all the glory, we can tell the truth about what He's done.

Character Connection

Peter and John knew the value of telling the truth. They told the lame man at the temple the truth: that they couldn't heal him, but Jesus could. When the religious leaders asked Peter and John what happened, they told the truth, even though they could get in trouble for it. When they were ordered to keep quiet about the truth of Jesus, they said, "We must tell people what we've seen and heard." Then, they prayed for power to tell the truth boldly.

Peter and John didn't hide the truth to stay out of trouble. ("What? No, we didn't do that.") They also didn't give themselves a pat on the back ("Yeah, we totally healed him, you know, with Jesus' help.") They told the truth. They said, "This man was healed because of the power of Jesus. The very Jesus you crucified, but God raised from the dead. He is the most important One."

The disciples gave Jesus all the glory for healing the man and for being our Savior. The Holy Spirit gave them power to speak the truth boldly. And the Spirit will help us tell the truth about God to others, just like Peter and John did.

Discuss the following questions with your students (Younger students may understand questions 1 and 2 best):

- When are you tempted to tell more (or less) than the truth? (*To get out of trouble, get more credit than we deserve, blame someone else.*)
- Why is it important to tell the truth, especially about God? (*So that we are seen as trustworthy, so others can know about God and how to love and follow Him, etc.*)
- What truths about God are most important to share with people who aren't Christians? (*His character traits, the gospel, etc.*)

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- Which of Jesus' followers went to the temple to pray?

  Peter and John, Acts 3:1

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- What temple gate was the crippled man sitting at?

  The gate called Beautiful, Acts 3:2
- How long had the man been unable to walk?

  Since birth, Acts 3:2
- What was the man doing at the gate?

  Begging, Acts 3:2
- What did the man want from Peter and John?

  Money, Acts 3:3
- What did the crippled man do after he was healed?

  Walk, jump and praise God, Acts 3:8–9
- What did the religious leaders tell Peter and John to stop doing?

  Ordered them to never preach or teach in the name of Jesus again, Acts 4:18
- Did Peter and John stop preaching and teaching?

  No, they did not stop, Acts 4:20

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REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Board Race Review (Older Students)

- Form two teams. Ask the teams a multiple choice Bible review question. One student from each team will race to the board and write the correct multiple choice letter down.

1. Which of Jesus' followers went to the temple to pray?
   a. Peter and James
   b. Peter and John

2. What was wrong with the man by the gate?
   a. He could not walk.
   b. He could not see.

3. What did the man want from Peter and John?
   a. Food
   b. Money

4. What did Peter give to the man?
   a. Money
   b. Healing in Jesus' name

5. How was Peter able to heal the man?
   a. Through faith in his own power
   b. Through faith in God's power

6. What did the lame man do after Peter healed him?
   a. Jumped for joy and praised God
   b. Went to show his family

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7. The religious leaders ordered Peter and John to stop _____ .
    a. Healing people
    b. Teaching about Jesus

8. Did Peter and John stop preaching and teaching?
    a. No
    b. Yes

9. Why didn't Peter and John stop talking about Jesus?
    a. They had to share the truth about what they had seen and heard.
    b. They weren't afraid of being punished.

10. What did Peter and John do after they met with the religious leaders?
    a. Prayed for God to help them speak boldly without fear.
    b. Asked other believers to protect them.

11. What does the Holy Spirit do?
    a. Lives inside of me
    b. Helps Christians follow Jesus

Sculpt a Scene (Older Students)

- Create groups of 5–6 students. Assign groups to sculpt specific scenes from the story [*Peter and John talking to the crippled man, the crippled man being healed, the crippled man in the temple praising God, Peter and John speaking to the religious leaders and Peter and John praying with other believers for courage*]. Have one student pose the rest of their group as characters from the scene by moving their head, arms and legs into the correct position. When the groups finish, guide them to tell about their scene from the Bible story.

Act Out the Story (Older and Younger Students)

- Remind the students that the book of Acts is in the first book after the gospels in the New Testament. It is a book of History, written by Luke. Assign specific students the roles of Peter, John, the lame man, the religious leaders and the crowd. Read the bold text of the Bible story and have the students act out what you read. If time allows, have students switch roles.

Acts of Compassion (Older and Younger Students)

- Plan and prepare for a service activity in your community. For example, prepare care packages for senior citizens at a nursing home. Invite the class to draw pictures and write notes of encouragement for residents. Place the notes and drawings into gift bags along with other small items, such as oversized playing cards, pocket flashlights, travel-size lotions or body washes, puzzle books, pens, note pads or sugar-free hard candies. You may deliver the bags during the week.

- We heard today about how, in Jesus' name, Peter healed a man who could not walk. The same power that worked through Peter—the power of the Holy Spirit—gives us power today as believers to live on mission for Jesus.

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True or False (Older and Younger Students)

- Divide into two teams. Have one student from each team stand on opposite sides of the room. Place pieces of laminated red and green construction paper on a chair or desk in the middle. Write *True* on green paper and *False* on the red. Ask the students a True or False question. Students must race to the middle and get the correct color to answer the question.

    - Peter and James went to the temple to pray. (*False; Peter and John*)
    - The man by the temple gate could not walk. (*True*)
    - The lame man wanted food from Peter and John. (*False; money*)
    - Peter gave the man money. (*False; healing in Jesus' name*)
    - Peter healed the man through faith in God's power. (*True*)
    - After Peter healed the lame man, he jumped for joy and praised God. (*True*)
    - The religious leaders ordered Peter and John to stop healing people. (*False; teaching about Jesus*)
    - Peter and John stopped teaching others about Jesus. (*False; they kept teaching boldly*)
    - Peter and John couldn't stop talking about Jesus because they had to share the truth about what they had seen and heard. (*True*)
    - After Peter and John met with the religious leaders they asked other believers to protect them. (*False; they prayed for God to give them boldness and courage*)
    - The Holy Spirit helps Christians to follow Jesus. (*True*)

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Triple Match (Older Students)
- Hidden Healing (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

God, thank You for sending Jesus to die for us and for sending the Holy Spirit to help us obey You. Help us to share about Jesus and speak your word lovingly and boldly to others who don't know you. Amen.

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Journal Page

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey?
- How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Share about a time you got something better than you expected.
- How can the Holy Spirit empower us to help people today?

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PETER HEALED A BEGGAR

ACTS 3:1–10; 4:5–31

MAIN POINT: IN JESUS' NAME, PETER HEALED A MAN WHO COULD NOT WALK.

One afternoon, Peter and John went to the temple. When they got there, Peter and John saw a man sitting by a gate. The man could not walk. As people entered the temple, they walked by the man, and the man asked them for money since he could not work.

Peter said to the man, "Look at us." The man looked at Peter and John.

Peter said, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk!"

Peter reached out and helped the man up. All of a sudden, the man's feet and ankles were strong. He could walk! He went into the temple with Peter and John, and he praised God.

The people were amazed at what had happened.

The next day, the religious leaders got together. They asked Peter and John, "How did you heal this man? By what power or in what name did you do this?"

Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit. He said, "We want all of you to know that this man was healed by the power of Jesus Christ from Nazareth."

The religious leaders were amazed, and they didn't know what to say. They ordered Peter and John to never preach or teach in the name of Jesus again.

Peter and John said, "We cannot be quiet. We must tell people about what we have seen and heard."

Jesus Connection: *After Jesus returned to Heaven, the Holy Spirit gave the disciples power to begin working. With the power of Jesus' name, Peter healed a man who was lame. Not even the religious leaders could stop Jesus' followers from sharing the good news about Jesus.*

Key Passage: *Acts 1:8 – But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

DISCIPLE YOUR PEOPLE

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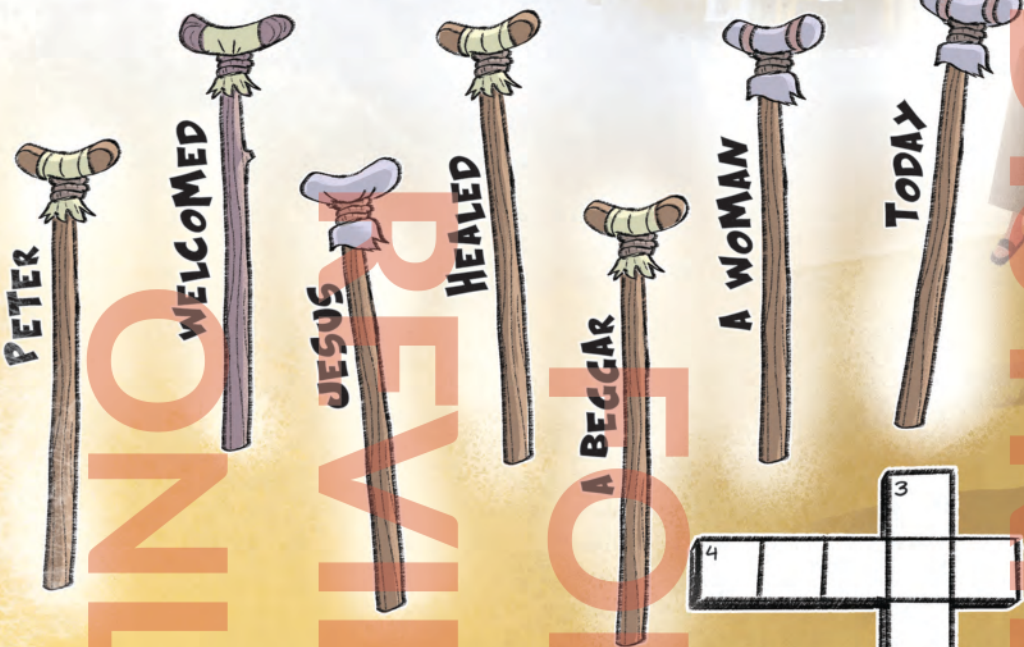
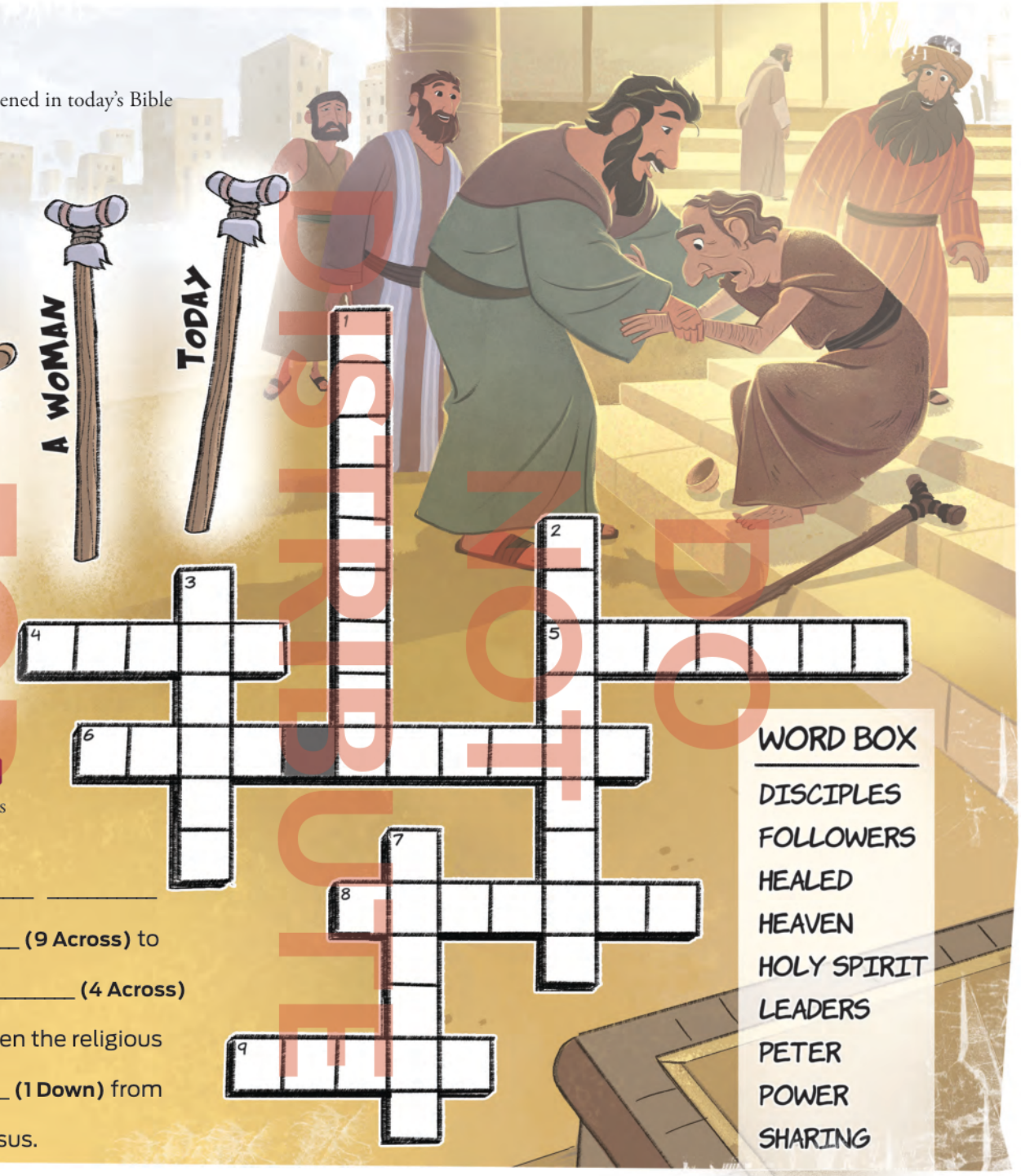
TRIPLE MATCH

Circle the three crutches that are the same to discover what happened in today's Bible story.





JESUS CONNECTION CROSSWORD

Fill in the crossword puzzle using the missing words from the Jesus Connection.

After Jesus returned to _____ **(7 Down)**, the _____ _____ **(6 Across)** gave the _____ **(2 Down)** _____ **(9 Across)** to begin working. With the power of Jesus' name, _____ **(4 Across)** _____ **(3 Down)** a man who was lame. Not even the religious _____ **(8 Across)** could stop Jesus' _____ **(1 Down)** from _____ **(5 Across)** the good news about Jesus.

WORD BOX

DISCIPLES
FOLLOWERS
HEALED
HEAVEN
HOLY SPIRIT
LEADERS
PETER
POWER
SHARING

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HIDDEN HEALING

INSTRUCTIONS: Find and circle the six hidden pictures in the Bible story art below.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Acts 1:8 – But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:
- What does the Holy Spirit do? The Holy Spirit helps Christians follow Jesus.

BIBLE STORY:
PETER HEALED A BEGGAR
- Peter and John saw a man who could not walk.
- The man asked for money, but Peter gave him something better.
- In the name of Jesus, Peter healed a man who could not walk.
- Peter and John refused to stop talking about Jesus.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:
- Can you think of a time you got something better than you expected?
- Where did the power to heal the man come from?
- How can we help people with the Holy Spirit's power today?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:
- Spend an afternoon volunteering with your family at a homeless shelter. Talk to your kids about the importance of helping those in need.

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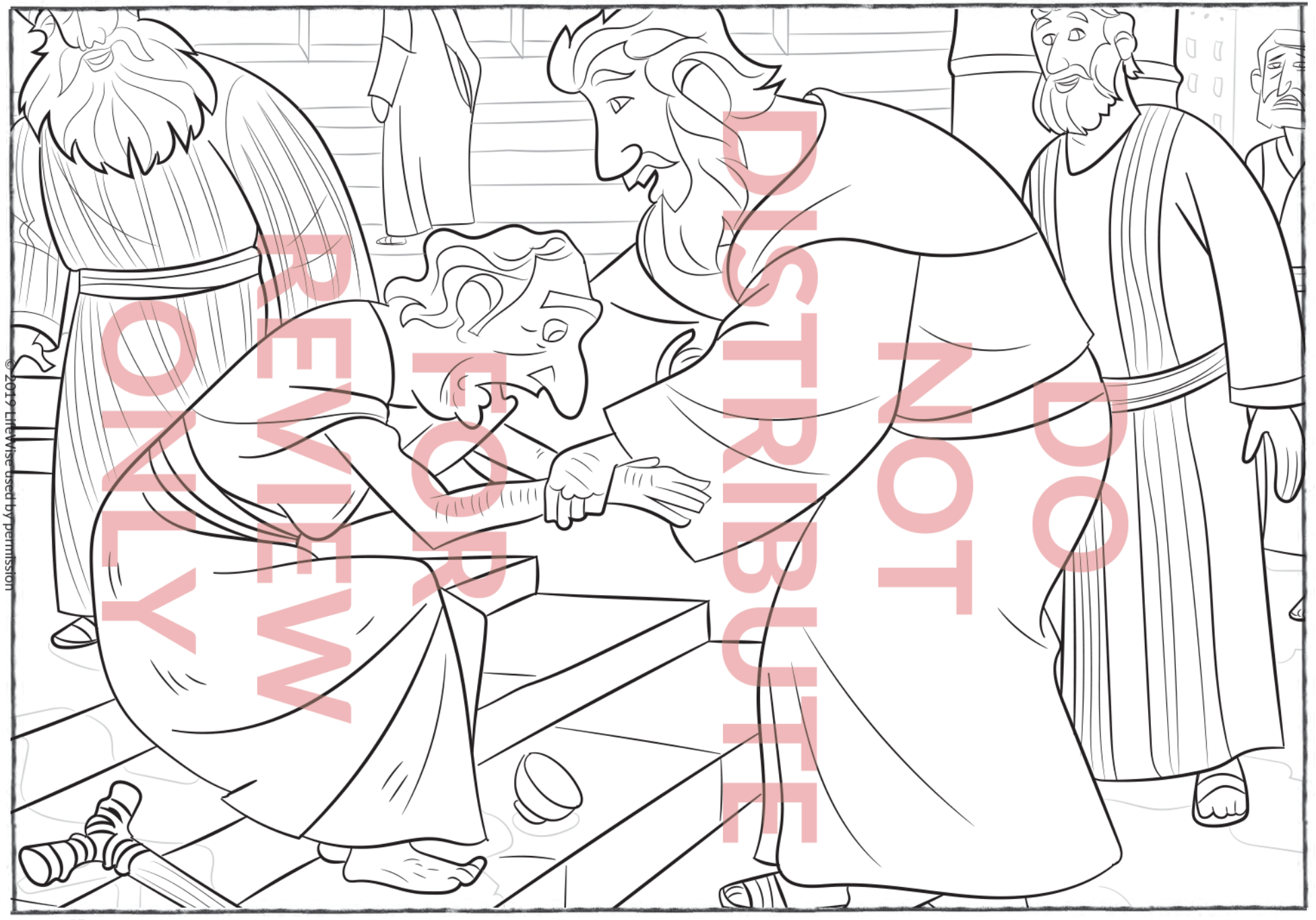

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IN JESUS' NAME, PETER HEALED A MAN WHO COULD NOT WALK.

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LESSON 94: COURAGE

STEPHEN SPOKE TO THE PEOPLE

Acts 6:8–7:60

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STEPHEN SPOKE TO THE PEOPLE

- Acts 6:8–7:60
- Big Picture Q&A: What does the Holy Spirit do? The Holy Spirit helps Christians follow Jesus.
- Key Passage: Acts 1:8 – But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

JESUS CONNECTION

Stephen was killed because he was a Christian. Jesus was crucified, and He told His followers that they would be persecuted—hated, hurt or even killed—for loving Him. Jesus also said that those who suffer for Him will be blessed (Matthew 5:11). We can face suffering in this life because Jesus suffered first. He died and then rose again, and He is waiting for us in Heaven.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

COURAGE – Boldly doing the right thing, even when it's hard.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Stephen was one of the seven men chosen to serve as leaders in the early church at Jerusalem (Acts 6:1–7). God blessed Stephen and gave him power to do wonders and miracles like some of the apostles.

Some of the Jews accused Stephen of blasphemy and dragged him to the Sanhedrin, a group of Jewish leaders who acted as a legal council. Stephen addressed the group. He drew from Jewish history, which the leaders in the Sanhedrin would have known well. But Stephen taught from the Old Testament things the Jewish leaders had likely never realized.

As Stephen preached, he showed how the Old Testament pointed to a coming Savior and how that Savior was Jesus. Stephen pointed out that the Jews' ancestors had rejected God's prophets. And they were just like their fathers: they rejected the Messiah, the Lord Jesus. Not only did they reject Jesus, they killed Him!

The Jewish leaders rushed at Stephen. Stephen looked into Heaven. He saw God's glory, and Jesus was standing at God's right hand. The Jews forced Stephen out of the city, and they stoned him.

Remind students of Jesus' words in Matthew 10:22: "You will be hated by everyone because of My name. But the one who endures to the end will be delivered." Following Jesus will include difficulty and suffering. Jesus gives words of both warning and comfort: "Don't be afraid" (Matt. 10:26).

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Stephen was killed because he was a Christian. Jesus told His followers that they would be persecuted—hated, hurt, or even killed—for loving Him (Mark 13:9–13; John 16:2). Jesus also said that those who suffer for Him will be blessed (Matt. 5:11). Stephen was not afraid to die because he saw Jesus waiting for him in Heaven. We can face suffering in this life because we know great joy is waiting for us in Heaven.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

In the book of Acts, we've seen how the Holy Spirit came to the apostles on the Day of Pentecost. The church started that day as the disciples went out and preached about Jesus to everyone who would listen. The Holy Spirit even made it so they could communicate with people who spoke other languages. Last time, we learned how God worked through Peter. What did Peter do for the crippled man? (*Healed him.*) Why weren't the religious leaders happy about Peter healing the crippled man? (*They didn't want people to follow Jesus.*) What did they tell Peter to do? (*Stop talking about Jesus.*) Today, we are going to see how the Holy Spirit gave courage to a man named Stephen even when he faced death.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

What to Expect (Older Students)

- Before the session, write the following words or phrases on separate paper cups: *eternal life, adoption into God's family, God's love, a purpose, forgiveness, freedom, peace, persecution, pain, suffering.* Position the cups at the front of the room. Give each student 10 pennies or other small manipulatives. Instruct them to drop a penny into the cups with things they think believers will experience because they trust in Jesus. Collect any extra pennies before examining students' choices.

- Interesting choices. Did any of these things surprise you? The Bible actually says that believers will have all of these things—even persecution, pain and suffering (Matt. 7:14; John 15:18; 2 Tim. 3:12). We will hear more about that in today's Bible story.

Take a Stand (Older and Younger Students)

- Read each statement. If the statement describes them, students should stand. The class should sit again before you read the next statement. Use the suggested statements or create your own. Be sure to end with a statement about trusting in Jesus.
    - My favorite color is pink.
    - I like to eat broccoli.
    - I like math.
    - I am afraid of the dark.
    - I don't like thunderstorms.
    - I believe Jesus is the Son of God.

- Was it hard to take a stand for what you know to be true? Sometimes, it takes a lot of courage to stand up for what you know is true. Today's Bible story is about one of Jesus' followers who stood up for what he believed no matter what.

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Rock Toss (Younger Students)

- Give each student a foam ball or a paper wad to represent a rock, and have them line up single-file. Allow them to take turns tossing their "rock" into a small trash can. If a student misses, allow him to collect his "rock" and go to the end of the line to wait for a turn to try again.

- We used soft, light materials to be our "rocks" because throwing rocks can be very dangerous. In fact, today, we will hear about a time when people threw rocks on purpose to hurt a man named Stephen!

Hard Or Easy? (Younger Student)

- Write a series of tasks on index cards. Allow each student to draw a card. Encourage her to complete her task without help, if possible. After each student has drawn a card and attempted the task on the card, discuss if the game felt fair. [*Suggested tasks: Hop three times, do five jumping jacks, say the alphabet backward, do a somersault, add two large numbers together, clap a simple rhythm, etc.*]

- Some of those tasks were clearly very easy and some were much more difficult, weren't they? That game probably felt really unfair if you got stuck with a hard task. Today, we will learn about a man named Stephen who did something difficult to honor Jesus and tell others about Him. Thankfully, the Holy Spirit gave Stephen help to obey God and share the gospel in the middle of a very dangerous situation.

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KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Blank by Blank (Older and Younger Students)

- Show the key passage poster and read it aloud together. On a large sheet of paper or the board, draw a blank for each word of the key passage. Hide the poster and invite volunteers to take turns writing in the words of the key passage, one at a time. Gently correct any errors. Turn over the paper or erase the words to play again if time allows.

Fill in the Blank (Older and Younger Students)

- Draw a simple church shape (a square with a triangle roof and cross on top) on the board or a large piece of paper. Make blanks for each letter of five to eight words of the key passage. Allow the class to take turns guessing letters to fill in the blanks. If students guess an incorrect letter, erase one line from the church drawing. For each word completed, add back a line that was erased. When all the blanks are filled, read the verse aloud together.

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Big Picture Q&A

Q: What does the Holy Spirit do?

A: *The Holy Spirit helps Christians follow Jesus.*

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BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Stephen Spoke to the People | Acts 6:8–7:60

One of Jesus' followers was named Stephen. God blessed Stephen and gave him power to do great wonders and signs among the people in Jerusalem. **One day, some Jews came and began to argue with Stephen. The Holy Spirit helped Stephen speak with wisdom**, so no matter how hard the Jews tried, they could not win the argument.

The Jews decided to lie about Stephen. They said that Stephen had spoken against God. **The people dragged Stephen to** the Sanhedrin (san HEE drihn), which was **the Jewish court.** There, they told more lies about Stephen. "We heard him say that Jesus will destroy the temple and change the laws that Moses gave us," they said.

"Is this true?" the high priest asked Stephen.

Stephen began to preach about Jesus. He started by reminding them about Abraham. God had made promises to Abraham and his son Isaac. **He reminded them about Joseph and Moses.** God kept Joseph safe when his brothers tried to hurt him, and God used Joseph to help all His people during a famine. **When God's people lived in Egypt, God called Moses to rescue His people from Pharaoh. Moses led God's people away from Egypt, but they turned against Moses and against God.**

God did not give up on His people, though. He was working out a plan. God worked through Joshua and David and Solomon. The religious leaders knew these stories from the Old Testament.

Stephen told them these stories to explain that Jesus was the Messiah God had promised! But just like their ancestors rejected and killed the prophets in the Old Testament, these Jewish leaders had rejected Jesus and murdered Him!

Stephen's words made the Jewish leaders so angry! Stephen was filled with the Holy Spirit, and he looked up into Heaven. Stephen saw Jesus standing there. "Look!" he said. "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

The Jewish leaders screamed at the top of their lungs. They covered their ears and rushed at Stephen. **They threw Stephen out of the city and began to throw stones at him. As they were stoning him, Stephen called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" Then, Stephen knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" After saying this, Stephen died.**

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JESUS CONNECTION

Stephen was killed because he was a Christian. Jesus was crucified, and He told His followers that they would be persecuted—hated, hurt or even killed—for loving Him. Jesus also said that those who suffer for Him will be blessed (Matthew 5:11). We can face suffering in this life because Jesus suffered first. He died and then rose again, and He is waiting for us in Heaven.

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LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

COURAGE – Boldly doing the right thing, even when it's hard.

Living LifeWise

Because Jesus rose from the dead, we can face every situation with courage.

Character Connection

Our sinful, broken world is full of pain. There is natural pain, like when sickness or natural disasters strike. And there is pain between people. Humans hurt each other in many ways. We say mean things or act in horrible ways. People lie about each other, fight with each other and sometimes even kill each other.

Bad things are part of life because of sin. We almost never see them coming, and they hurt. But even when someone lies about us or tries to get us in trouble, we can still live God's way with courage. That's what Stephen did. People lied about what he'd said and dragged him to court unfairly and then they killed him for telling the truth about Jesus.

But Stephen knew Jesus is the Messiah. He knew Jesus had risen from the dead, and the Spirit had given them power to prove their claims about Him. Because Stephen knew the truth about Jesus, he wasn't afraid to stand up and say the right thing courageously.

Most of us won't ever face a threat of death for our faith. But Jesus rose from the grave through God's great power, and He helps us live courageously through that same power working in us. What might it look like to live God's way with courage in these situations?

- A teacher accuses you of playing too rough, but you weren't involved.
- Someone writes you a mean note, saying they won't be your friend anymore because you won't do what they want.
- Someone blames you for what they did wrong.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- **What was Stephen doing at the start of the story?**

  Performing great signs and wonders, Acts 6:8

- **Why did the leaders lie about Stephen?**

  No one could stand up to Stephen's arguments about the truth of the gospel, Acts 6:10

- **What did the Jewish leaders accuse Stephen of?**

  Blasphemy, or saying false and dishonoring things about God, Acts 6:11

- **What did Stephen preach about?**

  How the Old Testament pointed to Jesus, Acts 7:1–50

- **What did Stephen see before he died?**

  Heaven opened and Jesus at God's right hand, Acts 7:56

- **What did Stephen ask God NOT to do?**

  Hold the people's sin against them, Acts 7:59–60

- **What does the Holy Spirit do?**

  The Holy Spirit helps Christians follow Jesus.

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REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

True or False (Older and Younger Students)

- Read sentences about today's Bible story. Students should determine if the statements are true or false. To make the game more active, have students walk or run to one side of the room if they think the answer is true and the other side if it's false.
    - The Holy Spirit gave Stephen wisdom when he spoke. (*True, Acts 6:10*)
    - The Jews took Stephen to Bethlehem. (*False; to the Sanhedrin or Jewish court, Acts 6:12*)
    - Stephen accused the Jewish leaders of rejecting Jesus, the Messiah, and murdering Him. (*True, Acts 7:52*)
    - Stephen saw Moses in Heaven, standing at the right hand of God. (*False; he saw Jesus, Acts 7:55–56*)
    - The Jewish people put Stephen in prison. (*False; they threw him out of the city and threw stones at him, Acts 7:58*)
    - Stephen asked the Lord not to hold his murderers' sin against them. (*True, Acts 7:59–60*)

Order the Story (Older and Younger Students)

- Print the "Order the Story" pictures before class. Have the students work together to put the pictures in order of the story. If you have a large class, print multiple copies of the pictures and break students up into small groups. Guide them in telling the story as they order the pictures.
    - The Holy Spirit helped Stephen speak with wisdom.
    - Stephen began to preach about Jesus. He explained what happened in the Old Testament.
    - Stephen said that Jesus is the Savior God had promised.
    - The Jewish leaders were angry, and they stoned Stephen.
    - Stephen saw the heavens open and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

Stephen's Storybook (Older Students)

- Provide a copy of the "Stephen's Storybook" for each student. Instruct the class to follow along as you read the storybook aloud. Then, encourage them to illustrate what happened in today's Bible story. As they work, talk about the story. Consider emphasizing the following points:
    - Stephen was the first Christian martyr. A *martyr* is someone who suffers or dies because of his message about God's truth.
    - After Stephen was killed, Jesus' followers scattered, but they did not stop sharing the good news.
    - Jesus said that His followers will be hated. He also said that those who suffer for Him will be blessed.
- Stephen was not afraid to die so that others would hear about Jesus. He looked up and saw Jesus standing in heaven. Stephen knew that his physical death was not the end. When he died, he would be with Jesus, which is far better than life on Earth. When Stephen died, Jesus welcomed Stephen home into life forever with God.

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Courageous Choices (Older and Younger Students)

- Read a series of scenarios. Invite the class to act out how they would react. Encourage them to be honest about how they would behave. Ask students what courage looks like in each scenario. Ask them what it would look like to act out of fear in each scenario.
    - Your teacher asks you a question in class, but you haven't been paying attention and don't know the answer.
    - You accidentally broke the toy you were borrowing from your best friend.
    - A couple of students are saying unkind things about another classmate.
    - You know a classmate doesn't believe in Jesus and you want to tell him about the gospel, but you think the other students might tease you.
- Courage looks different at different times. In our story, Stephen showed courage that could only have come from God. Stephen was not afraid to die so that others would hear about Jesus. We can pray to God and trust that He will give us courage to face our fears and spread the gospel even when it might cost us something.

Trust Stones (Older and Younger Students)

- Provide smooth stones for the class to decorate with permanent markers. You may choose to provide colorful duct tape for students to cut and cover their stones. As the class works, talk about the following points:
    - The Holy Spirit helped Stephen speak with wisdom.
    - Stephen began to preach about Jesus. He explained what happened in the Old Testament.
    - Stephen said that Jesus is the Savior God had promised.
    - The Jewish leaders were angry, and they stoned Stephen.
    - Stephen saw the heavens open and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.
- The Jewish leaders threw stones at Stephen until he died. Stephen was killed because he was a Christian. Why do you think Stephen didn't just pretend to not be a Christian so he would not be killed? [*Allow students to respond.*] Jesus was crucified, and He told His followers that they would be persecuted—hated, hurt or even killed—for loving Him. Jesus also said that those who suffer for Him will be blessed (see Matthew 5:11). Keep your stones as a reminder of our Bible story. Remember that we can face suffering in this life because Jesus suffered first. He died and then rose again, and one day, everyone who trusts in Him will live with Him forever.

Stone of Remembrance (Older and Younger Students)

- Provide each student with a smooth stone, paper and markers. The class should trace the outline of their stone onto the paper and then write the main point or Scripture reference in the traced lines. Help them cut out their shapes and use découpage paste to attach it to their stone. Set the stones aside to dry.
- Stephen faced a scary situation. The men he spoke to wanted to kill him for talking about Jesus. Instead of backing down, Stephen spoke the truth. Stephen was not afraid to die so that others would hear about Jesus. The men killed Stephen, but he knew that they could not take away the eternal life Jesus gave him. If we believe in Jesus, we have eternal life and the Holy Spirit with us, just like Stephen did. That means no one can take us away from God, and we can face danger courageously too.

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Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Can't Live Without It (Older Students)
- Good, Better, Best (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Father God, we confess that we are not always bold for Your name. Sometimes, we feel embarrassed to talk about Jesus. Lord, change us. Give us courage to tell other people about You and challenge them to turn to You. We pray for the believers all over the world who face persecution because they follow You. Give them comfort and strength. Guide them as they work to tell others about You. Amen.

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Journal Page

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What do you think Stephen valued most?
- What do you value most?
- How can we show we value Jesus in our lives?

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STEPHEN SPOKE TO THE PEOPLE

ACTS 6:8–7:60

MAIN POINT: STEPHEN WAS NOT AFRAID TO DIE SO THAT OTHERS WOULD HEAR ABOUT JESUS.

One of Jesus' followers was named Stephen. One day, some Jews came and began to argue with Stephen. The Holy Spirit helped Stephen speak with wisdom.

The Jews decided to lie about Stephen. The people dragged Stephen to the Jewish court.

Stephen began to preach about Jesus. He started by reminding the Jews about Abraham. He reminded them about Joseph and Moses. When God's people lived in Egypt, God called Moses to rescue His people from Pharaoh. Moses led God's people away from Egypt, but they turned against Moses and against God.

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Stephen's words made the Jewish leaders so angry! Stephen was filled with the Holy Spirit, and he looked up into Heaven. Stephen saw Jesus standing there.

The Jewish leaders screamed at the top of their lungs. They threw Stephen out of the city and began to throw stones at him. As they were stoning him, Stephen called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" Then, Stephen knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" After saying this, Stephen died.

Jesus Connection: *Stephen was killed because he was a Christian. Jesus was crucified, and He told His followers that they would be persecuted—hated, hurt or even killed—for loving Him. Jesus also said that those who suffer for Him would be blessed (Matthew 5:11). We can face suffering in this life because Jesus suffered first. He died and then rose again, and He is waiting for us in Heaven.*

Key Passage: *Acts 1:8 – But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

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CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT IT

Number the following items from 1 to 8.

1 = Can't live without it!

8 = Wouldn't miss it at all



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LOOK, I SEE THE HEAVENS OPENED AND THE



STANDING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD!

STEPHEN SAID

Color in the spaces to discover what Stephen saw when he looked up into Heaven.

1 – yellow

2 – blue



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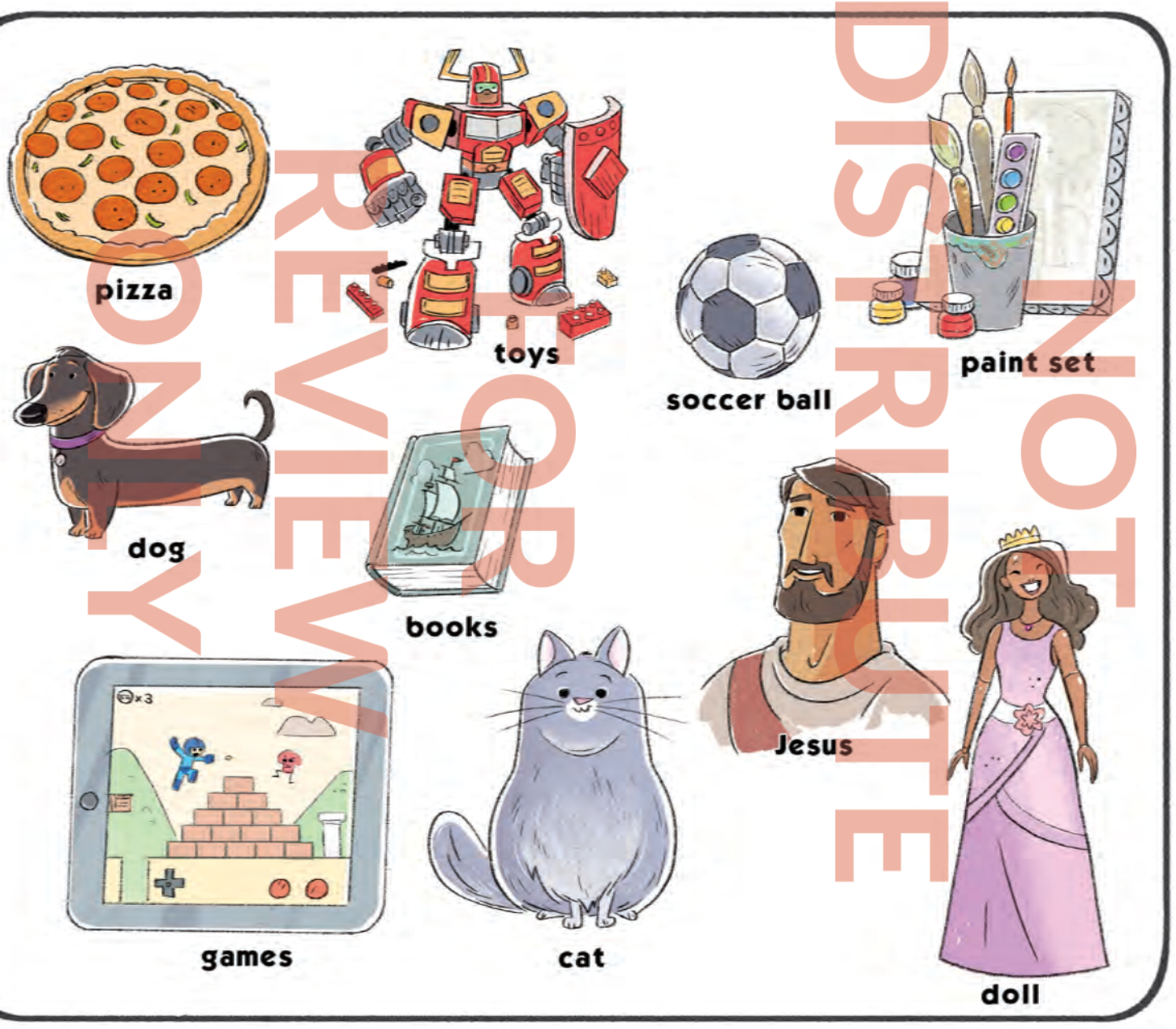
GOOD, BETTER, BEST

INSTRUCTIONS: Write numbers by each picture, ranking them. Compare your results with a friend.



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KEY PASSAGE:
Acts 1:8 – But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- What does the Holy Spirit do? The Holy Spirit helps Christians follow Jesus.

BIBLE STORY:
STEPHEN SPOKE TO THE PEOPLE

- Stephen was filled with the Holy Spirit and did amazing things.
- The Jewish leaders wanted to silence Stephen.
- Stephen preached to them anyway.
- Stephen was not afraid to die so that others would hear about Jesus.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- What do you think Stephen valued most?
- What do you value most?
- What can we do to value Jesus most in our lives?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Talk to your kids about the persecuted church and research places where it is worst. Take time to pray for those places.
- Take your family to skip rocks into water. Talk about what it means to love your enemies.

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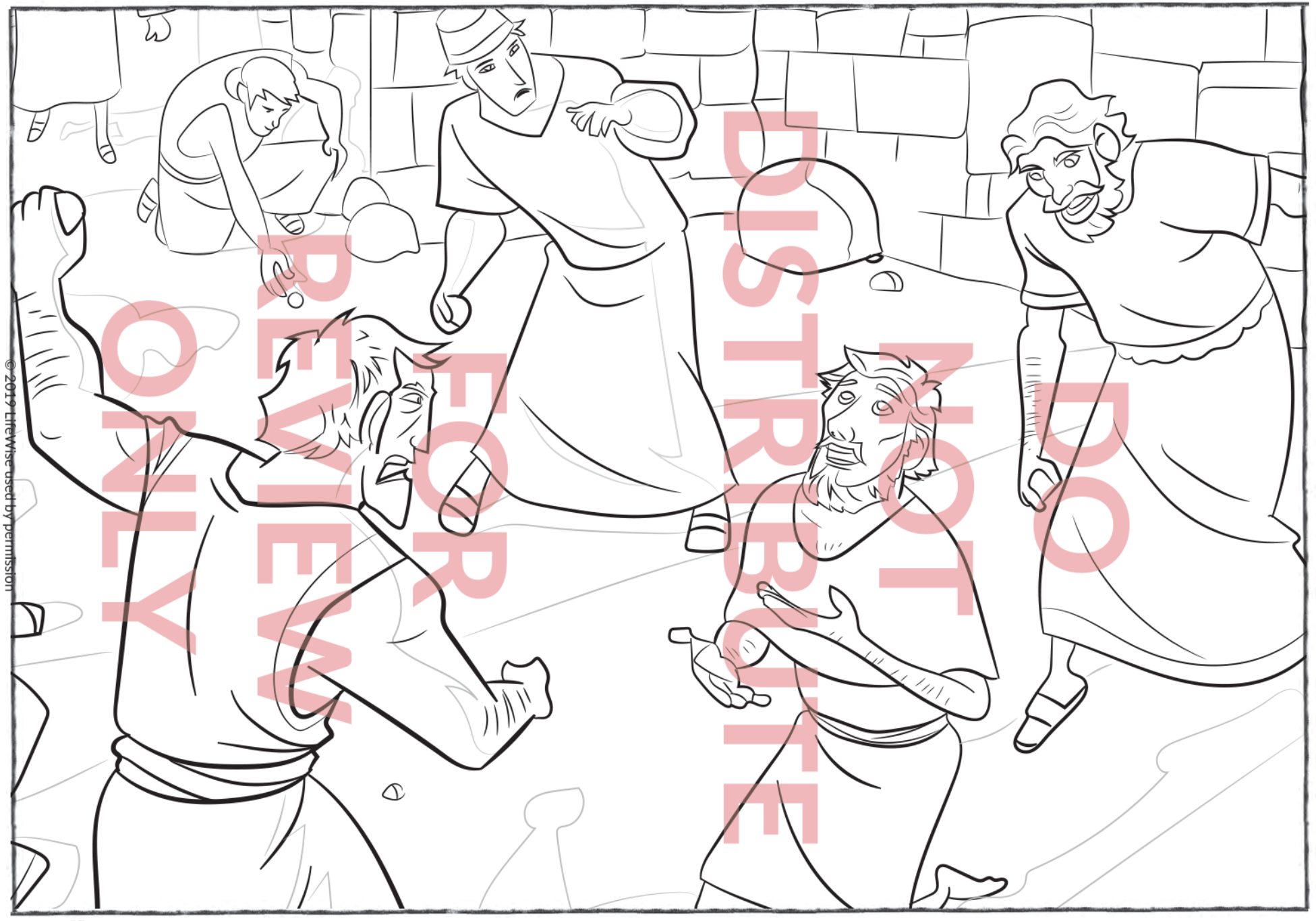

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STEPHEN WAS NOT AFRAID TO DIE SO THAT OTHERS WOULD HEAR ABOUT JESUS.

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Stephen, a man full of wisdom and grace,
When seized by the Jews, kept an angelic face.
He preached of the promises God had fulfilled
And of the Messiah they rejected and killed.

Their hearts filled with rage. They hated him so.
They killed him with stones, but was he scared? No!
For there in the heavens, he saw Christ his King:
the reason he'd suffered, the reason he'd sing.

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Stephen's address

Based on Acts 6:8–7:60

Illustrated by

"Forgive them!" he cried before dying that day.
And then into heaven, his soul went to stay.

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JESUS MADE PEOPLE MISUSING THE TEMPLE LEAVE.



THE JEWISH LEADERS WERE SO ANGRY THEY STONED STEPHEN.

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Order the Story

Instructions: Use as directed in the leader guide.

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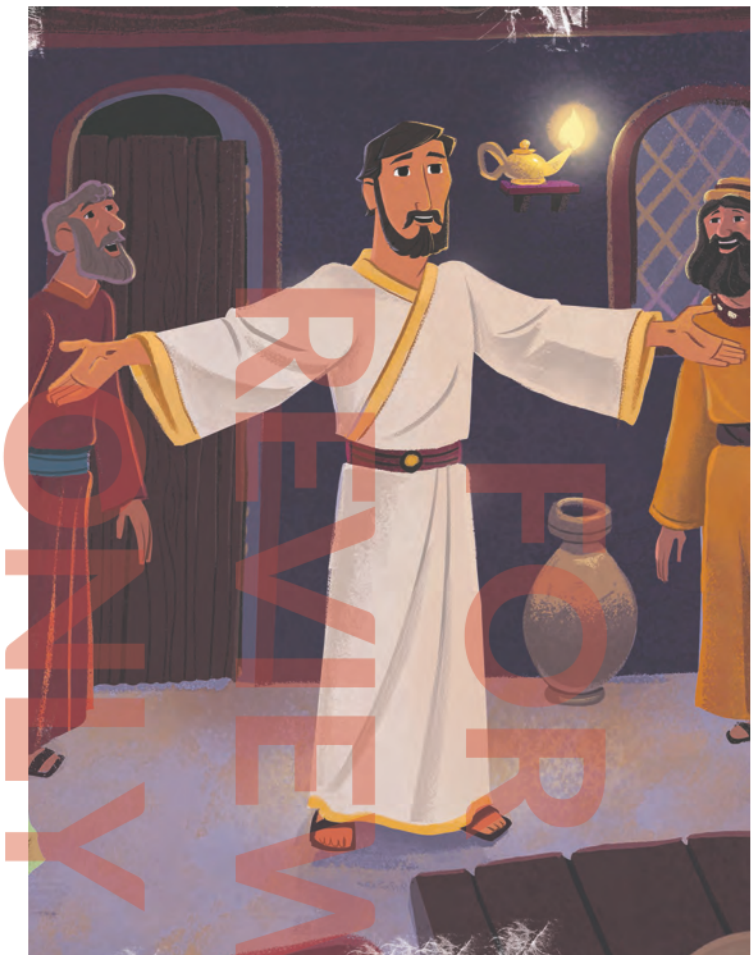

STEPHEN SHARED THAT JESUS IS THE SAVIOR GOD HAD PROMISED.



STEPHEN SAW THE HEAVENS OPEN AND JESUS STANDING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD.

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STEPHEN SAID GOD PROMISED TO SEND A SAVIOR IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

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Order the Story

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LESSON 95: INITIATIVE

THE ETHIOPIAN OFFICIAL BELIEVED

Acts 8:26–40

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THE ETHIOPIAN OFFICIAL BELIEVED

- Acts 8:26–40
- Big Picture Q&A: What does the Holy Spirit do? The Holy Spirit helps Christians follow Jesus.
- Key Passage: Acts 1:8 – But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

JESUS CONNECTION

The Ethiopian official knew what the Old Testament prophets had said, but he did not understand that the prophets spoke about Jesus. The Holy Spirit led Philip to help the official understand the good news about Jesus: Jesus died on the cross for our sins and was raised from the dead, just like the Old Testament prophets said.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

INITIATIVE – Recognizing and doing what needs to be done without being asked.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

The believers in the early church faced intense persecution. After Stephen was killed, Jesus' followers at the church in Jerusalem scattered; however, they did not stop talking about Jesus. They continued to share the good news. One man, Philip, took the gospel to Samaria. The crowds there listened and believed, and they had great joy.

In today's Bible story, Philip was instructed by an angel of the Lord to go to a certain road in the desert. Philip obeyed. The Spirit led Philip to a chariot, where an Ethiopian official was reading the Scriptures from the prophet Isaiah. The Ethiopian man did not understand what he was reading, so Philip explained it to him.

The man was reading from the prophet Isaiah: "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter ... In His humiliation justice was denied Him ... For His life is taken from the earth" (Acts 8:32–33). The official wondered if Isaiah was speaking about himself or another person. Philip told the official that Isaiah's words weren't about Isaiah; they were about the Messiah—Jesus! The official believed in Jesus and was baptized. After his interaction with the Ethiopian official, Philip continued sharing the gospel in all the towns on his way to the town of Caesarea.

Guide students to consider the role of the Holy Spirit in this interaction between Philip and the Ethiopian official. Who was responsible for Philip going to the desert? Who helped Philip explain the Scriptures? Who changed the heart of the official so he would believe?

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In our mission of making disciples, believers must be willing instruments to be used in the hands of the Lord. Philip didn't go into the desert today with a strategy for converting another man; the Holy Spirit led Philip, and he obeyed. As believers, we can be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and willing to follow His lead. He will go with us.

BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

We have learned how the Holy Spirit came and filled Jesus' disciples. As the Holy Spirit worked through Jesus' followers, the gospel spread. Before long, the church faced persecution. Can anyone remember what the word *persecution* means? (*Being mistreated by others because of what you believe.*) We learned last week about Stephen. Why wasn't Stephen afraid to die? (*He knew his death would help others hear about Jesus.*) How did the Holy Spirit help Stephen? (*He gave Stephen the courage to speak about Jesus and showed him a vision of Jesus in Heaven when he was being hurt.*)

After Stephen was killed, the believers scattered from Jerusalem. They went into the regions of Judea and Samaria—and eventually spread to many countries. Today's Bible story takes place in the regions of Samaria. It's about an official who was traveling home to Africa.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Country Clues (Older Students)

- Print and cut apart the "Country Clues" cards. Mix them up and lay them face up on the floor or table. Challenge the class to study the cards and find the pairs to match the country name with its shape and flag: *1. Ethiopia; 2. Mexico; 3. Germany; 4. Egypt; 5. United States; 6. China; 6. Canada; 7. Brazil*. If you have a world map, allow students to study it if they have trouble identifying a shape.

- Do you know how many countries there are in the world? There are nearly 200 countries in the world! One of the countries on these cards—Ethiopia—is related to our Bible story today. Our story is about a man from Ethiopia who heard the good news about Jesus and believed!

Who Is It? (Older and Younger Students)

- Bring three students to the front and give descriptions about one of them. You may ask the class to provide descriptions or share what you already know or can observe about them. For example, "This person has two siblings," or "This person is wearing blue today." Give three descriptions and ask the remaining students to identify which volunteer you are describing. As time allows, choose new volunteers and play additional rounds.

- In today's Bible story, a man read some words from the prophet Isaiah. He wondered who the prophet was talking about. One of Jesus' followers helped the man understand the Scriptures. We'll find out just what happened.

Put a Pin in It (Younger Students)

- Print out the unlabeled "Map of Africa" and use tape to hang it on a wall in your room. You may choose to use a cork board behind it to protect the wall from push pins. Then, allow the students to take turns putting pins in the countries they think might be Ethiopia. After everyone has had a turn, show the class which country is Ethiopia, and let them move their pins if they placed them incorrectly.

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- Our story today features a man from Ethiopia who had traveled to Jerusalem to worship. He was struggling to understand God's Word when God sent Philip to teach him about Jesus.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Forwards and Backwards (Older Students)

- Display the key passage poster. Guide the class to read the key passage together. Then, challenge them to read it backward. Choose volunteers to take turns reading it forward and then backward. See who can read it the fastest.

Key Passage Relay (Older and Younger Students)

- Before class, make two copies of the key passage by writing words or phrases on index cards. Guide the class to say the key passage together. Form two teams and give each team a set of cards. Make sure every student has a card or two. If necessary, help them read their words. Have both teams stand at one end of the room. Say the first word of the verse. The two students with the correct cards must race to the other end, put their card on the floor in the correct spot, and run back. Continue with the entire passage. If you have a student or two who cannot, or prefer not to, race, have them stay with the index cards and make sure they are in the correct order as their team sets them down.

Big Picture Q&A

Q: What does the Holy Spirit do?

A: *The Holy Spirit helps Christians follow Jesus.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

The Ethiopian Official Believed | Acts 8:26–40

An angel of the Lord told Philip, a follower of Jesus, to go to a desert road between Jerusalem and Gaza. So, Philip went.

On the road was a man from Ethiopia. He was an important official to the queen of Ethiopia. The man had come to worship in Jerusalem, and now he was on his way home. **He sat in his chariot, reading aloud the words of the prophet Isaiah.**

The Holy Spirit told Philip to go to the chariot, so Philip ran up to it. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked the man.

The official replied, "How can I, unless someone explains it to me?" He invited Philip into his chariot, and Philip sat with him.

The official was reading these words from Isaiah: "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb is silent before its shearer, so He does not open His mouth. He was treated unfairly, and His life is taken away."

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The official asked, "Was Isaiah talking about himself or someone else?" Isaiah was talking about the Messiah, so **Philip began to tell the man the good news about Jesus.**

As they traveled down the road, they came to some water. "What would keep me from being baptized?" the official asked.

Then, the official asked the chariot to stop. He and Philip went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Holy Spirit took Philip away. **The official continued home, and he was very happy.**



JESUS CONNECTION

The Ethiopian official knew what the Old Testament prophets had said, but he did not understand that the prophets spoke about Jesus. The Holy Spirit led Philip to help the official understand the good news about Jesus: Jesus died on the cross for our sins and was raised from the dead, just like the Old Testament prophets said.

LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

INITIATIVE – Recognizing and doing what needs to be done without being asked.

Living LifeWise

God took the initiative to save us, so we can show initiative to do what is right.

Character Connection

Just like doing homework isn't always fun, practicing something we know we should do isn't always easy. Practice can be boring, or we are tired, or it's easier to do something more fun. That's why we need initiative. Showing initiative means we choose to pay attention, to look for opportunities to do what we're supposed to, every chance we get.

That's what Philip did, and the official too. When the Spirit told Philip to talk to the official, he went right away and started a conversation. That's initiative. Once the official learned he could be saved, he wanted to be baptized right away. Initiative asks, "Why wait to do the right thing?"

God took the initiative to save us by sending Jesus to die for our sins. He has given us the Bible so we have clear directions and commands for how to live His way. His Spirit helps us know what pleases God and empowers us to do those things *with initiative*. He will help us see opportunities to do the right thing, right away, in every area of life.

What would it look like to show initiative in these situations?

- While in line to clean up your tray after lunch, the student behind you gets pushed and drops his whole tray.
- A classmate falls down playing soccer at recess, but you can't tell if she's hurt.
- Your sister comes home from school very grumpy.

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BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- Why did Philip go to the desert road?

  An angel told him to go there, Acts 8:26

- Why did Philip run by the official's chariot?

  The Holy Spirit told him to, Acts 8:26–27

- Where was the man in the chariot from?

  Ethiopia, Acts 8:27

- Who was the Ethiopian man?

  An official who served the queen of Ethiopia, Acts 8:27

- What book of the Bible was the man reading?

  Isaiah; Acts 8:28, 30

- Whom did Isaiah's words describe?

  The Messiah, Acts 8:35

- Did the Ethiopian official understand the words he was reading?

  No, Acts 8:31

- After Philip explained the Scriptures, what did the Ethiopian official want to do?

  Be baptized, Acts 8:36

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REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Bible Reading Plan (Older Students)

- Print and cut apart the Bible reading plan bookmarks. Demonstrate how to cover the bookmark with clear contact plastic or packaging tape to laminate it. Provide fine-point dry erase markers for students to fill out the reading plan. Challenge them to read the Bible every day. Encourage them to decide and write down when and where they will read, whom they might read with and whom they can tell about what they read. Students may use the bookmark to keep track of the days they read the Bible.

- In the Bible story, the Holy Spirit told Philip to tell the Ethiopian man about Jesus. The Ethiopian man invited Philip to sit with him as he read the Scriptures. Then, Philip began with what the man was reading in Isaiah and told him the good news about Jesus. Did you know that if you were to read three chapters of the Bible every day, you would read the whole Bible in a little over a year? Whether you read a chapter a day or a verse a day, the Bible is how we come to know God. God gave us His Word so we can know what is true about Him and about ourselves. The Bible says that people need to hear about Jesus so they can believe in Him. When we spend time getting to know Jesus by reading the Bible, we are better equipped to tell others about Him.

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Team Trivia (Older and Younger Students)

- Form two teams. Ask Bible review questions, alternating between teams. Award a point for each correct answer. If a team answers incorrectly, give the other team a chance to answer for a point. To make the game more exciting, have two teams face off with a bell or object in the middle. Call two students from opposite teams forward. The first person to sound the bell can give the answer.

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Exact Instructions (Older and Younger Students)

- Provide the materials to make a PB&J sandwich (if there is a nut allergy, make a turkey and cheese sandwich). Show the class the materials you have gathered and explain to them that you want their help to make a sandwich. Invite them to give you instructions, but be sure to follow them exactly. If they simply tell you to put the peanut butter on the bread, put the unopened jar of peanut butter on the unopened loaf of bread. Soon, the students will catch on and walk you through making a sandwich with detailed instructions.

- That was a pretty silly example of how to make a sandwich. How many of you think I probably knew how to make it without help? Of course, I was pretending I had no idea what you were talking about, but in the world there are actually people who don't know anything about Jesus. Sometimes, it can be tempting to skip sharing the gospel because we think the people around us already know about Jesus. But the truth is, many people don't know about Jesus, or they may find the Bible confusing. When the Holy Spirit gives us opportunities to share the gospel with the people around us, it's important to explain things clearly. That's why it's important to study the Bible, so that we can explain what it says to other people! Thankfully, we know that when we obey God, the Holy Spirit works through us. That means even if we are afraid we don't know enough to share the gospel, we can share anyway! The Holy Spirit has the power to give us the right words even if we think we cannot tell the gospel clearly.

The Gospel Game (Older and Younger Students)

- Guide the class to form a circle. Each player should hold out his or her left hand toward the person next to him, hand open and palm up. Each player then places her right pointer finger down into the middle of the palm of the person next to her. Explain that all players must keep their left hand flat until they hear the special word. When players hear the special word, they will try to grab the finger in their left hand while at the same time pulling their finger away from the person to their right. Announce a new special word for each round:

    - Round 1: *Salvation*. The gospel is the good news about Jesus. He came to save us from our sin, or give us His *salvation*.
    - Round 2: *Everything*. God rules. In the world, God is in charge. He created it all, so He is in charge of *everything*.
    - Round 3: *Punishment*. Everyone sins, or disobeys God, sometimes. Our sin separates us from God. God is holy and must punish sin. But God provided by sending His Son, Jesus, to take the *punishment* we deserve.
    - Round 4: *Gift*. Jesus took our punishment for sin by giving His life, and He gives us His righteousness. God sees us as if we lived the perfect life Jesus lived. This is the best *gift* ever!
    - Round 5: *Turn*. We respond. Everyone has a choice to make. Will you trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord? You can *turn* away from self and sin and *turn* to Him.

- That was a fun game. If you have any questions about the gospel or what it means to follow Jesus, ask a teacher, your parents or your pastor, and we would be happy to talk about it.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Led to Tell (Older Students)

- Scrambled Words (Younger Students)

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Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Lord God, thank You for Your Word and thank You for the Holy Spirit, who helps us understand and remember it. Please soften our hearts so we will be open to the Spirit's leading in our lives. We want to follow You for Your glory. Amen.

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Journal Page

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Whom can we ask if we have questions about the Bible?
- How can you know when the Holy Spirit is leading you?
- How could you respond in love to a person who rejects Jesus?

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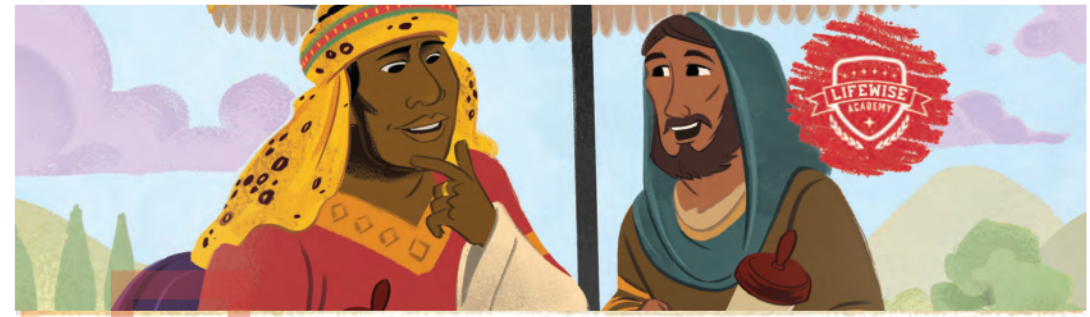

THE ETHIOPIAN OFFICIAL BELIEVED

ACTS 8:26–40

MAIN POINT: THE HOLY SPIRIT TOLD PHILIP TO TELL THE ETHIOPIAN MAN ABOUT JESUS.

An angel of the Lord told Philip, a follower of Jesus, to go to a desert road between Jerusalem and Gaza. So, Philip went.

On the road was a man from Ethiopia. He sat in his chariot, reading aloud the words of the prophet Isaiah.

The Holy Spirit told Philip to go to the chariot, so Philip ran up to it. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked the man.

The official replied, "How can I, unless someone explains it to me?" He invited Philip into his chariot, and Philip sat with him.

Philip began to tell the man the good news about Jesus.

As they traveled down the road, they came to some water. "What would keep me from being baptized?" the official asked.

Then, the official asked the chariot to stop. He and Philip went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. The official continued home, and he was very happy.

Jesus Connection: *The Ethiopian official knew what the Old Testament prophets had said, but he did not understand that the prophets spoke about Jesus. The Holy Spirit led Philip to help the official understand the good news about Jesus: Jesus died on the cross for our sins and was raised from the dead, just like the Old Testament prophets said.*

Key Passage: *Acts 1:8 – But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

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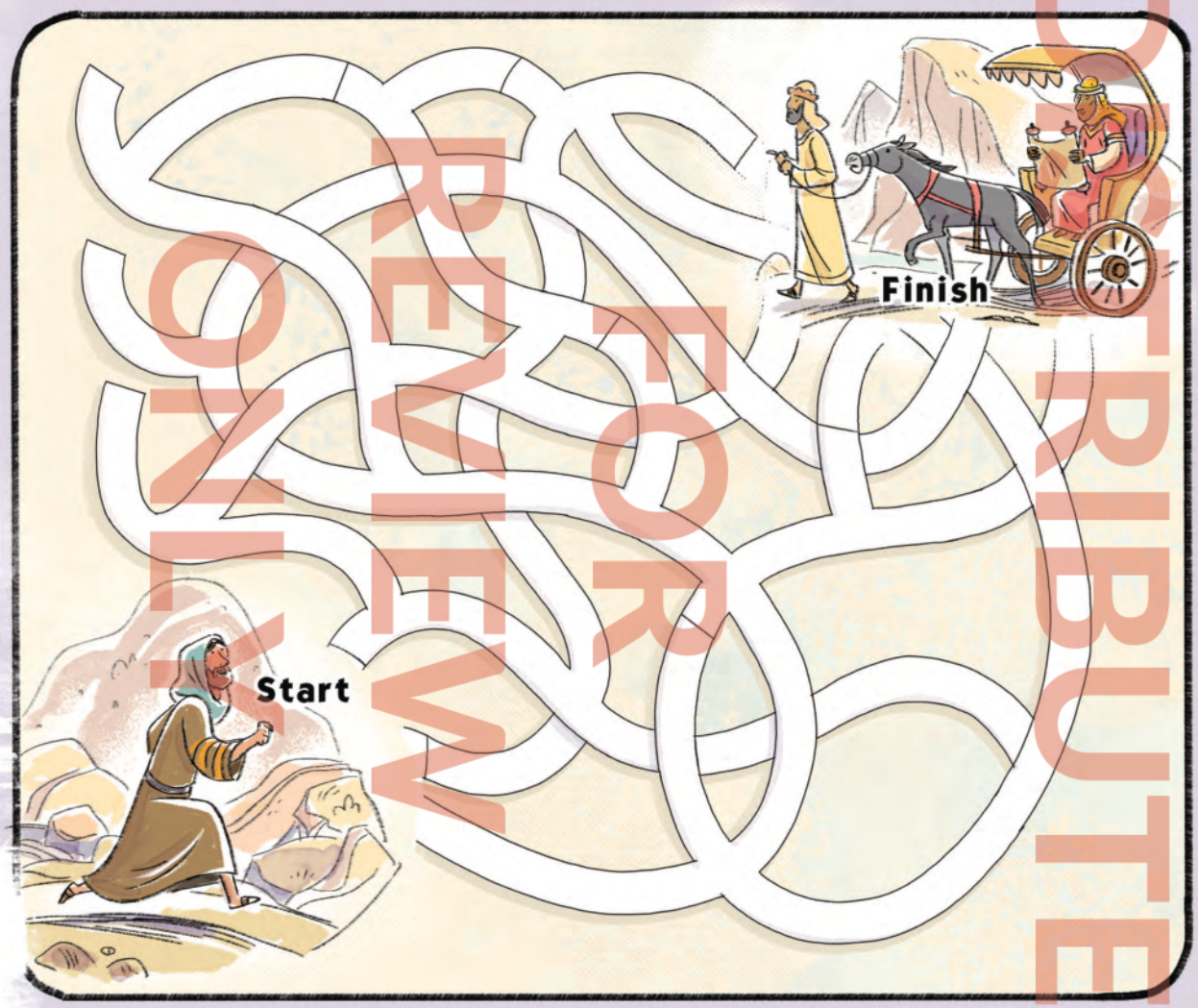
LED TO TELL

Trace the path from Philip to the Ethiopian official.



TWO TALKING

Find Acts 8:26-40 in your Bible. Mark the box to show who said each statement.

"Do you understand what you're reading?"

☐ Philip ☐ Ethiopian Official

"How can I, unless someone guides me?"

☐ Philip ☐ Ethiopian Official

"Whom is the prophet saying this about?"

☐ Philip ☐ Ethiopian Official

"What would keep me from being baptized?"

☐ Philip ☐ Ethiopian Official

"I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

☐ Philip ☐ Ethiopian Official

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SCRAMBLED WORDS

INSTRUCTIONS: Unscramble each key word below, using the pictures as help. See if you can guess why each word is important.



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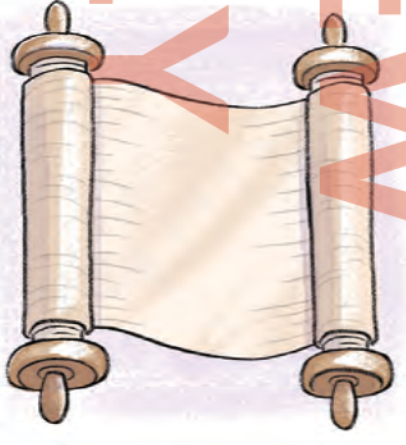
HILIPP



CHTEAER



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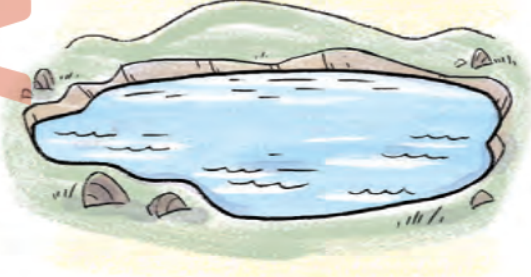

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KEY PASSAGE:
Acts 1:8 – But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- What does the Holy Spirit do? The Holy Spirit helps Christians follow Jesus.

BIBLE STORY:
THE ETHIOPIAN OFFICIAL BELIEVED

- The Holy Spirit sent Philip out to a specific place.
- There, Philip met an Ethiopian man who was confused by Scripture.
- Philip taught the man about Jesus.
- The Holy Spirit told Philip to tell the Ethiopian man about Jesus.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Whom can we ask if we have questions about the Bible?
- How can you know when the Holy Spirit is leading you?
- How would you respond in love to a person who rejects Jesus?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Talk to your kids about baptism. If they are believers, discuss with church leaders a plan for when they could be baptized.

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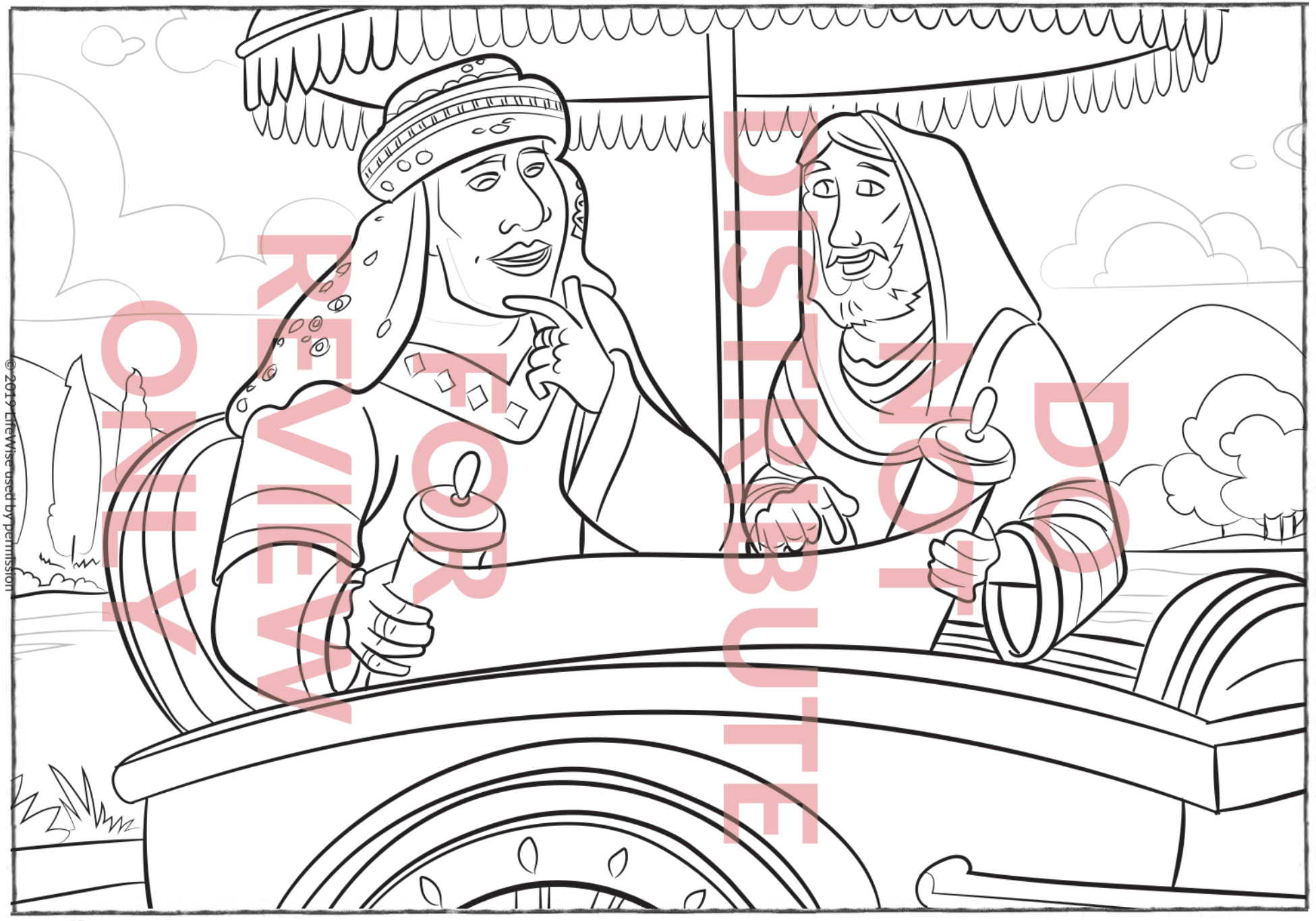

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THE HOLY SPIRIT TOLD PHILIP TO TELL THE ETHIOPIAN MAN ABOUT JESUS.

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1

Ethiopia

2

Mexico

3

Germany

4

Egypt

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8

Brazil

7

Canada

6

China

5

United States

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_____
(Your Name)

I will read the Bible ...
- ❑ in the morning.
- ❑ after lunch.
- ❑ before bedtime.
- ❑ _____

I will read the Bible ...
- ❑ in my room.
- ❑ at the kitchen table.
- ❑ in the car.
- ❑ _____

I will read the Bible ...
- ❑ with an adult.
- ❑ with a friend or sibling.
- ❑ by myself.
- ❑ _____

I can tell _____ about what I read in the Bible.

I read the Bible on these days:
- ❑ Sunday
- ❑ Monday
- ❑ Tuesday
- ❑ Wednesday
- ❑ Thursday
- ❑ Friday
- ❑ Saturday

_____
(Your Name)

I will read the Bible ...
- ❑ in the morning.
- ❑ after lunch.
- ❑ before bedtime.
- ❑ _____

I will read the Bible ...
- ❑ in my room.
- ❑ at the kitchen table.
- ❑ in the car.
- ❑ _____

I will read the Bible ...
- ❑ with an adult.
- ❑ with a friend or sibling.
- ❑ by myself.
- ❑ _____

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- ❑ Thursday
- ❑ Friday
- ❑ Saturday

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Bible Reading Plan

Instructions: Print and use as directed in the leader guide.
L 95 The Ethiopian Official Believed | INITIATIVE

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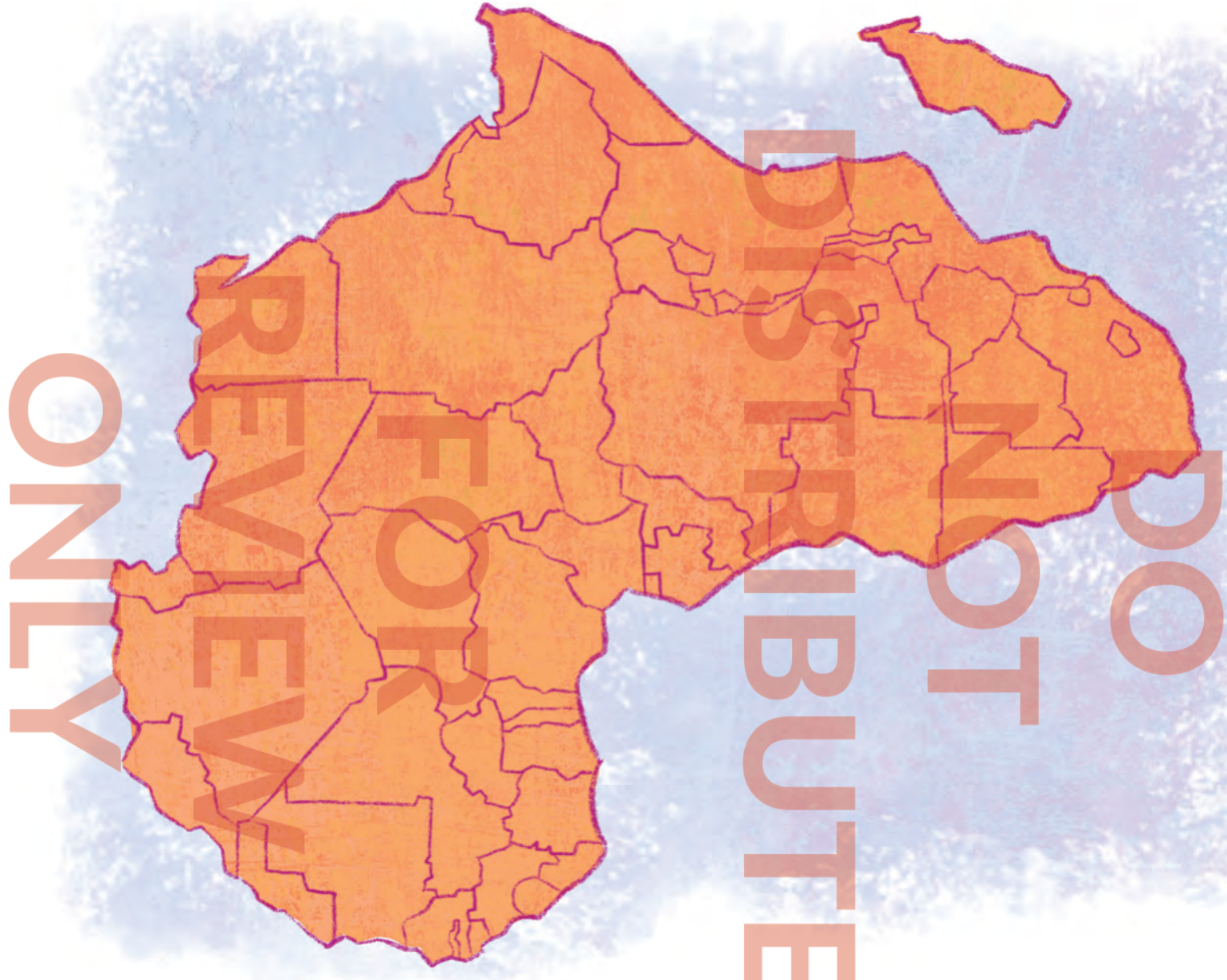

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Map of Africa

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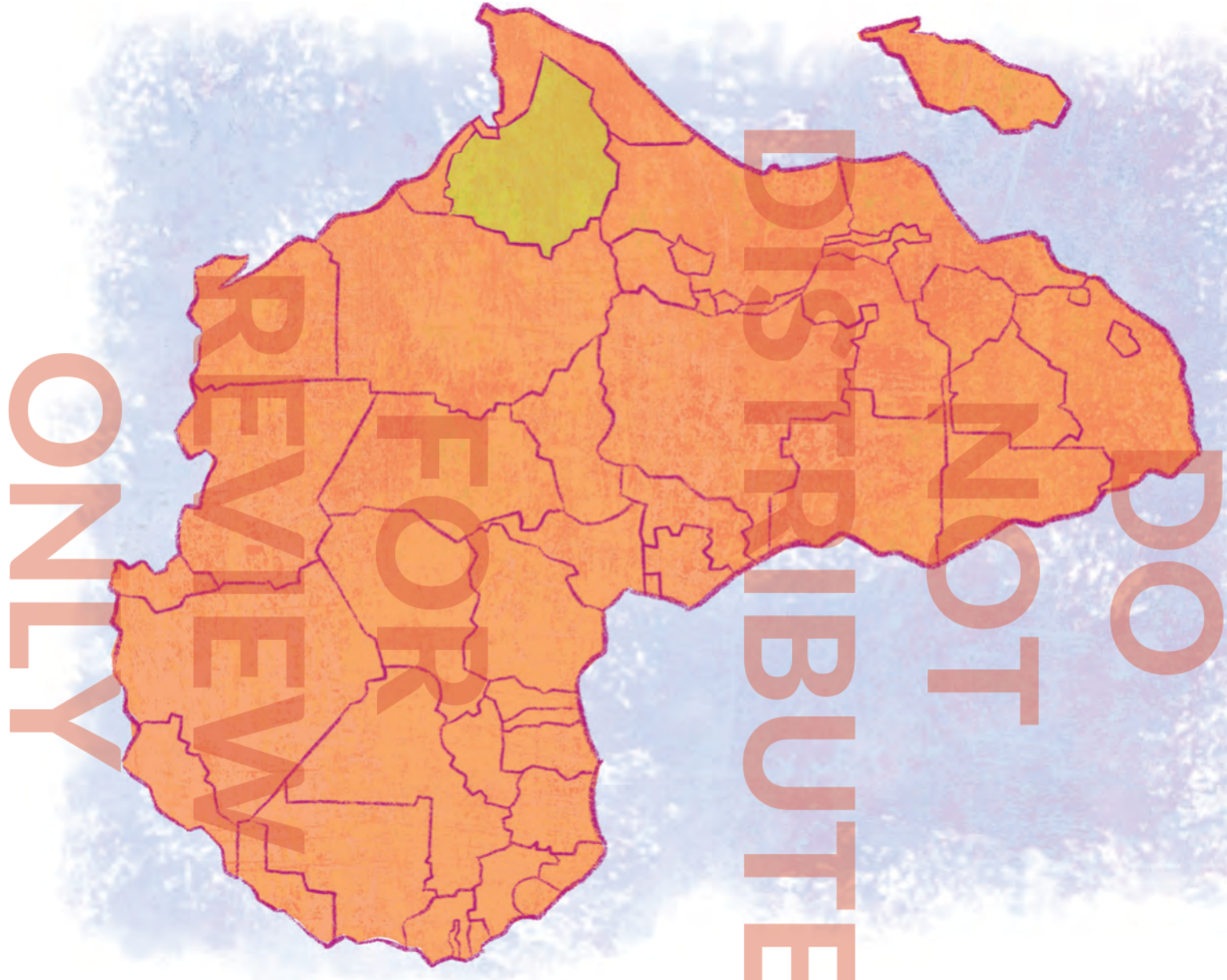

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LESSON 96: RESPECT

PETER VISITED CORNELIUS

Acts 10

PETER VISITED CORNELIUS

- Acts 10
- Big Picture Q&A: What does the Holy Spirit do? The Holy Spirit helps Christians follow Jesus.
- Key Passage: Acts 1:8 – But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

JESUS CONNECTION

God showed Peter that just as there is no "clean" and "unclean" food, there are no "clean" and "unclean" people. God calls believers to tell everyone the good news about Jesus, no matter who they are or where they come from. Jesus is the Lord of all.

LIFEWISE QUALITY

RESPECT – Acting considerately toward people based on their God-given value and worth.

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LEADER BIBLE STUDY

The Apostle Peter preached and taught boldly after Pentecost. Jesus had commanded His followers to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. Acts 10 shows us how God made clear to Peter that the gospel is for everyone—not only the Jews but also the Gentiles.

The story begins in Caesarea (SESS uh REE uh), the capital city in the Roman province of Judea. Cornelius, a Roman centurion, lived in Caesarea. Like many of the people in Caesarea, Cornelius was a Gentile; however, he did not worship the Roman gods. Cornelius worshiped the one true God, and one day, God spoke to Cornelius in a vision. In the vision, an angel told Cornelius to send for Peter.

Now, Peter was in Joppa (JAHP uh), about 30 miles south of Caesarea. As Cornelius' men approached the city, Peter had a vision too. He was on a rooftop when God showed him a sheet of animals and commanded him to eat. The problem was that some of the animals were considered "unclean" by Jewish food laws. Three times, God said to Peter, "What God has made clean, do not call impure."

Peter visited Cornelius and others who had gathered with him. Peter understood that God did not want a Jewish man to call anyone unclean just because he was a foreigner (see Acts 10:28–29). Peter preached the gospel to the Gentiles there, and they believed. The Holy Spirit filled them, and they were baptized.

The gospel is good news for everyone. As you teach students, emphasize that God showed Peter that just as there is no "clean" and "unclean" food, there are no "clean" and "unclean" people. God calls believers to tell everyone the good news about Jesus, no matter who they are or where they come from. Jesus is the Lord of all!

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BIBLE TIMELINE & REVIEW (3 MIN)

We have been learning stories from the Book of Acts about the early church and what Jesus' followers did after Jesus ascended to Heaven. Do you remember what happened on the day of Pentecost? (*The Holy Spirit came.*) How did the Holy Spirit help the disciples? (*He gave Jesus' disciples power to carry out God's plan of taking the gospel to the whole world.*) Special things happened through the Holy Spirit's power. Whom did Peter heal? (*A lame beggar.*) Whom did Stephen see in Heaven when he was about to die? (*Jesus.*) Whom was Philip able to tell about Jesus? (*The Ethiopian official.*) Today's Bible story is about the Apostle Peter and a man named Cornelius.

SESSION STARTERS (5-10 MIN)

Red Light, Green Light (Older and Younger Students)

- Review how to play the game Red Light, Green Light. Students can move around the room until you shout, "Red light!" Then, players must stop in place. When you say, "Green light!" they may move again. Explain that today, the rules are going to change. When you say, "Green light," students should stop. When you say, "Red light," they may move again. Play for several minutes. For an added challenge, change the rules to incorporate other colors such as "Blue light!" (wiggle in place) and "Yellow light!" (move in slow motion).
- Playing a game with new rules is kind of hard! It feels rather wrong. In the Bible story we will hear today, God gave Peter a vision to change how Peter thought about certain things and certain people.

Best and Worst (Older and Younger Students)

- Invite students to decide together the top five best and worst foods. Invite suggestions and friendly discussion. As the class talks, list all of their ideas. Then, guide them to number the foods to indicate the best five and the worst five. Prompt the class by asking, "If you could only eat five foods the rest of your life, what would you choose?" and "Name five foods you never want to eat again." Encourage students to work together and compromise to develop final "Best Five" and "Worst Five" lists.
- I like your lists. In today's Bible story, God told Peter in a vision to eat some foods, but Peter did not want to. We will find out what happened when we hear our story.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY/BIG PICTURE Q&A (5 MIN)

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Sticky Note Challenge (Older and Younger Students)

- Cover the key passage poster in sticky notes. Take volunteers to say the key passage from memory. If no one is able to recite the passage, remove a few sticky notes to allow the students a bit of help. Continue removing sticky notes until they can say the verse without further help. Then, begin adding sticky notes back to the poster until the passage is covered again.

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Big Picture Q&A

Q: What does the Holy Spirit do?
A: *The Holy Spirit helps Christians follow Jesus.*

BIBLE STORY (10 MIN)

Peter Visited Cornelius | Acts 10

Cornelius was a man who lived in Caesarea (SESS uh REE uh). He **was an officer in the Roman army, and he and everyone in his house worshiped God.** Cornelius helped other people, and he always prayed to God. **One afternoon, Cornelius saw a vision of an angel of God coming to him.** The angel said, "Cornelius!"

Cornelius was afraid. He looked at the angel and said, "What is it?"

The angel said, "God has heard your prayers, and He has seen how you help others." Then, **the angel instructed Cornelius to send for a man named Peter, who was in the city of Joppa. When the angel left, Cornelius sent two of his servants and one soldier to Joppa.**

The next day, as the servants and soldier were nearing the city, Peter went up on the roof of the house to pray. He was hungry, but while he was waiting for the meal, **Peter saw a vision. In this vision, Peter saw something like a large sheet coming down from Heaven. In the sheet were all kinds of animals, reptiles and birds. Then, a voice said to him, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat!"**

"No, Lord!" Peter said. "I have never eaten anything that is not clean or not used for food."

Again, a voice said to him, "God has made these clean. Do not call them unfit to eat." This happened three times, and then the whole thing was taken up into Heaven. Peter tried to understand what the vision meant.

Then, the men Cornelius had sent arrived at the gate. They explained that Cornelius had seen a vision, and an angel instructed him to send for Peter. So, the next day, Peter went with the men to Caesarea. **When Peter got to Cornelius' house, he** began to speak. Peter **explained that God does not consider some people to be better than others. God had sent good news to the Israelites—Jesus is Lord of all. "Everyone who believes in Jesus will have their sins forgiven," Peter said.**

While Peter said this, the Holy Spirit came down on those who heard the message—not just the Jewish people, but the Gentiles, or non-Jews, too. They began to speak in other languages declaring God's greatness. The Jewish believers were amazed. Cornelius, his friends and his relatives were baptized in the name of Jesus, and Peter stayed with them for a few days.

JESUS CONNECTION

God showed Peter that just as there is no "clean" and "unclean" food, there are no "clean" and "unclean" people. God calls believers to tell everyone the good news about Jesus, no matter who they are or where they come from. Jesus is the Lord of all.

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LIFEWISE QUALITY (3–4 MIN)

RESPECT – Acting considerately toward people based on their God-given value and worth.

Living LifeWise

Since God loves and creates everyone, we can respect those who are different from us.

Character Connection

We often divide people into groups. We accept some and leave others out based on our personal list. The word we use for that is *partial*. We say we are partial to this or that or we "show partiality." Basically, it means we pick our favorites. And with foods or music or colors, that's no big deal. But God says that, when it comes to people, it can be a very big deal.

In our story today, God told Peter not to be disrespectful to people based on a list that God didn't use. He said that what Peter called unclean, God had made clean. Peter's vision was of animals, but God was making a point about people and who was welcome to hear and receive the good news of the gospel. (Hint: it's everyone!)

God doesn't ask us to like or agree with every person we meet. But we are to show respect. God doesn't want us to treat people differently based on things that God says aren't important. Instead, we can ask God to help us accept people as He does, showing kindness to everyone and inviting everyone to know and obey Him. By respecting the people God made and loves (which is everybody), we live God's way and may even get the chance to share about God with them. Dividing is an easy habit to get into, so we have to ask the Holy Spirit to help us see others as He does and show them respect.

In each example, which person would you have an easier time treating with respect? What are some ways you could show them respect anyway?

- Someone who likes the same team as you OR someone who likes your team's rival?
- The kids who like art or music OR the kids who want to play football during recess?
- The substitute teacher who yelled at you last time OR the gym teacher you love?

BIBLE STORY REVIEW (5 MIN)

- **Who was Cornelius?**

  A centurion, or officer, in the Roman army, Acts 10:1

- **Whom did the angel tell Cornelius to call for?**

  Simon Peter, Acts 10:5

- **What did Peter see in a vision?**

  A large sheet with animals in it, Acts 10:11–12

- **What did God tell Peter to do?**

  Kill and eat, Acts 10:13

- **When Peter refused to eat the animals, what did the voice say?**

  What God has made clean, do not call impure, Acts 10:15

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- How many times did the voice say, "What God has made clean, do not call unclean"?

  Three times, Acts 10:16

- What did Peter learn from his vision?

  No people should be considered impure or unclean, Acts 10:28

- Whom did the Holy Spirit fill?

  Those who heard the message, both Jews and Gentiles, Acts 10:44–45

REINFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES (5-10 MIN)

Clean/Unclean Magnets (Older Students)

- Provide for each student one 4-inch foam square, one 2-by-4-inch foam rectangle, and a 3-inch strip of magnetic tape. Guide the class to glue the foam rectangle over half of the foam square. Students should remove the adhesive backing from the magnetic tape and attach it to the back of the foam square. Provide permanent markers for them to write *CLEAN* on the top half of the foam square. Then, demonstrate how to rotate the square 180 degrees and write *UNCLEAN* on the opposite half.

- Explain that the magnet can be displayed on a dishwasher to indicate that the dishes are clean and ready to be put away (when *CLEAN* is on top) or that the dishes have not yet been cleaned (when *UNCLEAN* is on top). If students do not have a dishwasher at home, they may display the magnet on a refrigerator or locker as a reminder of today's Bible story. There are no "clean" or "unclean" people. Jesus is Lord of all. When we place our faith in Jesus, God accepts us by faith and the Holy Spirit cleans our hearts from sin.

Hot Spot (Older and Younger Students)

- Before the session, list the Bible review questions on a piece of paper and cut them apart. Include the references, but not the answers. Put the strips into a paper bag. Instruct students to pass the bag. While students pass the bag, turn around so you can't see who has it. When you turn around, whoever you catch holding the back must pull out a question strip, read it aloud and try to answer the question.

Story Scenes (Older and Younger Students)

- Provide several large sheets of paper and markers for your students. Form small groups and assign each group a specific scene from the story to draw. [*The angel visiting Cornelius, Peter praying on the roof, Peter's vision of the animals in the sheet, Peter visiting Cornelius, Cornelius and his family trusting in Jesus.*] If large paper is not available or students struggle with group projects, have them work individually with a regular sheet of paper.

Show and Tell Pictionary (Older and Younger Students)

- Provide a student with a dry erase marker and whiteboard to draw a picture of their favorite toy or most prized possession. Have the class guess what item it is. Allow each student to take a turn if time allows.

- It's normal to have a favorite toy or a special treasure that you value a lot. However, the Bible tells us that we are not to show that kind of favoritism to people. The Holy Spirit told Peter to preach to Cornelius, a Gentile, even though it was common in those days for Jews to look down on Gentiles. God made everyone, and we all carry His image. We are to love all people because Jesus

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loved all people. A great way to love everyone is to share the gospel with them. God wants everyone to believe in Jesus, and He doesn't want us to think of anyone as "unclean" or unworthy of His love. No one can earn salvation, but God offers it freely to everyone who believes in Jesus.

Sheet Toss (Younger Students)

- Lay a parachute or sheet on the floor and instruct students to take hold of the edge with both hands. Guide the class to spread out evenly around the perimeter and hold the sheet at waist level. Toss a few stuffed animals onto the sheet and lead students through several games.
  - *Popcorn* – shake the sheet to make the animals pop up like popcorn.
  - *Around and Around* – students turn their bodies sideways and hold the sheet with one hand. They should walk in a circle and move the sheet slowly up and down.
  - *Animal jumps* – each student shakes the sheet to keep the animals from touching him or her.
  - *The Wave* – students put up their hands, one after another, in order to create a synchronized "wave."

- Peter was on a roof when he saw a vision of something like a sheet with animals in it. Peter saw animals that were considered "unclean," but a voice told him that God had made them clean. God showed Peter that just as there is no "clean" and "unclean" food, there are no "clean" and "unclean" people. God calls believers to tell everyone the good news about Jesus, no matter who they are or where they come from. Jesus is the Lord of all.

Activity Pages & Recap Cards (5–10 min) (For in-class or take-home use)

- Word Search (Older Students)
- Clean or Unclean (Younger Students)

Prayer & Requests (3–5 min)

Father, thank You for sending Jesus to save sinners. Thank you for welcoming all people, no matter who we are, where we come from or what we have done. You have promised that anyone who puts their faith in Jesus' death and resurrection will be saved from sin. Holy Spirit, help us understand this and reach out to all people with the good news about Jesus.

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Journal Page

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- How do you treat people who are different than you?
- What is one way all people are alike?
- How can we show love to everyone?

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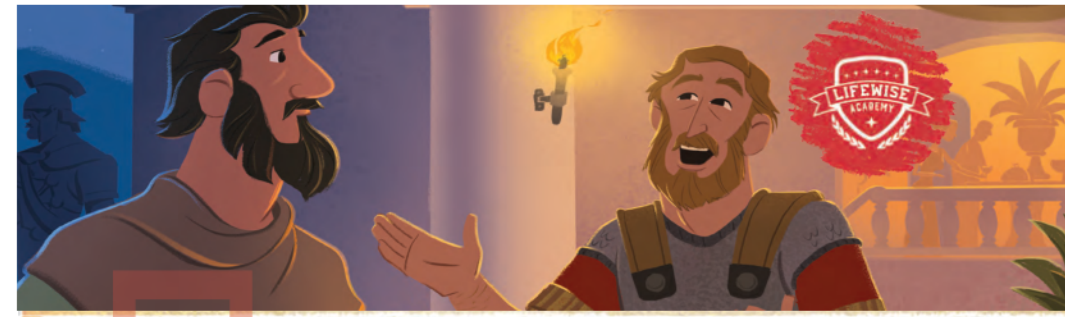

PETER VISITED CORNELIUS

ACTS 10

MAIN POINT: THE HOLY SPIRIT TOLD PETER TO PREACH TO CORNELIUS, A GENTILE.

Cornelius was an officer in the Roman army, and he and everyone in his house worshiped God. One afternoon, Cornelius saw a vision of an angel of God coming to him. The angel instructed Cornelius to send for a man named Peter, who was in the city of Joppa. When the angel left, Cornelius sent two of his servants and one soldier to Joppa.

The next day, as the servants and soldier were nearing the city, Peter went up on the roof of the house to pray. Peter saw a vision. In this vision, Peter saw something like a large sheet coming down from Heaven. In the sheet were all kinds of animals, reptiles and birds.

Then, a voice said to him, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat!"

"No, Lord!" Peter said. "I have never eaten anything that is not clean or not used for food."

Again, a voice said to him, "God has made these clean. Do not call them unfit to eat."

Then, the men Cornelius had sent arrived at the gate. They explained that Cornelius had seen a vision, and an angel instructed him to send for Peter. So, the next day, Peter went with the men.

When Peter got to Cornelius' house, he explained that God does not consider some people to be better than others. God had sent good news to the Israelites—Jesus is Lord of all.

"Everyone who believes in Jesus will have their sins forgiven," Peter said.

While Peter said this, the Holy Spirit came down on those who heard the message—not just the Jewish people, but the Gentiles, or non-Jews, too. The Jewish believers were amazed.

Cornelius, his friends and his relatives were baptized in the name of Jesus.

Jesus Connection: *God showed Peter that just as there is no "clean" and "unclean" food, there are no "clean" and "unclean" people. God calls believers to tell everyone the good news about Jesus, no matter who they are or where they come from. Jesus is the Lord of all.*

Key Passage: *Acts 1:8 – But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

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WORD SEARCH

Find the words hidden in the puzzle.

WORD SEARCH

ANGEL
ANIMALS
CLEAN
CORNELIUS
EAT
GENTILES
GOSPEL
JEWS
LORD
PETER
PRAY
ROOF
UNCLEAN
VISION

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

CLEAN OR UNCLEAN?

God's laws for His people told them which animals they could eat ("clean" animals) and which animals they could not eat ("unclean" animals). Can you guess which animals the Jews were allowed to eat and which were not allowed? Read Deuteronomy 14:3-20 to check your answers.



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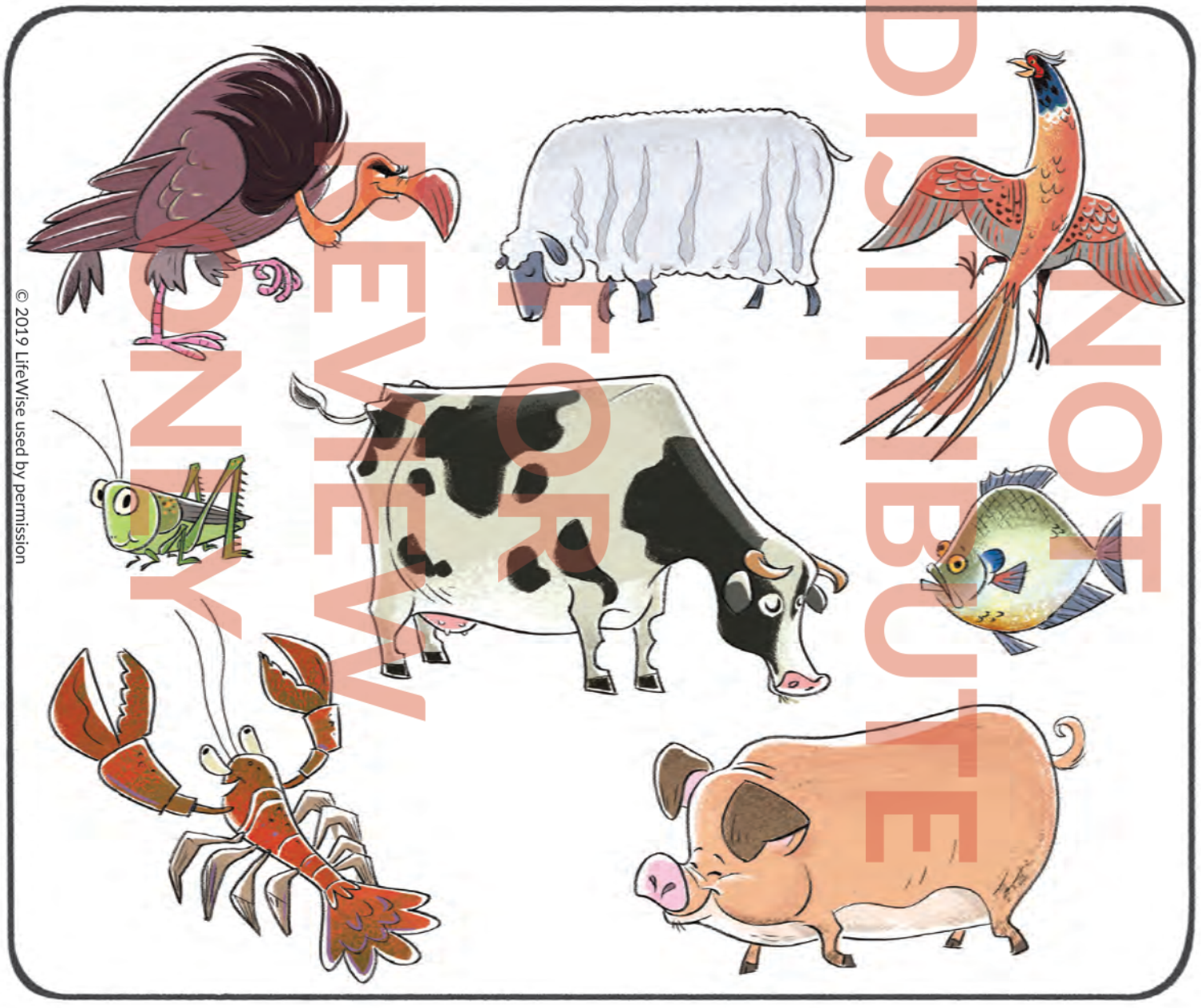
CLEAN OR UNCLEAN?

INSTRUCTIONS: Circle animals that were clean under Jewish law. Cross out unclean animals. Check Deuteronomy 14:3-20 if you get stuck!



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KEY PASSAGE:
Acts 1:8 – But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:
- What does the Holy Spirit do? The Holy Spirit helps Christians follow Jesus.

BIBLE STORY:
PETER VISITED CORNELIUS
- God sent Cornelius to find Peter.
- Peter had a vision of unclean animals.
- Peter learned that God made unclean things clean.
- God told Peter to preach to Cornelius, a Gentile.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:
- How do you treat people who are different from you?
- What is one way all people are alike?
- How can we show love to everyone?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:
- Crush chocolate cookies into whipped topping to make "mud pie" treats.
- Eat at a restaurant that serves a food from a culture you are unfamiliar with, and discuss how Jesus will unite people of all nations under His rule.

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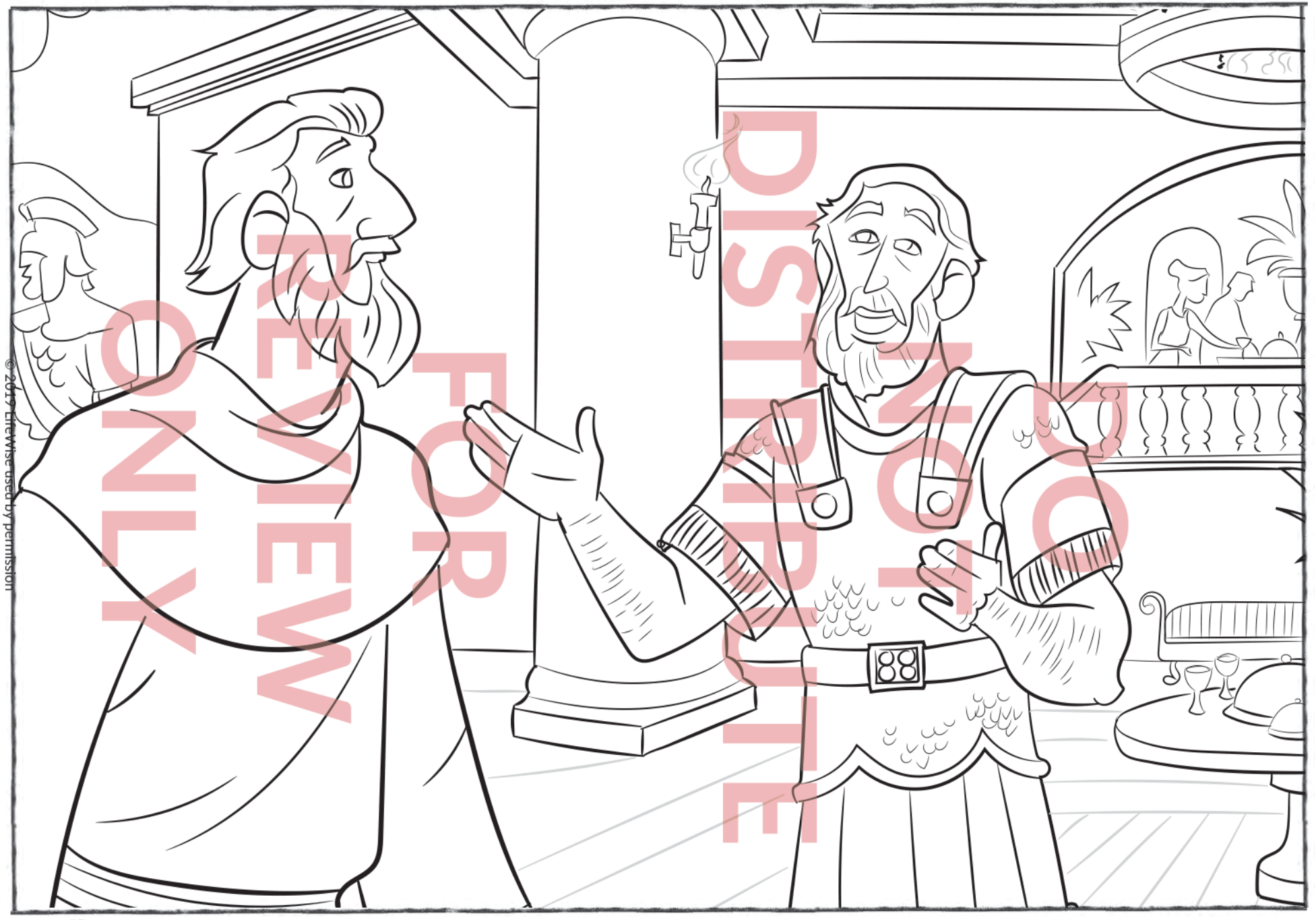

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THE HOLY SPIRIT TOLD PETER TO PREACH TO CORNELIUS, A GENTILE.