

# Cornerstone Christian Fellowship Children's Bible Curriculum

## Year Three

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## Year Three Memory Verses

- January: "Jesus always used stories and illustrations like these when speaking to the crowds. In fact, He never spoke to them without using such parables. This fulfilled what God had spoken through the prophet: 'I will speak to you in parables. I will explain things hidden since the creation of the world.'" Matthew 13:34-35  
*(Verse 35 could be used just for the older children if both are too much for the younger students.)*
- February: "To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given, and they will have an abundance of knowledge. But for those who are not listening, even what little understanding they have will be taken away from them." Matthew 13:12
- March: "Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will be also." Matthew 6:19-21
- April: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 18:3-4
- May: "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you." John 13:14-15
- June: "He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth." Isaiah 53:7
- July: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Acts 2:38
- August: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20
- September: "Then Peter began to speak, 'I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.'" Acts 10:34-35

October: "And now these three remain; faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." I Corinthians 13:13

November: "I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength." Philippians 4:12b-13

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

27th

Missionary → Borden / Neals / Gosherts  
Goel with us  
Short Scripture Story

# Lesson 1

## The Parable of the Sower

Matt, 13:1-9, 18-23; Mark 4:1-9, 14-20; Luke 8:4-15

**INTRODUCTION** The parable of the sower is one of three parables (the sower, the mustard seed, the wicked husbandman) found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Also, it is one of the few parables Jesus explained for His disciples and others with them. Some have called it the *parable of parables*, because it really contains four parables in one with each emphasizing one basic truth.

In New Testament times farming was simple. The *common ground* in Palestine was divided into long narrow strips. There was no fence around the strips, but separating the strips was a path or right-of-way upon which anyone could walk. These paths were beaten as hard as pavement from many passers-by. In many areas the land consisted of outcroppings of bedrock, and the surface of this *rocky terrain* was covered with only a thin layer of soil. Ridding the ground of *thorny weeds* was a continual problem. If the roots escaped the plow or if the weeds had produced seeds, a new growth of thorny weeds was inevitable.

The farmer carried his seed in a bag which was slung around his neck and shoulders. In the fall when the long, hot summer was ended, the farmer walked through the field and cast, or broadcast, the seed upon the ground. Then he plowed the field to cover the seed, waited for the winter rain to germinate the seed, and looked forward to the harvest the following year.

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. What the seed represents.
2. The four types of ground.
3. What kind of harer each type of ground represents.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Have each student fold a paper into quadrants and draw one of the four soils in each area. Glue seeds on each soil. Draw what happened to the seed in each of the soils. Ex. - birds on the common ground, beautiful plants in the good soil, etc.

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

“Shrink, Shrink, Shrink/Grow, Grow, Grow” (sung to the tune of “I Will Make You Fishers of Men)

## Lesson 2

# The Parable of the Tares, The Parable of the Drawnet, & The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard

Matt. 13:24-30,36-43; Matt. 13:47-50; Matt. 20:1-16

### INTRODUCTION

Theme: It is not for us to judge others or to decide what is "fair"

**Tares** - Tares are weeds called bearded darnel grass (*Lolium temulentum*). These weeds look so much like wheat in the early stages that it is almost impossible to distinguish one from the other. Not until the plants head out can the farmer tell the difference, but by then the roots are so intertwined, pulling up the weeds would root out the wheat also.

There were three ways to separate the tares and wheat. The tares did not grow as high as the wheat, and sometimes the wheat was reaped over the top of the darnel. Then the field was set on fire, burning the darnel that remained. Sometimes the reaper separated the wheat and the darnel as he reaped, dropping each in bundles. The darnel could then be gathered later and burned. If there was just a small amount of darnel in the field, the seed was picked from the good grain before it was milled. This task was performed by women and was necessary, for the darnel seeds when ground to flour were semi-poisonous.

**Drawnet** - The parable of the drawnet compares the kingdom to a dragnet cast into the sea, drawing every kind of fish. When the net is filled, it is drawn to shore and the separation of good and bad takes place. Just as the net did not discriminate between the good and bad (both were gathered together), so we must not be selective in our efforts to teach and preach the gospel. In the judgment (when the net is filled) the separation of the righteous and unrighteous will take place.

The drawnet is a large net sometimes as long as half a mile. The bottom is weighted with bits of lead and the top is supported with corks. At times the fisherman fastened one end of the net on shore, then pulled the other end with the boat in a semicircle back to the shore. Other times the net was drawn between two boats.

**Laborers** - This parable follows the story of the rich young ruler. After he went away, Peter asked what they would have since they had forsaken everything and followed Jesus. The Jews believed in a doctrine of merit; that is, by keeping the law and doing good deeds, one could come to God and claim rewards. This parable teaches that God rules in His kingdom and literally gives His grace freely to all who come to Him.

The law of Moses required that hired laborers be paid at the end of each day's work (Lev. 19:13). The worker was to be paid each day before sunset because he was poor and needed the money for himself and his family (Deut. 24:15). A normal day's wage was a *denarius*, worth about seventeen cents. In Palestine, the work day began at 6 a.m. and continued to 6 p.m.

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. Only God can and should judge.
2. We should show love to everyone and share the gospel freely.
3. God rules and reigns and He is always right.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Blindfold one student at a time and have them “sort” items of similar shape and size. Ex.: Red dried kidney beans from white dried navy beans. Have them glue their results on a piece of construction paper to remind them that we don’t see/know everything. Only God can “sort” and judge.

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

“I Will Make You Fishers of Men” - reminding the children that we want to share God’s love with everyone.



## Lesson 3

**The Parable of the Mustard Seed: Matt. 13:31-32; Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18-19**

**The Parable of the Leaven: Matt. 13:33; Luke 13:20-21**

**The Parable of the Hidden Treasure: Matt. 13:44**

**The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price: Matt. 13:45-46**

### INTRODUCTION

Theme: The growth and value of God's Kingdom

**Mustard Seed:** Jesus spoke two parables to teach how the kingdom would grow, the Mustard Seed and the Leaven. These two parables should be considered together.

In this parable the kingdom of heaven is compared to the mustard seed. From this tiny seed grows the mustard tree, reaching to a height of seven to eight feet, with twelve feet not being unusual. In the same manner, from a small beginning the kingdom of heaven spread through out the whole world. This parable was meant to be an encouragement to Jesus' followers. His disciples were uneducated fishermen whose task was to take the gospel message to the whole world. In a few short years they "turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6), and the tiny gospel seed had been "preached to every creature which is under heaven" (Col. 1:23). From the smallest beginning came the greatest blessing ever bestowed upon humankind - the forgiveness of sins through Jesus's blood.

**Leaven:** The Parable of the Mustard Seed declares the *fact* of the growth of the kingdom of heaven - it was extensive, vast, reaching out to the four corners of the world. The parable of the leaven is also about the growth of the kingdom, but this parable teaches the *way* or *manner* of the growth - it has great power and force. In this parable, both Matthew and Luke state that a woman hid leaven in "three measures" of meal, which is equivalent to 39 liters or slightly more than a bushel. Thus a little leaven added to a large quantity of meal permeated the entire mixture. Although the leaven disappeared in the meal, it worked secretly and invisibly and after a time the results were visible.

**Hidden Treasure:** In this parable and the one to follow - The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price - Jesus declared the great value of the kingdom. This parable tells of a man who found a treasure hidden in a field. He willingly sold all that he had to buy the field. It was common practice in Jesus' time to bury valuables as a means of preserving one's property. Therefore, Jesus again used an illustration that was familiar to his hearers to teach a spiritual lesson - the value of the kingdom of God.

**Pearl:** The Parable of the Hidden Treasure was about a man who *found* by accident a hidden treasure. The parable of the pearl of great price is about a man who was *searching* for pearls. In New Testament times pearls were in great demand. The merchants found pearls in the Red Sea, but they had to go to the Persian Gulf and India to find the finest quality pearls. The merchant described by Jesus found a pearl of great value and sold everything he had in order to buy it.

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. In God's kingdom big things come from little "seeds".
2. God's kingdom is more valuable than anything else.
3. God uses little things, like us, to build His kingdom.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Make a "dough" (recipes for play dough are online). Divide the dough into pieces about 1/4 cup in size. Place a tiny drop of food coloring in the middle of each little ball. Have the children knead their little ball of dough until the color has permeated the entire ball. Talk about the leaven parable while kneading.

Get "pearl" beads from a craft store. Have each student decorate a paper envelope like a "treasure box" and place the pearl bead inside. Discuss the pearl parable.

If you have extra time, have the children draw a mustard tree and talk about how tiny the seed is and how big the tree grows. Bring in mustard seeds (available in the spice aisle at the grocery store) to demonstrate the tiny size of the seed. Allow the students to put one in their "treasure box" along with their "pearl."

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

"Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God" (if possible, sing as a round)

## Lesson 4

### The Parable of the Two Debtors Luke 7:36-50 The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant Matthew 18:21-35

**INTRODUCTION** Theme: Forgiveness

**Two Debtors:** In this parable Jesus was invited to the house of Simon the Pharisee for a meal. The homes of the wealthy usually consisted of several rooms opening onto a courtyard where meals were eaten in the warm weather. People of that day usually reclined when eating, leaning on the left elbow with the right hand free and the feet stretched out behind. While Jesus was dining with Simon, a woman who was a sinner entered Simon's house and stood behind Jesus while He dined. She brought with her an alabaster box of ointment as a gift for Jesus.

Simon was a Pharisee who was very careful to keep the law, but he did not extend the common hospitality of the day to Jesus. Simon's servant should have stood at the door with water to wash Jesus's feet, dropped a little scented oil on his hair or burned sweet incense around his head for a short period. Nor did Simon greet Jesus with a kiss of peace. But the woman stood behind Jesus, and was overwhelmed with emotion and began to weep. When her tears fell on his feet, she loosened her hair and wiped them dry. Next she kissed His feet and anointed them with the perfume. The woman acted from a deep sense of love for Jesus. She was painfully aware of her sinful condition and wished to express her gratitude to the one who had freed her from the bondage of her sins.

For Simon this incident was extremely embarrassing. If the money to buy the ointment came as a result of the woman's sinful life, the gift was an abomination (Deut. 23:18). Untying her hair in public was very immodest, and touching one of his guests was regarded as an act of defilement. Jesus knew Simon's thoughts and thus told him this parable.

**Unmerciful Servant** This parable followed a question by Peter, "Lord how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?" (Matt.18:21). The Jewish rulers taught that man's duty was to forgive three times and no more. By stretching forgiveness to seven times, Peter had gone well beyond the Jewish tradition. Imagine Peter's surprise when Jesus replied, "Seventy times seven!" Jesus then spoke a parable about forgiveness to illustrate God's mercy, justice, and forgiving love.

In the parable the servant owed the king 10,000 talents (about \$10,000,000 or more). The amount was more than could be paid in a lifetime of work. The first servant's fellow servant owed 100 denarii to the first servant. This amount was about \$17.00, a debt that could be paid in time. Although the king forgave the first servant his enormous debt, the servant refused to extend mercy to his fellow servant.

This parable teaches that justice and mercy are equally important. As God's mercy and forgiveness have no bounds, no limits, our mercy and forgiveness of others must likewise have no bounds, no limits.

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. Justice demands that we pay the debt of our sin, but God in His mercy sent His Son to die on the cross to pay the debt for us. Forgiveness isn't cheap.
2. We are all sinners and in need of forgiveness.
3. As God has forgiven our sins, we ought to forgive those who sin against us - completely, without any blame or condemnation.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Script some circumstances/skits where someone is in need of forgiveness. Have the children act them out. Discuss the correct way to apologize and ask for forgiveness and what our response should be when asked for forgiveness, remembering how God has forgiven us for sinning against Him.

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

**"No More Condemnation!"**

## **Lesson 5**

### **The Parable of the Good Samaritan**

**Luke 10:25-37**

**INTRODUCTION** This parable followed a question by a lawyer (scribe). The lawyer asked Jesus what he had to do to inherit eternal life. Jesus asked the lawyer what was written in the law. The lawyer answered correctly - to love God and his neighbor. However, the lawyer, desiring to justify himself, continued by asking Jesus to define "neighbor."

The parable relates the story of a man traveling the road from Jerusalem to Jericho who was beaten, robbed, and left wounded on the side of the road. The city of Jerusalem is located on hills about 2500 feet above sea level. Jericho lies in the Jordan river valley near the north end of the Dead Sea which is some 1200 to 1300 feet below sea level. From Jerusalem the seventeen-mile-long road to Jericho descends 3500 feet, winding between steep and barren cliffs. In Bible times the road was sometimes called the "red" or "bloody way" due to the many bandits that preyed upon the travelers.

Although the story is about the man who was attacked, the main character is the Samaritan. To gain a full appreciation of the parable, it is necessary to understand the origin of the Samaritans and the utter disdain the Jews had for them.

In 931/30 B.C. the United Kingdom of Israel was divided after the death of Solomon into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. The northern kingdom continued to 722 B.C. Then the city of Samaria fell to Shalmaneser V, King of Assyria, after a siege of three years. As a result of this defeat, most of the people of the northern kingdom were carried away into Assyrian captivity. The Assyrians then populated the country with peoples from other conquered nations who intermarried with the Jews that were left. Thus the Samaritans were a mixed race, and the Jews did not normally associate with them.

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. The greatest commandment, Luke 10:27.
2. Everyone is our neighbor.
3. Love means helping, action.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Bring in coins, dish towels, robes, other costume pieces, ace bandages, gauze rolls, etc., and let the children act out the story. They can bandage the wounded man, load him on a "donkey" and take him to the "inn." Discuss the attitudes of the people who passed by without helping.

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

Play the "Love Your Neighbor" song from the Veggie Tales "Are You My Neighbor" - most of the children can probably sing along. :-)

## Lesson 6

**The Parable of the Friend at Midnight Luke 11:5-13**

**The Parable of the Persistent Widow Luke 18:1-8**

**INTRODUCTION** Theme: Persistence in Prayer

**The Friend at Midnight** - This parable is an illustration by Jesus to His disciples encouraging prayer. One of the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. Jesus instructed His disciples in His model prayer, then followed with this parable which teaches the value of persistence in prayer.

A man who had an unexpected visitor late at night had no food to set before his guest. He went to his neighbor's house to borrow bread but found the door barred and shut. Hospitality was very important in Palestine in New Testament times, but it was not unusual to have no bread late at night. Bread was baked by the women each day, but they made only enough to last for one day so there would be no waste. The loaves of bread were about the size of a stone that could be held in one's hand. Three of these small loaves made a meal for one person.

The homes of the poor generally had just one room which was used as sitting room, dining room, and bedroom. The floor was packed earth covered with reeds and rushes. At night the livestock was often brought in the house to prevent their theft by robbers. At one end of the room was a raised platform upon which mats were spread and used as beds for the family. Although the door to the house was left open during the day and anyone could go in and out, when the sun set, the door was closed and barred. Once the family was sleeping, anyone getting up to find a needed item would disturb the whole family.

**The Persistent Widow** - This parable tells the story of a widow who sought justice from a judge. She did not have a lawyer, nor did she have any witnesses to support her claim. Even her adversary did not appear in court. Her chances of being heard by the judge appeared hopeless. Nevertheless, due to her persistence, the judge finally heard her complaint and gave her justice.

A widow in Israel was often poor and had a difficult time. God had pledged to execute justice for the widow (Deut. 10:17-18), and had placed a curse on anyone who perverted the justice due her (Deut. 27:19). Even so, widows were generally defenseless and apt to be oppressed by those in power.

The parable of the persistent widow resembles that of the parable of the Friend at Midnight, but the friend asked his neighbor for a gift (bread), while the widow asked a judge for justice. The necessity of persistent prayer is the message of both parables.

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. We can go boldly to the throne of God in prayer because Jesus died on the cross for us. (see Hebrews 4:14-16.)
2. We are not “bothering” God when we pray persistently.
3. We do not always get what we ask for, just because we ask persistently. God knows what is best for us.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Make prayer journals. There is a lot of colored card stock in the office that can be cut in half and used for front/back covers. Place several half sheets of paper between the front and back covers, use a two hole punch and secure by tying with yarn/ribbon. Have the children decorate their front cover and then explain how to record prayers/answers. Discuss times when you or the children have prayed for a specific request for a long time.

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

“Whisper a Prayer/God Answers Prayer”



## Lesson 7

### The Parable of the Seats of Honor Luke 14:7-14 The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector Luke 18:9-14

**INTRODUCTION** Theme: Self-Righteousness and Humility

**Seats of Honor** - Large feasts on the Sabbath day were common in New Testament times although the food was prepared before the Sabbath commenced in obedience to the instructions given the Israelites in the wilderness (Ex. 16:23). The tables were arranged in the form of a U. The servants entered the open end and served the guests from the middle area which was left vacant. Around the outer edge of the tables, couches or cushions were placed upon which the guests reclined as they ate. Each couch or cushion generally held three people, with the middle seat regarded as the place of highest honor. In addition, the seats closest to the master of the feast were chief seats and greatly prized. Those of lower estate generally arrived early as they were grateful for the invitation. Those who were of higher importance and esteem, at least in their own eyes, arrived late in order to be seen by all. If one of the early arrivals took a seat that was too high a place, he might be asked to move down to make room for the one of higher honor who had arrived later. This of course would be very humiliating.

**Pharisee and Tax Collector** -The two men in this story represent the extremes of the Jewish religious and social classes of that day.

**THE PHARISEES:** This religious group was the strictest sect of the Jews (Acts 26:5). Pharisee means "separatists." The Pharisees separated themselves from those who did not strictly observe their traditions, shunning social contacts and business dealings with them. Becoming haughty and self-righteous, they divided people into two classes: themselves and the rest of the world.

**THE TAX COLLECTOR (or Publican):** The Romans required a certain amount of customs or tolls from a specified area. The right to collect these taxes was sold to the highest bidders, called publicans, who paid to Rome the required amount of taxes and then kept for themselves anything they collected above that amount. There were import and export taxes on everything that went in and out of the country: taxes for entering a walled city, market, or harbor; taxes for crossing a bridge; taxes for using roads; taxes on carts hauling merchandise; taxes on each wheel of the cart; taxes on the animal pulling the cart. These publicans were extremely unpopular, for many were dishonest and made their living by extorting high taxes from the citizens. Those publicans who were Jews were doubly despised by their fellow countrymen for selling themselves to the Romans. They were considered as sinners and renegades.

**THE PARABLE:** This parable contrasts the haughty, self-righteous attitude of the Pharisee with the humble manner of the publican. The Pharisee full of pride believed he was justified before God, for he had not only kept the law, he had gone beyond it. Yet the publican was the one who went home justified, for he humbled himself and asked for mercy.

## **TEACHING**

### **After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. Those who honor themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be honored. (Luke 14:11)
2. It is important to think of others before ourselves.
3. Jesus was humble and served others as our example.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

### **Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Using card stock, draw a picture of a u-shaped table setting with Jesus at the head of the table. See the introduction information for this lesson for a description of this seating. Make slits in two places. One near Jesus and one further away. Have the children draw other people at the table, leaving the two slotted places empty. Have the children draw a picture of themselves on a craft stick. Have them push the stick up in each of the two slots and discuss which slot the parable teaches we should sit in first and why. What does it mean to think of others before ourselves?

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

“Jesus and Others and You”

## Lesson 8

# The Parables of the Builder and the King at War

### Luke 14:25-35

Theme: The cost of discipleship

**INTRODUCTION: The Builder and the King at War** These two parables, the Builder and the King at War, are often called the twin parables because they were spoken by Jesus together and teach the same lesson - the cost of discipleship. The parables illustrate that discipleship has a price, and one needs to count the cost if he plans to follow Jesus.

The first parable concerns the building of a tower - probably a tower in a vineyard from which a watchman would guard the vineyard. The second parable pertains to a king preparing for war. Jesus had previously warned His disciples regarding the perils they would face as they preached the gospel of the kingdom. To the twelve, He said, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves..." Matt. 10:16. He also told them, "But beware of men: for they will deliver up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; And you shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake..." Matt. 10:17-18. Then He said, "And you shall be hated of all men for my name's sake..." Matt. 10:22.

To the seventy, He said, "...behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves." Luke 10:3.

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. Salvation is a gift from God; cannot earn salvation.
2. Being a disciple is not something to take lightly. It is a total commitment.
3. Following Jesus is not always easy, and the Bible promises that there will be hard times.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Borrow the cross from the front of the church. Have each child, (it make take several at a time), move it from one side of the room to the other. Discuss how hard it is to move it. Talk about what Jesus meant in Mark 8:34 when He says, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me." Discuss what "selfish ways" are and what it means to follow Jesus. Have the children draw a large open cross on a sheet of paper. Have each child list inside the cross some selfish ways they need to turn from in order to follow Jesus. Remind them we do not do this to earn our salvation. We do this as faithful servants.

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

"Obey, Obey-O"

"O-b-e-d-i-e-n-c-e"

"Trust and Obey"

## Lesson 9

### **The Parable of the Great Banquet Luke 14:15-24** **The Parable of the Marriage of the King's Son Matthew 22:1-14**

**INTRODUCTION** Theme: The Invitation of God

**The Great Banquet** In New Testament times it was common for the host to plan a feast and invite the guests. At the proper time when the supper was ready, the host then sent his servants to summon the guests. The summons to dinner was to be honored as though it were a command, and to refuse the hospitality was an insult.

In this parable the invited guests refused the summons of the servants by offering various excuses. As a result the host sent his servants into the city streets to bring in the poor, maimed, blind, and lame. When there was still room at the feast, he sent his servants to the country to bring in more guests.

The general meaning of the parable is clear. God sent his servant forth offering the blessings of the kingdom. Those who refuse the invitation and reject Jesus will be excluded from the kingdom. Those who hear the message and receive it will be part of the kingdom, and will enjoy the presence of Jesus Christ.

Specifically, the parable teaches that the Jews who were God's chosen people received the original invitation to the kingdom. When they refused the blessings offered by God and rejected His Son, the invitation or gospel was then extended to the Gentiles.

**The King's Son** The parable of the Marriage of the King's son is similar to the parable of the Great Banquet, yet there are differences. The two parables were spoken on different occasions. The Great Banquet was told during a meal at the house of a Pharisee. The Marriage of the King's Son was told at the temple during Jesus's last week on earth. When Jesus related the story of the great supper, the Pharisees and lawyers were watching Jesus, hoping to entrap Him. When Jesus spoke the parable of the marriage of the king's son, the Jews were actively plotting to kill Him.

In this story, the "certain man" who represents God invited the guests to his feast as a friend. The guests simply refused the invitation. In the Marriage of the King's Son, the host is the king. His feast is his son's marriage supper and, therefore, not to be disregarded. Some of the invited guests were merely indifferent to the invitation, but others rejected it with violence. The king avenged this insult by sending his armies to destroy the murderers and burn their city. The servants of the king then went to the highways to find guests for the feast as did the servants in the great supper. When the king arrived at the feast, he discovered one of the guests was not dressed in suitable wedding garments. The man was bound and cast into outer darkness. The custom in some societies was for a king or wealthy host to supply each guest at a feast with clothes made especially for the occasion. The garment was a vest that could be placed over the person's clothes or a mantle that was hung on the shoulders. Refusing the gift would be a sign of contempt and a gross insult to the host, and in some instances worthy of death.

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. God has invited us to be a part of His kingdom.
2. Some people will make excuses instead of accepting God's invitation.
3. We must accept God's invitation if we want to be part of His kingdom.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Make "Wedding Invitations" to the marriage feast in heaven. What does God have planned for us there? What must we do to "RSVP" - accept the invitation?

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

**"Whosoever Calls Upon the Name of the Lord"**

Worship combined

teach-young / craft-ol (15 min x 2)

Craft-ol / teach-young **Lesson 10**

**The Parable of the Lost Sheep Matt. 18:12-14; Luke 15:3-7**

**The Parable of the Lost Coin Luke 15:8-10**

**The Parable of the Prodigal Son Luke 15:11-32**

**INTRODUCTION** Theme: Repentance

**The Lost Sheep-** The shepherd in the parable represents Jesus who is the good shepherd (John 10:1-18). The shepherd was a familiar figure in Palestine. His equipment consisted of a *rod*, *staff*, *water-skin*, *scrip* and *sling*. The *rod* was like a shepherd's crook, used for walking and catching wandering sheep. At night the shepherd held his rod across the entrance to the sheepfold, and each sheep had to pass under it. The shepherd could then quickly inspect each sheep as it passed under the rod in to the fold. The *staff* was a sturdy stick about three or four feet long with a knob of wood on the top. This was the shepherd's weapon with which he could beat off wild animals or thieves. The *water-skin* contained water for the shepherd and the *scrip* held his food. The *sling* was used to drop a stone in front of a straying sheep to turn it back to the herd.

In New Testament times sheep were used for their wool and seldom for eating. As a result the shepherd knew his sheep and called them by name. Likewise, the sheep knew their master's voice and responded to the call of no other. The shepherd walked in front of the sheep, leading them, and risking his life for them. He was the first to encounter the dangers - wild animals, robbers, dangerous rocky areas. At night the shepherd laid across the entrance to the fold, for there was no gate; thus he was the door to the sheepfold. The shepherd had to produce the fleece of any sheep that was missing. Therefore, when a sheep strayed from the flock, the shepherd tracked and searched until he found it, dead or alive. When the sheep was found alive, there was great rejoicing.

**The Lost Coin** The lost coin like the lost sheep represents the lost sinner. However, unlike the lost sheep that wanders and strays by itself, the coin was lost because someone lost it. It is tragic when one sins, but it is even worse when one causes another to sin. In addition, the sheep knows when it is lost, but the coin did not know it was lost just as some people are unaware of their lost condition. In both parables there is great joy and rejoicing in heaven over the repentance of one lost sinner.

\* **The Prodigal Son** In these three parables Jesus teaches that God seeks the sinner, waiting and watching for him to come and partake of the blessings of the kingdom, and that there is great joy in heaven over one sinner who repents. Jesus called the publicans (tax collectors) and sinners to repent, and He called the Pharisees and scribes to accept the sinner and rejoice in his salvation. Unlike the two previous parables, this one does not end with the joyful celebration. The father had an elder son who was angry and envious of the honor bestowed upon his brother. As the younger son, the prodigal, symbolized the publicans and sinners, the elder son represented the self-righteous Pharisees who would rather see punishment for sinners than forgiveness. The elder son was a good man, but his goodness was hard and cold, without love and mercy. The loving father, the real hero of the story, is a reflection of the merciful God.

Justin

Olivia  
CRA

## TEACHING

After the lesson, each child should know:

1. God cares about every lost person. John 3:16.
2. There is great rejoicing in heaven when just one person repents.
3. We should welcome new believers, not judge them - we all have sinned.

## ART/CRAFT STATION

### Experiences/Craft Suggestion:

Use one of those plastic tubes with little objects hidden in it (e.g. "Find It" tube, available at stores like Resource Island) and have the children work together to find all the objects. If you don't have access to one of those, fill a shoe box with dry beans and hide a coin, a plastic sheep and a plastic person. Blindfold the children and have them search in the box for each item. You could put other items in the beans to make it more difficult for the older kids. You could time them and see who accomplishes the task the quickest. Discuss how diligently each person in the parables looked for their lost items and how they rejoiced when they found them. Talk about how God cares about each lost person and rejoices when they are "found."

WORSHIP TIME: → 10-15 minute

"No More Condemnation"

All in All  
Lord, You are...



March 19th

## Lesson 11

### The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree Luke 13:6-9 The Parable of the Two Sons Matt. 21:23-32

#### INTRODUCTION Theme: Repentance

**Barren Fig Tree:** Fig trees were important in Palestine and symbolic of Israel's prosperity. Fig trees are cultivated all over the land of Palestine and especially in the mountain areas. The trees grow generally 10 to 15 feet high, and their thick foliage provides dense shade in the summer. In warm climates such as Israel, the fig tree produces two crops each year, an early one which is ripe about June, and a later, more important one which is ripe about August.

By December the leaves of the fig tree have shed and the trees are bare until the end of March when the leaf buds begin to appear. At the same time, tiny figs begin to grow. When they reach the size of a cherry, most of them fall to the ground. These "unripe" and "immature figs" are called taksh and may be and are eaten as they fall. Some of these immature figs remain on the tree, ripen to perfection about June, and are known as the "early figs" or "first-ripe" (Isa. 28:4; Jer. 24:2; Hosea 9:10). The first-ripe figs are greatly desired for their delicate flavor (Micah 7:1). These first-ripe figs grow on the old wood of the tree, while the second crop which ripens in August grows upon the new spring shoots of the tree.

The fig tree in this parable was planted in a vineyard. For three years the owner had sought fruit upon the tree and had been disappointed - the tree was barren. He told the vinedresser to cut the tree down, for not only was the tree unproductive, it occupied space which might be more profitably used. In addition, the tree took nourishment from the soil needed for the grapevines. But the vinedresser pleaded for one more year to care for the tree, and if it did not bear then, he would cut it down.

**The Two Sons** The parable of the two sons followed the questioning of the authority of Jesus by the chief priests and elders. Jesus countered their question by one of His own - was the baptism of John from heaven or men? The chief priests could not answer the question. If they said, "from heaven," then they would be condemned for not believing John. If they said, "from men," they feared the multitude who believed John was a prophet. Jesus then spoke the parable. Although this parable is a simple story, the application and meaning are significant. The first son, who refused his father, but repented, represents the publicans (tax collectors) and sinners of Jesus' day who openly transgressed the laws of God. However, when John the Baptist preached the baptism of repentance, these social and moral outcasts believed and repented, doing the will of the Father. The second son, who agreed to work but did not, represents the religious leaders, chief priests, and elders. They were proud of their righteousness and works of the law. Nevertheless, they did not believe the preaching of John, and when they saw the repentance of the publicans and sinners, they still did not believe. They professed zeal for the Father with an outward display of obedience, but inwardly they refused the Word of God.

B  
Baptist

## TEACHING

After the lesson, each child should know:

1. If we are following Jesus, we will bear fruit (see the fruits of the Spirit in Gal. 5:22).
2. God is merciful and patient, but there will come a time for judgment for the unrepentant.
3. Obedience is more than just saying you will obey, it involves the action of obedience!

## ART/CRAFT STATION

Experiences/Craft Suggestion:

Fold a paper into four quadrants. Have the children draw a fig tree in two quadrants. Glue raisins (as pretend figs) on one fig tree to show a fruitful tree. Have the children draw a son in two of the quadrants - one relaxing while saying he will work in the field and the other actually working in the field.

## WORSHIP TIME:

"Trust and Obey"

"Obey Obey-O"

"The Fruit of the Spirit" by JoLinda Crump

He knows my name

(Fruit of the Spirit - Game) Justin

March 12<sup>th</sup>

Prayer - Encl

## Lesson 12

**The Parable of the Rich Fool Luke 12:13-21**

**The Parable of the Watchful Servants Luke 12:35-40**

**The Parable of the Ten Virgins Matthew 25:1-13**

**INTRODUCTION** Theme: The Importance of Preparing for the Future

**The Rich Fool** This parable is a story about a rich farmer and his covetousness. Apparently the farmer was honest and industrious. He gained his wealth from the productivity of his land which was a blessing from God. Then one year his harvest was so great he did not know where to store it. He devised a plan to hoard his possessions in barns and enjoy a life of comfort and pleasure, but suddenly and unexpectedly death called and his soul was required. Barns in Palestine were generally caves and underground pits or cisterns where grain could be stored. The storage pits were carefully prepared and dry, preserving the grain for long periods. Notice in this parable the rich man's use of "I" and "my." His thoughts were only of himself. His surplus could have been shared with his neighbors and the poor. He had forgotten the two great commandments - "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" and "love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. 22:37-39).

Josh  
Teach

**The Watchful Servants** We do not know the hour the Son of Man comes. In this parable Jesus presented to his disciples two illustrations for watchfulness. The first illustration promises a joyful occasion, the second is a warning of impending calamity. The meaning of the parable is clear. The disciples and all believers are told to watch and wait for the Lord's return which involves both a great promise and a warning. To those who are prepared, the coming of Jesus will be a joyous event. Jesus, like the master in the parable, will reward those servants who are faithful and watching. For those who are unprepared, Jesus' coming will be sudden and unexpected, like a thief who breaks in and brings disaster.

**The Ten Virgins** The parable of the ten virgins is a story based on the wedding customs of Palestine in New Testament times. This parable is a description of the festive occasion known as "bringing home the bride." However, the story does not concern the bride, but rather the young virgins who were part of the wedding party. Young women, virgins, prepared the bride at her home to receive her bridegroom. The exact time of his arrival was unknown, and in this case, he was delayed. When the bridegroom did arrive to claim his bride, the joyous procession to the groom's home began. Since the festivities occurred at night, the attendants of the bride and groom carried torches for illumination. The lamps or torches were made of oil drenched rags inserted in a copper vessel which was attached to a long pole. The lamp contained very little oil, and a fresh supply had to be added frequently. The reserve supply of oil was carried in another vessel in the other hand of the torchbearer.

The parable represents Jesus as the bridegroom and his return. Those who are wise will be prepared for Jesus' coming.

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. We do not know when Jesus will return.
- ② We need to prepare by storing our treasure in heaven, not on earth.
3. We have an individual responsibility to be ready when Jesus comes.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

### **Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Use the game "Jenga" – the one where you pull out blocks one at a time, never knowing when the whole thing will collapse. The Hersheys have a similar version called "Tumbling Towers" you could borrow. Have the children take turns removing a block. Discuss how you feel - nervous, excited, etc. Discuss how people feel about Jesus returning. If you're ready, you are excited and look forward to it. If you aren't ready it is something you are nervous about and dread.

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

"Where You Go, I Go"

"The Fruit of the Spirit" by JoLinda Crump

March 25<sup>th</sup>

## Lesson 13

### The Parable of the Pounds Luke 19:11-27 The Parable of the Talents Matthew 25:14-30

#### INTRODUCTION Theme: Individual Responsibility

**The Pounds** In the parable of the pounds a nobleman went to a far country to receive a kingdom. He gave each of his ten servants a pound (*mina* – approximately 100 *drachmas* or \$17.00 - \$20.00, the amount of wages for 100 days). He instructed the servants to use the money for trade. Meanwhile, the citizens who hated the nobleman sent ambassadors after him with the message that they did not want him to reign over them.

When the nobleman returned, he called his servants for an accounting. The first and second servants each reported a profit and were rewarded. The third returned the pound, criticizing the nobleman and giving excuses for not gaining a profit. The nobleman ordered that the pound be taken from the unprofitable servant. Then he commanded that his enemies who rebelled against him be slain before him.

Jesus spoke the parable of the pounds because the multitude following him supposed the kingdom was about to appear. They expected Jesus to receive a crown at Jerusalem. They did not as yet understand that his kingdom was a spiritual kingdom. The parable was meant to teach that there would be an interim between Jesus' first and second comings and that patience and faithful service were necessary during his absence.

**The Talents** The parable of the talents follows directly the one of the ten virgins in Matthew. While the parable of the ten virgins teaches the importance of watching and preparing for the judgment, the parable of the talents is an exhortation to the followers of Jesus to use the gifts entrusted to them during his absence. A talent in New Testament times was not a coin, but a weight – a sum of money weighing a talent and varying in amount in different nations. The value of these talents in this story is not known, but a talent of silver could run from \$1,000.00 to \$2,000.00. A talent of gold would naturally be much more.

When the master returned, he called his servants for an accounting. The first two used their talents well and gained a profit. The master was pleased, commended and rewarded them. The third servant, however, buried his talent and began to make excuses for his neglect. In addition he criticized his lord. The master ordered that the talent be taken from the unprofitable servant, and that he be cast into outer darkness.

## TEACHING

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. Jesus has given each of his followers gifts and opportunities to be used in the service of the kingdom.
2. Each of us is responsible to use our gifts and opportunities as faithful servants.
3. There is joy in serving Jesus!

## ART/CRAFT STATION

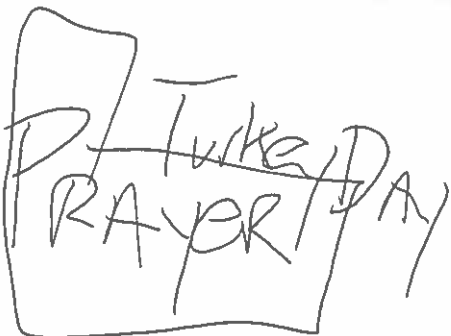
**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Have the children discuss different people in our church and how they use their gifts. Don't focus on just the "up front" people, but help them see people who work behind the scenes. Have them draw a mural of ways people serve Jesus at Cornerstone and in Lebanon that can be hung in the hallway outside the sanctuary.

## WORSHIP TIME:

"Yes, Lord, Yes, Lord, Yes, Yes, Lord"

"The Fruit of the Spirit" by JoLinda Crump



# **Lesson 1**

## **JESUS'S TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM**

**Matt. 21:1-11, 14-17; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:12-19**

### **INTRODUCTION**

When Jesus journeyed for the last time to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, He was ready to complete his work on Earth. For three years, He had taught the people, preaching the gospel of the kingdom and demonstrating with signs and wonders that He was the Messiah, the Anointed One, promised by the Old Testament prophets. Soon after reaching the city, Jesus told his disciples what was to come--that He would suffer, die, and then triumph over death by rising on the third day--but they did not understand (Luke 18:31-34).

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. How Jesus rode into Jerusalem.
2. How Jesus was received as he rode into Jerusalem.
3. The significance of Jesus weeping as he looks out over the city (one of only two occurrences mentioned in the Scriptures).

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the people honored him with words of praise and by laying palm branches at his donkey's feet. Talk to the children about ways we can honor Jesus and have them create a giant palm tree out of craft paper. Have the children cut out palm branches and write down different ways to honor Jesus on each of the branches. Paste the branches onto the giant palm tree.

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

Any songs with "Hosanna" in the lyrics.



## **Lesson 2**

# **THE MONEY CHANGERS**

**MATT. 21:12-13; MARK 11:15-19; LUKE 19:45-48, 21:37-38**

### **INTRODUCTION**

After Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the first day of the week on a donkey, He then entered the temple. Upon entering, Jesus is angered by what He sees and reminds the people of what the Lord said about honoring His house (Jeremiah 7:11).

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. What Jesus saw when He entered the temple and how He responded.
2. Where Jesus went every night after teaching at the temple.
3. What the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the leaders among the people tried to do and what kept them from doing it.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Draw a simple line picture of a temple and label it "God's House"; then make a photocopy of it for each student. Next, draw small cutout pictures of different items — some that belong in God's house and some that don't. For example, draw sacred things like people praying or worshipping, a heart, and a Bible. Draw negative items from the Bible story such as moneybags, cattle, and people selling items from their tables. Photocopy these small drawings until each student has several. To begin, tell students to place all the items in the temple. Then, on the count of three, give students one minute to take out all the items that don't belong. Explain why certain items stay and certain items should be taken out at the end of the activity.

Next, teach students about treating their own bodies as temples by having them create life-size stencils of their own bodies, which they will then "fill" with pictures of healthy items and habits. Have each student lie down on a long stretch of butcher paper while you trace his/her outline. Cut out the outline and let each student decorate it with drawings of healthy items and habits.

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

Since this lesson is partly about treating the house of the Lord with respect, share with the students that how we behave during worship time says a lot about what we think about God. Talk about how the words that we sing should match the way that we act and treat each other. Have the students talk about respectful and disrespectful ways to join in the worship time in class. Then, take some song requests while reminding the students about being respectful. Always remember, we are in God's house!

## **Lesson 3**

# **PAYING TAXES TO CAESAR**

**MATT. 22:15-22; MARK 12:13-17; LUKE 20:19-26**

### **INTRODUCTION**

As Jesus continued to heal and teach people, the animosity of the Jewish religious leaders toward him intensified. The Pharisees and the Herodians were two key groups who plotted against Jesus. The Pharisees were a religious sect of the Jews and the most numerous and popular. Although they strictly followed the Law of Moses at first, through the years they added their traditions, and by New Testament times their spiritual zeal was focused on the outward correctness of the law, rather than sincere obedience to the will of God. The Herodians were not a religious sect but a political party, which supported the ruling dynasty of Herod the Great, apparently preferring to be ruled by the family of Herod rather than by the Romans. One tactic the leaders attempted was to ensnare Jesus in his talk.

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. Pharisees and other enemies of Jesus wanted to get Him in trouble, so they tried asking Him a trick question.
2. What did Jesus know about the men who flattered him?
3. Jesus had them bring him a coin, and taught them about what belongs to Caesar, and what belongs to God.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Create a list of yes or no questions about obeying authority. For example, "If a teacher asks you to raise your hand when answering a question, should you do it?" Some of the questions can be about parents, teachers, church leaders, etc. Some can be about whether to obey God. Some can suggest a conflict between what God would want us to do and what someone else might ask us to do; these types of questions will help students conclude that if there is a conflict, God always comes first. Divide students into two groups and play a game where you ask the teams to answer each question one by one. Give each team a point or a small treat for each question answered correctly.

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

"He's Got the Whole World in His Hands"

**Lesson 4**  
**Condemnation of the Pharisees:**  
**the Seven Woes**  
**Matt. 23; Mark 12:38-40; Luke 20:45-47**

**INTRODUCTION**

Jesus's humble life and teachings were opposed to the proud, self-righteous attitude and manner of life of the Pharisees, the most numerous and popular sect of the Jews, and Jesus was "grieved for the hardness of their hearts" (Mark 3:5). While Jesus taught, "The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks" (Luke 6:45), He also recognized and made clear the hypocrisy among the Pharisees. In his last public discussion, just days before his crucifixion, he pronounced seven woes against the scribes and Pharisees.

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. What were the seven woes?
2. Jesus commanded the people should obey but not behave like the Pharisees.
3. Jesus said the Pharisees did everything not for God, but for men.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

**“What’s in Your Cup/Heart?” Puppet Craft**

What you will need: 16 oz foam cups, yarn, stick-on eyes, markers, paper, and glue.

What to do:

1. Before class make puppet hair by winding yarn around your four fingers about 25 times. Pull it off your fingers keeping the yarn in the same shape and tie the yarn together in the middle with another piece of yarn. Cut the looped ends to make a pompom.
2. In class have your children glue the pompom to the bottom of the cup for the hair, stick on eyes, and draw on a face, or cut faces out from construction paper.
3. Punch a small hole in the face for the nose. Children will stick their hands in the cup and put their pointer fingers through the hole for the nose.
4. Print out the “What’s in your Cup?” sayings onto colorful paper and cut them out. In class have your children glue them to the rim of the glass.
5. As you work, remind your children that Jesus compared the Pharisees to a cup that was dirty inside. Ask them to think of some bad things that Jesus doesn’t want us to have in our hearts — greed, envy, lying, laziness, bad words, etc., and have them think of good things Jesus would want us to have in our hearts such as love, kindness, helpfulness, patience, etc.

As an alternative, have the children make three-dimensional hearts instead of cups.

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

**“Down in My Heart/I’ve Got the Joy”**

**Lesson 4**  
**Condemnation of the Pharisees:**  
**the Seven Woes**  
**Matt. 23; Mark 12:38-40; Luke 20:45-47**

**INTRODUCTION**

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4. Print out the “What’s in your Cup?” sayings onto colorful paper and cut them out. In class have your children glue them to the rim of the glass.
5. As you work, remind your children that Jesus compared the Pharisees to a cup that was dirty inside. Ask them to think of some bad things that Jesus doesn’t want us to have in our hearts — greed, envy, lying, laziness, bad words, etc., and have them think of good things Jesus would want us to have in our hearts such as love, kindness, helpfulness, patience, etc.

As an alternative, have the children make three-dimensional hearts instead of cups.

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

**“Down in My Heart/I’ve Got the Joy”**



**Lesson 5**  
**The Second Coming of Jesus Christ:**  
**The Separation of the Sheep and Goats**  
**Matt. 25:31-46**

**INTRODUCTION**

In Jesus's last public discussion, just days before his crucifixion, he pronounced seven woes against the scribes and Pharisees (Matt. 23). He then left the temple, and with his disciples, he went to the Mount of Olives outside the city of Jerusalem and sat down (Matt. 24:1-3). When his disciples asked him about the end of the age, Jesus answered by warning his disciples not to be deceived by false prophets. He then prophesied the destruction and persecution to come and discussed his second coming and the final judgment. First, He told his disciples that only the Father knew the day and hour of Jesus's second coming (Matt. 24:36). He described the suddenness of His coming to emphasize the necessity of preparedness (Matt. 24:37-44). He then spoke three parables: the parable of the faithful and unfaithful servants (45-51), the parable of the ten virgins (25:1-13), and the parable of the talents (25:14-30). Last of all, He described the scene of the final judgment.

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. When Jesus sits on his throne, He will separate all people from all nations, one by one, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.
2. Who will Jesus place to his right and who to his left?
3. What will Jesus say to the people on his right and the people on his left?

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

You will need a bag of macaroni and a bag of candy such as M&Ms that can be easily divided into pieces. Give each child a handful of macaroni and a handful of M&Ms all mixed together. Have the students separate the macaroni from the M&Ms, placing the M&Ms to their right and the macaroni to their left. Explain how this compares to what Jesus will do the final judgment during. Finally, let the students eat the M&Ms.

**WORSHIP TIME:**

“No More Condemnation”

## **Lesson 6**

# **THE LORD'S SUPPER**

**Matt. 26:17-35; Mark 14:12-31; Luke 22:7-38**

### **INTRODUCTION**

For several hundred years, from the time they left Egypt to the New Testament times, the Jews had celebrated the Passover. In obedience to the law, Jesus and his disciples journeyed to Jerusalem to observe this feast that commemorated the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage. Now, Jesus as the Lamb of God was about to be slain as the Paschal (Passover) Lamb in order to deliver all who would receive him from the bondage of sin. On the sixth day (Thursday), after sunset, Jesus and his disciples gathered together to celebrate the Passover Feast, an evening that would become known as the Last Supper. It was then that Jesus revealed a new covenant — that His blood would cover all sins.

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. Jesus told the disciples He would not eat or drink again until when?
2. What is the significance of the bread and wine, and what were Jesus' instructions?
3. What did Jesus say about the one who would betray him and the one who would deny him?

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

### **Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Have the students assemble the ingredients to make unleavened bread. If there's time, use the kitchen to make the bread. If not, bring along some unleavened bread and explain its significance to the Passover.

### **WORSHIP TIME:**

"Bread and Wine" by Smith and Holder

**Lesson 7**  
**THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE**  
**PETER'S DENIAL**

**Matthew 26:31-75; Mark 14:27-72; Luke 22:24-62**

**INTRODUCTION**

Late Thursday night following the Passover feast as the sixth day continued, Jesus and his disciples (minus Judas) sang a hymn, then left the city of Jerusalem. They passed over the Brook Kidron and continued on to the Garden of Gethsemane. Here Jesus admonished his disciples to watch and pray while He sought comfort and aid from his Father in heaven. That very night, in the garden, under the cloak of darkness, Judas led a crowd of Roman soldiers and officers from the chief priests, Pharisees, scribes, and elders to arrest the Son of Man. Just as Jesus foretold, one of his own, Judas, betrayed him, and another, Simon Peter, denied knowing him after Jesus was arrested.

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. How did Jesus pray on the Mount of Olives?
2. What did Jesus say to Judas? The crowd?
3. What happened when Jesus's disciples realized he was about to be arrested?
4. After Jesus was arrested and before the rooster crowed, Simon Peter denied knowing Jesus three times.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Jesus asked his disciples to watch and pray. Brainstorm with the students about how we should watch and pray. Write down different ideas on folded slips of colored construction paper and use the pieces to create a "garden" on poster board.

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

Sing songs about prayer or the innocence of Jesus

## **Lesson 8**

# **CAIAPHAS AND THE JEWISH TRIAL**

**Matt. 26:57, 59-68; Mark 14:53, 55-65; Luke 22:54, 63-65**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Caiaphas Was appointed high priest by the Romans and served in that position from A.D. 18-36. As the son-in-law of Annas, the former high priest, he was part of the ruling dynasty of high priests founded by Annas. Caiaphas advised the Sanhedrin that "one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not... Being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation" (John 11:49-51). Thus, two days before the Passover, the Sanhedrin assembled at the palace of Caiaphas and conspired to take Jesus secretly and kill him. They agreed not to destroy Jesus during the feast lest there be an uproar among the people (Matt. 26:3-5; Mark 14:1-2; Luke 22:1-2). Shortly afterward, however, Judas bargained with the rulers to betray Jesus to them. After his examination before Annas, Jesus was taken for trial to Caiaphas and the assembled chief priests, elders, and scribes (the Sanhedrin). It was still nighttime and the sixth day, sometime early Friday morning before dawn. Caiaphas, as high priest and president of the Sanhedrin, presided over the proceedings, all of which were illegal under Jewish law. It was not lawful for the Sanhedrin to try a capital offense, for only the Romans had the authority to impose the death sentence.

Furthermore, the council decreed death to Jesus before He had been formally accused of any crime or before witnesses had testified against him. It was the judges' responsibility to carefully guard the accused and to be impartial and unprejudiced, but some of these judges took part in the actual arrest of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. The council sought to obtain the testimony of false witnesses. The trial took place while it was still night, with the guilty verdict pronounced during the night session rather than the following day in another session. Jesus was adjured (placed under oath), which forced him to testify. The morning session of the Sanhedrin was held on a feast day, and the verdict was again rendered without waiting the required interval of at least one day. Both verdicts (those rendered at the night and day sessions) were pronounced without any legal evidence.

## **TEACHING**

After the lesson, each child should know:

1. The counsel produced many false witnesses against Jesus.
2. When Caiaphas placed Jesus under oath and forced him to answer whether he was the son of God, Jesus answered truthfully.
3. What made the trial illegal?

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

### **Experience/Craft Suggestion**

The High Priest and Sanhedrin called people into Jesus's trial who were willing to lie about Him. Ask for a volunteer to play a defendant on trial, and take several students aside and give them lies to say about the defendant in front of the class. Have the lies be really outrageous (i.e., "I saw Johnny steal a jug of milk from Turkey Hill," "I saw him, too. He was wearing purple sunglasses and riding a hippo," etc), but be careful not to be spiteful or hurt anyone's feelings. Ask the students whether lies someone says about Jesus or us have any bearing on the truth of God and His Word.

Give each student a sheet of white paper. Give them two pieces of masking tape, and have them make a cross on the paper. Then have them scribble (if they're young), or write lies (if they're older) all over the paper, including on top of the tape. Then have them carefully remove the tape to reveal that the cross (the truth of Jesus) isn't changed by our sin or by lies.

## **WORSHIP SONG SUGGESTION**

"Jesus Died for You and Me"

"You are My King"



## **Lesson 9**

# **PILATE AND THE ROMAN TRIAL**

**Matt. 27:11-31; Mark 15:2-20; Luke 23:2,3 and 18-25, John 18:29-19:16**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Sanhedrin had charged Jesus with blasphemy against God, a sin punishable by death under the Law of Moses, but only the Roman governor had the authority to administer the death penalty. Pontius Pilate did not believe in God nor would he punish Jesus for breaking the Jewish Law. The Sanhedrin made their case against Jesus in the Roman court, accusing him of treason – because he called himself the King of the Jews.

Jesus was interviewed by Pilate, sent to Herod Antipas (who killed John the Baptist), and then sent him back to Pilate who then gave the crowd the choice to release Jesus or Barabbas. The angry mob yells, “Crucify him!” and Pilate washed his hands of the situation.

Throughout the story of the Roman trial, Jesus has several interesting interactions with Pilate. They talk about truth (John 18:38) and Pilate marvels at Jesus (Matt 27:12-14). Jesus tells Pilate that all the authority he has comes from above (Jn 19:7-11). Pilate’s wife has a dream and tells him not to have anything to do with Jesus (Matt 27:19). Though Pilate finds no charge against Jesus, he allows the Jews to crucify him.

It’s easy to feel confused or overwhelmed by all the different people that Jesus got passed around to for his trial. However, all of these steps were to fulfill prophecy. The Jewish form of execution was stoning, but the prophecy said that Jesus would be crucified. He had to be convicted by the Romans. Ultimately, God accomplishes his will - even when things seem wrong, complex, and confusing.

## **TEACHING**

After the lesson, each child should know:

1. Pontius Pilate found Jesus innocent.
2. Jesus came to bear witness to the truth and Pilate marveled at him.
3. Everything that happens on earth is subject to the Father's power (Jn 18:38).

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

### **Experience/Craft Suggestion**

Create a craft that utilizes the symbolism of a caterpillar going into a cocoon and becoming a butterfly. The lesson being that what looks like death often produces life.

## **WORSHIP SONG SUGGESTION**

"Thank you Jesus"

Themes: Jesus is innocent, crucified, God is in control.

## **Lesson 10**

# **THE CRUCIFIXION**

**Matt. 27:32-44; Mark 15:22-32; Luke 23:33-43, John 19:17-24**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Jesus's death on the cross is one of the key stories of the Christian faith. There are many details and dimensions to the story. Here are a few to focus on. First, Jesus's death was painful. He was executed; nails were driven into his hands and feet, it was very difficult to breathe, he would be very thirsty, and face fever and infection. Many prophecies were fulfilled during the crucifixion: betrayed for thirty pieces of silver (Zech 11:12-13), his garments were divided and they lots cast for his tunic (Ps 22:18), his side was pierced (Zech 12:10), but none of his bones were broken (Ps 34:20).

Second, many strange events occurred at the time of Jesus's death – supernatural darkness, veil of the temple torn in two, a great earthquake, and saints came out of the graves. These events were miraculous and very unusual. They are rich with symbolism, testifying to who Jesus is. He is the first born of the dead (Col 1:18). All these things convinced the witnesses that “Truly this was the Son of God” (Matt 27:54).

Finally, Jesus accomplished his mission. Before his death, he said, “It is finished” (Jn 19:30, Luke 23:46). The crucifixion was not an accident, though it was painful. It was purposeful. Every detail was set by the Father. We don't need to be discouraged by the crucifixion. This is the way that God chose to save the world. Jesus accomplished the mission; it was for this reason that he came to earth (1 Pet 1:18-19).

## **TEACHING**

After the lesson, each child should know:

1. Jesus died a painful death on the cross.
2. Many strange events occurred when Jesus died.
3. Jesus accomplished his mission.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

### **Experience/Craft Suggestion**

Make a craft or create a simulation about the strange events that happened – supernatural darkness, tearing of the temple veil, earthquake, and saints rising from the dead. All of these events were shocking and unusual. They bore witness to the fact that “Truly this was the Son of God” (Matt 27:54).

## **WORSHIP SONG SUGGESTION**

“The Wonderful Cross”

# **Lesson 11**

## **THE RESURRECTION: THE FIRST 4 APPEARANCES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

After Jesus's death, Joseph of Arimathaea asked Pilate if he could bury Jesus. He prepared the body – wrapping it in a clean linen cloth and he laid it in his own tomb. Jewish rulers requested for a guard to be placed at the tomb to ensure that no one would steal the body. Jesus was taken down from the cross late Friday afternoon, he lay in the tomb on Saturday, and early Sunday morning he rose from the grave!

Women came to anoint Jesus's body with sweet spices and they found the tomb empty. They ran for Peter and John. Jesus appeared several times to people before his ascension. First he appeared to Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9-11, Jn 20:11-18), then to a group of women (Mt 28:9-10, Lk 24:9-11), next to Peter (Lk 24:34, 1 Cor 15:5), and finally to some disciples walking on the road to Emmaus (Mk 16:12-13, Lk 24:13-35). Each time he appeared was different, but overall his message was one of comfort – he told them not to be afraid and he showed them his hands and his feet. Ultimately, Jesus appears to speak about the truth of who He is and the power of the gospel story for those who believe.

## **TEACHING**

After the lesson, each child should know:

1. Jesus rose from the dead!
2. He appeared to people.
3. He told them not to be afraid and taught them about the Truth.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

### **Experience/Craft Suggestion**

Something that “appears”. Like a trick...Color marker designs, then color over it with black crayon. Then write the verse by scratching off the black crayon; the color will appear from underneath.

## **WORSHIP SONG SUGGESTION**

“Up From the Grave He Arose” (have the students sit while singing the verses quietly, then jump up to sing the chorus with loud voices!)

## **Lesson 12**

# **THE RESSURECTION: THE 5<sup>TH</sup>, 6<sup>TH</sup>, & 7<sup>TH</sup> APPEARANCES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The fifth appearance of Jesus (Mk 16:14, Luke 24:36-43, Jn 20:19-25) occurred when the disciples were together behind locked doors because they feared the Jews. Jesus said, "Peace be with you," and showed them his hands/feet. He ate fish with them and opened their minds to the scriptures about him. He commissioned them by saying, "As the Father sent me, so I have sent you."

The sixth appearance was only a week later (Jn 20:26-31). Simon was not with the disciples the last time Jesus appeared and though they told him about Jesus, he did not believe. Jesus came again and specifically addressed Thomas. He invited Thomas to touch his wounds and told him to "Stop doubting and believe."

The seventh appearance happened on the Sea of Galilee when some of the disciples were fishing (Jn 21:1-14). They had not caught anything when a person on the shore told them to cast the net on the right side of the boat. They caught so many fish that the nets tore. Immediately Peter exclaimed "It is the Lord!" He jumped out of the boat and swam to shore.

## **TEACHING**

After the lesson, each child should know:

1. Jesus came when the disciples were afraid (5<sup>th</sup> appearance).
2. Jesus came when one disciple doubted (6<sup>th</sup> appearance).
3. Jesus came when the disciples were empty handed/unsuccessful (7<sup>th</sup> appearance).

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

### **Experience/Craft Suggestion**

Bring costumes for the students (sheets, towels, lengths of cloth are fine) to dress up as the disciples. Have one student dress up as the risen Jesus (in addition to the robes, use makeup to make marks for the places where the nails would have marked his hands and feet.) Have the students pretend to hunker down, afraid because Jesus was dead. Then have "Jesus" enter, and encourage the kids to show all the emotions that might have been displayed (shock, surprise, disbelief, curiosity, celebration, worship).

## **WORSHIP SONG SUGGESTION**

"Up From the Grave He Arose" (have the students sit while singing the verses quietly, then jump up to sing the chorus with loud voices!)



## **Lesson 13**

# **THE RESURRECTION: THE 8<sup>TH</sup>, 9<sup>TH</sup>, & 10<sup>TH</sup> APPEARANCES; THE ASCENSION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The eighth appearance occurred on a mountain in Galilee (Matt 28:16-20, Mk 16:15-16, Lk 24:46-47). The disciples saw Jesus and worshipped him. He gave them the Great Commission, to "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." He told them he would always be with them.

The ninth appearance is only mentioned by the Apostle Paul (1 Cor 15:7). He says that Jesus visited his earthly brother James (Matt 13:55). According to John, Jesus's half-brother did not believe in him before his death, but he later joined the apostles (Acts 1:14) and became prominent in the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:13).

The tenth appearance was Jesus' final appearance (Lk 24:44-53, Acts 1:3-12). Jesus took the disciples to the Mount of Olives. He opened their minds to the scriptures and told them that all the things written must be fulfilled. He said that they would be His witnesses. Then Jesus blessed them and ascended to the right hand of God (Mk 16:19).

## **TEACHING**

After the lesson, each child should know:

1. Jesus appeared to tell the disciples to preach the good news.
2. Jesus appeared to his unbelieving brother.
3. Jesus ascended to the right hand of God.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

### **Experience/Craft Suggestion**

Consider an activity surrounding the idea of being “witnesses.” Create a skit or a funny scenario and have the kids report what they “witnessed.” Ask them to describe the details of the situation. Then ask one of them to describe what the disciples “witnessed” about Jesus.

## **WORSHIP SONG SUGGESTION**

“Open the Eyes of My Heart”

**Lesson 1**  
**THE ASCENSION OF JESUS;**  
**THE SELECTION OF MATTHIAS**  
**Acts 1**

**INTRODUCTION**

The book of Acts is the history of the early church – its beginning and growth. It is written by the disciple Luke to Theophilus. The book of Luke concludes with Jesus' ascension. He tells the disciples to stay in Jerusalem until they receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon them (Lk 24:36-49).

While the disciples waiting for the gift of the Holy Spirit to come, they decide to pick another apostle to take the place of Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:12-26). Two men were proposed. They prayed together and asked God to show them who should take over the apostolic ministry. They drew lots and the lot fell to Mathias.

## **TEACHING**

After the lesson, each child should know:

1. The book of Acts is the story of the Early Church.
2. After the ascension, the disciples waited for the Holy Spirit, the gift Jesus had promised them.
3. Like the disciples, we can pray when you're not sure what to do.
4. The apostles chose Matthias to take Judas's place as one of the twelve apostles.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

### **Experience/Craft Suggestion**

Kids are told to "wait" a lot...especially by grown-ups in their lives. Have the students suggest scenarios in their lives when they had to wait, and circumstances when it's hard to wait. Create skits re-enacting times when they had to wait and what happened.

Tell them that today's story talks about the disciples having to wait for the Holy Spirit, having no idea when He would come.

## **WORSHIP SONG SUGGESTION**

"Open the Eyes of My Heart"

"Where You Go, I Go"

"Father (Jesus/Spirit), I Adore You" (sing as a round, if desired)

## **Lesson 2**

# **THE HOLY SPIRIT – PETER’S SERMON – THE CHURCH**

### **Acts 2**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The disciples were all together one day when the Holy Spirit came upon them (Acts 2). Suddenly a sound like the rushing wind came from heaven. They saw tongues of fire come upon each of them. All were filled with the Holy Spirit and they began speaking in other tongues. God-fearing Jews from every nation were in Jerusalem and each one was amazed because they could hear them speaking in their own language, declaring the wonders of God.

Then Peter stood up and spoke to the crowd. He said that all these things fulfilled the prophecy of Joel – that the Spirit would come, people would prophesy, and we would see many signs and wonders. Peter spoke about Jesus and declared that he died, rose from the grave, and now is seated in heaven. He told the people that they had crucified the Lord. They were cut to the heart and asked what they could do. Peter told them, “Repent and be baptized” (Acts 2:23). Three thousand people were baptized that day.

## **TEACHING**

After the lesson, each child should know:

1. The power of the Holy Spirit (tongues, miracles, wind, flames, Peter's sermon)
2. The nature of the Holy Spirit (Comforter, Counselor, Truth)
3. The Holy Spirit was active in the Early Church (Acts 2:42-47), and still is today!

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

### **Experience/Craft Suggestion**

Buy cheap plastic headbands from the dollar store or online. Make a template for 3" flames out of cardboard and let the students trace them on red, orange, and yellow construction paper. Have them glue several flames together, then tape the "flames" to one end of a pipe cleaner. Then wrap the other end of the pipe cleaner to the top center of the head band. When the students wear the headband, they can remember the tongues of fire from the Holy Spirit that came upon the disciples at Pentecost.

## **WORSHIP SONG SUGGESTION**

"One Name"

"Strong Tower"

## **Lesson 3**

# **THE LAME MAN AT THE TEMPLE**

### **Acts 3**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Peter and John were going to the Temple to pray when they were passing by the lame man sitting at the gate called Beautiful. The man asked them for money. Instead, Peter and John looked the man in the face and told him that they didn't have any money. Peter said, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk!" The man was healed. He began walking and jumping throughout the temple. People recognized him as the crippled beggar and they were amazed (Acts 3:1-10).

Peter took this opportunity to preach to the people. He said, this didn't happen because of our own power, but because of God. He testified about who Jesus is and how faith in Christ healed this man. He told them to repent and turn to God. He told the story of Jesus, beginning with Abraham and the prophets (Acts 3:11-26). Peter proclaimed the truth of Jesus as evidenced by the miracle of this man's healing.

## **TEACHING**

After the lesson, each child should know:

1. The lame man was healed. He jumped and ran throughout the temple, praising God.
2. The people were amazed to see the crippled man healed.
3. Upon performing a miracle, Peter pointed the people to God.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

### **Experience/Craft Suggestion**

Peter didn't take credit for the lame man's healing—he used the opportunity to share the story of Jesus with all who were listening. Create a song of thanksgiving to the Lord for the things He has given you. Get in a circle and invite each kid to sing/dance – stating something they are thankful for. Create a basic chorus (i.e. Thank you, Jesus) that everyone can say together. Borrow or make simple instruments to use during the song.

## **WORSHIP SONG SUGGESTION**

### **“Give Thanks”**

Look for songs about thanksgiving, the power of God, and healing.



## **Lesson 4**

### **Peter and John Imprisoned**

#### **Acts 4**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

As Peter preached to the crowd in Solomon's porch, he explained the healing of the lame man. When he spoke of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus and repentance for forgiveness of sins, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees arrested him and John. The captain of the temple was the commander of the guard of Levites who were stationed in the temple at the gates and elsewhere to keep order. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, and therefore they objected to the preaching of Peter.

Peter and John were kept in prison overnight. In the morning they were brought before the Sanhedrin which was the Jewish supreme council or court of justice composed of seventy-one men. The president of the Sanhedrin was the high priest. Annas was high priest from A. D. 6-15, but his influence continued as five of his sons, a grandson, and his son-in-law Caiaphas served as high priests after him. Caiaphas was the actual high priest from A. D. 18-36 and thus presided over the Sanhedrin during Jesus's ministry and at the time of this incident.

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. Peter and John were imprisoned by the high priest and the Sadducees, who were angry about what they were preaching about Jesus (the Sadducees were Jewish leaders who didn't believe in resurrection).
2. The rulers told Peter and John to stop speaking in the name of Jesus.
3. Peter and John courageously spoke the truth of Jesus and refused to stop speaking in His name. The rulers were amazed that these uneducated, ordinary men were speaking so boldly, and eventually let them go.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

### **Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Using a dry erase board, have the students suggest all the scenarios that were obstacles to the apostles preaching about Jesus. For example: death threats, far distances, hunger, thirst, stoning, shipwrecks, prison, etc. Talk about how, despite all the obstacles in their way, nothing stopped God's word from spreading. The book of Acts is filled with stories of how God's word kept spreading, no matter what. Then have the students list things they are afraid of or things that they feel stand in the way of God's goodness in their lives or neighborhoods. Using crepe paper rolls, create "finish lines" with a student holding each end. Tape the name of an obstacle (for example, "prison") to the middle of the finish line. Have a student hold a sign that says "GOD'S WORD" on it. Ask the students, "Can prison stop God's Word from spreading?" Have them respond, very loudly, "NO!" and have the student holding the sign break through the tape. Repeat with other scenarios. Spend time in prayer with the students about the obstacles they see in their lives, and ask God to tear those things down so that His love can spread.

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

"One Name"

"Where You Go, I Go"

## **Lesson 5**

# **Ananias and Sapphira**

### **Acts 5:1-10**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The early members of the church came from many lands and different backgrounds (Acts 2:9-11), yet they were of "one heart and of one soul" (Acts 4:32). Those who were poor had their needs supplied by the generosity of others (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35). Barnabas is specifically named as one man who sold his property, then gave the money to the apostles to distribute to those in need (Acts 4:36-37).

In contrast to the sincerity and liberality of Barnabas and others who willingly sold their possessions to provide for the needy, the story of another man and his wife reveals their insincerity and hypocrisy. This couple, Ananias and Sapphira, also sold some property, but, unlike Barnabas who gave all his money to the apostles, these two gave some of the money to the apostles and kept a portion for themselves. The money was theirs to do with as they desired, but they conspired with one another to deceive the apostles by professing to give *all* the money they had received for the sale of their land.

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. Ananias and Sapphira were a husband and wife who sold some land and gave part of the money to the church, and kept some for themselves. However, they pretended they were giving all the money to the church.
2. The apostle Peter said that they had lied to the Holy Spirit, and Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead that day.
3. God wants us to be generous out of love for Him—not to be recognized by others.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Ananias and Sapphira gave money to the church to be recognized by others, but God wants us to be generous and kind to others because we love Him, not because we want credit from other people. Use the white board to list ways the students can be “sneaky” in doing something nice for their families this week. In other words, have them list some good deeds they can do when no one (but God) is looking. Prior to this lesson, contact the church office for ideas of a few service things the children can do to help the church (perhaps cleaning some toys, dusting, folding bulletins, etc.) in secret. Lead the students in this activity during craft time.

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

“This is My Commandment (That You Love One Another)”

## **Lesson 6**

### **The Apostles Imprisoned**

#### **Act 5:11-42**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

As we learned in Lesson 4, after healing the lame man in the temple, Peter and John were imprisoned for preaching about Jesus Christ and his resurrection from the dead (Acts 4:1-4). When the council (Sanhedrin) assembled the following day, they were puzzled concerning what action to take with Peter and John. They could not deny the lame man had been healed, but the Sadducees objected to Peter's preaching regarding the resurrection. Consequently, the council charged the two apostles not to teach anymore in the name of Jesus and then let them go (Acts 4:5-22). Nevertheless, the apostles continued to preach the word of God with boldness (Acts 4:31).

As the number of believers in the church grew—multitudes of men and women (Acts 5:14)—the Jewish rulers became more and more alarmed. They resolved they could not allow the apostles to continue their bold preaching in the name of Jesus Christ.

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. In the previous chapter of Acts, we learned that Peter and John were imprisoned and ordered to not speak in Jesus's name anymore. In this chapter, we find that all the followers of Jesus kept right on preaching in His name.
2. The Jewish council (Sanhedrin) had them put in prison. However, in the night, an angel of the Lord broke them out of prison and told them to go into the temple courts and preach God's message of life.
3. When the council got a hold of them, they couldn't justify keeping them in custody. They had the apostles flogged (beaten) and let them go. The apostles rejoiced that they had suffered for Jesus's name, and went from house to house, sharing the story of Jesus.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Work with students to make a “newspaper” telling the story of the apostles' jailbreak. Make a template of a newspaper page with the headline “JAILBREAK IN JERUSALEM!”, a few lines summarizing the story, and empty spaces for the students to draw action shots of the angel breaking the jail open for the apostles and of the shocked members of the Sanhedrin. Make copies so each student has his own newspaper to complete. Encourage them to have their parents and friends “read all about it” after class.

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

“Nothing is Too Difficult for You”  
“Mighty to Save”

## **Lesson 7**

### **Stephen – the First Recorded Christian Martyr**

**Acts 6; 7**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

As the church continued to grow, the apostles were unable to look after the wants of all the believers. As a result some needy widows were neglected and complaints arose among the Grecian Jews against the Hebrew Jews. Grecian Jews were Jews who were born and raised in foreign lands, spoke the Greek language, and read the scriptures in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament scriptures. Hebrew Jews were Jews who were born and reared in Palestine, spoke the Aramaic language, and read the Old Testament scriptures in the Hebrew language.

The apostles could not give their time to the daily care of the needy and continue to preach the gospel. Therefore, seven men were chosen to take care of the daily distribution of goods to the needy. The men chosen were of good report, full of the Spirit, and full of wisdom. One of the men chosen was Stephen.

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. Stephen was a man full of faith, chosen by the apostles, along with six other men, to help in taking care of the poor widows in the church who needed food.
2. Stephen boldly shared the story of Jesus, and spoke so convincingly that some Jews started lying about him to get him in trouble with the Sanhedrin. When he was brought before the Sanhedrin, he preached the truth of Jesus to them, by sharing the relationship God has had with the Jewish people from the beginning, and how they (the Sanhedrin) were stubborn and guilty of rejecting the Son of God.
3. The Sanhedrin were furious, and stoned Stephen to death, making him the first martyr recorded in the Bible.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Have the students make bracelets with alphabet beads that spell "F O F" to stand for "Full of Faith." Talk about how Stephen was full of faith in Jesus's power, even when he was in the scariest of places. Ask the students to wear the bracelets to remind them to rest in Jesus's power every moment of the day. If there's time, have the students make bracelets to give away.

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

"Mighty to Save"

"Your Word is a Lamp to My Feet" (Steve Green's *Hide 'Em in Your Heart*)



## Lesson 8

### Philip and Simon the Sorcerer

#### Acts 8:1-25

#### INTRODUCTION

After Stephen was stoned, devout men buried him and lamented him. Then a great persecution by the Jews arose against the church at Jerusalem. As a result, the members of the church scattered throughout Judea and Samaria, but the apostles remained in Jerusalem. Saul, who had consented to Stephen's death and received the garments of those who had stoned Stephen, created much distress for the church, entering the homes of the members and dragging men and women to prison (Acts 8:1-3).

The Jews who persecuted the church had hoped to crush and destroy this rising, new religious movement, but instead, those members of the church who were scattered went everywhere preaching the gospel (Acts 8:4). Consequently, more people were brought to Christ, and the church grew and spread beyond the borders of the city of Jerusalem.

One of the members of the church who left Jerusalem due to the persecution was Philip (not the apostle Philip, for the apostles remained in Jerusalem, according to Acts 8:1). This man was one of the seven men chosen in Jerusalem to help with the daily care of the needy (Acts 6:1-6), and is later referred to as "Philip the evangelist" (Acts 21:8).

**SAMARIA.** When Philip left Jerusalem, he went to Samaria to preach. Samaria was the ancient capital of the ten tribes or northern kingdom of Israel. The city had been built by Omri, the father of Ahab, about 880/79 B. C. (I Kings 16:23-28). Through the centuries Samaria was destroyed several times and rebuilt. In 30 B. C., Herod the Great reconstructed the city in a magnificent manner, enlarging and beautifying it over a period of ten years. In New Testament times the city of Samaria and the entire country of Samaria were ruled by a Roman governor who resided in Caesarea.

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. Philip was a godly man who shared Jesus with the people of Samaria, and God gave him power to heal sick people and drive out evil spirits.
2. Many Samaritans believed in Jesus and were baptized because of Philip's message and the miracles he performed. One of these was Simon, who had been practicing sorcery.
3. When the apostles came to lay hands on Philip to give him the gift of the Holy Spirit, Simon offered to pay them to lay their hands on him! The apostles corrected him and told him to pray for forgiveness; the gift of the Holy Spirit cannot be bought at any price.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

God's gifts are something we cannot buy or earn. Simon the Sorcerer did not understand this. Talk to the students about blessings they receive in their lives. Use a very long piece of paper (there is a huge roll in the supply cupboard) to record the blessings in the students' lives. Have them line up, and come forward, one at a time, to write down one blessing. The instructor can write down students' ideas if the students themselves can't write them. Continue for the entire craft period. Roll out or hang up the list when the time is up to demonstrate how much God is doing in our lives.

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

Chorus to "Count Your Blessings"  
"Amazing Grace"  
"Amazing Love"

## Lesson 9

# Philip and the Ethiopian Nobleman

Acts 8:26-40

### INTRODUCTION

After Philip preached to the Samaritans, an angel of the Lord spoke to him and instructed him to go toward the south, the way from Jerusalem to Gaza, which is "desert." Philip must have been puzzled, for he was commanded to leave a city where many people were obeying the gospel to go to a lonely road in uninhabited territory.

**GAZA.** The Old Testament city of Gaza was a Philistine city about fifty miles southwest of Jerusalem. It was located on the caravan and military route from Egypt to Palestine, Syria, and Mesopotamia. The only reference to Gaza in the New Testament is this incident when Philip was directed by the angel to go to the road leading from Jerusalem to Gaza.

**THE ETHIOPIAN NOBLEMAN.** When Philip obeyed the angel's instructions, he encountered an Ethiopian nobleman on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza. Ancient Ethiopia, also called Nubia (the Hebrew name Cush is sometimes used in the Old Testament), was a nation south of Egypt and west of the Red Sea. The Biblical Ethiopia should not be confused with modern Ethiopia which is hundreds of miles away. The word "Ethiopia" is Greek and means "burnt face" or "dark-faced."

The Ethiopian had been to Jerusalem to worship and was returning to his own country. He was a nobleman with great authority as treasurer for Candace, queen of Ethiopia. Candace was a title for the queens of Ethiopia as Pharaoh was a title for the Egyptian kings. Whether this Ethiopian was a Jew or a Jewish proselyte (a Gentile who was converted to the Jewish religion, in this case a native of Ethiopia) is unknown.

## **TEACHING**

### **After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. An angel instructed Philip to travel down a desert road; he obeyed, and met a servant of the Queen of Ethiopia in a chariot.
2. The Ethiopian was reading Scripture, but didn't understand it. Philip explained that the Scripture was about the good news of Jesus.
3. The Ethiopian was so excited by the good news that when he saw some water by the side of the road, he immediately wanted to be baptized! Philip baptized him and then immediately disappeared.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

### **Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Bring some dress-up clothes (suitcoat, tie, dress, high heels), something to use for a fake video camera, and a poster board with the words "THE GOOD NEWS SHOW" to put on the wall. Give each student an index card and write something about the Good News of Jesus (how He paid for our sin, how He loves each and every person, how He brings healing, how He gives us hope, etc.). Then have them create a "news broadcast" using these note cards as the "headlines." Have the students take turns being the newscasters (wearing the costumes), announcing different "headlines" about the Good News. Students can also take turns being the camera operator. Talk about how Philip was excited to share the Good News with the Ethiopian man in today's Bible story.

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

"You are Good"

"I Want to Know You"

## Lesson 10

### The Conversion of Saul

Acts 9:1-19

#### INTRODUCTION

Saul was first introduced into the narrative at the stoning of Stephen. Witnesses against Stephen laid their garments at the feet of Saul who was consenting to Stephen's death (Acts 7:58; 8:1). Saul was a Hebrew of Hebrews of the tribe of Benjamin and a Pharisee (Phil. 3:5), the strictest sect of the Jews (Acts 26:4-5). He was instructed in Jewish law at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3), and exceedingly zealous for the traditions of the fathers (Gal. 1:14).

**TARSUS.** Saul was born in Tarsus, the chief city of Cilicia in Asia Minor (Acts 22:3). Its early history is rather obscure, but in the three centuries before Christ, the city passed under the control of the Persians, Greeks, and Romans. Thus in New Testament times, Tarsus was a place of many cultures, a center of great commerce, and a free Roman city. In this setting of Greek and Roman cultures, Saul acquired the knowledge to speak and write Greek, and claimed Roman citizenship as a free-born citizen (Acts 22:28).

**DAMASCUS.** After the stoning of Stephen, Saul made havoc of the church, dragging men and women to prison (Acts 8:3). Continuing his persecution, Saul received letters from the high priest authorizing him to go to Damascus to find any who were of the Way (followers of Jesus), bind them, and bring them back to Jerusalem (Acts 9:1-2). Julius Caesar, a Roman general and statesman, and Augustus Caesar, the first Roman emperor, had given the high priest and Sanhedrin authority over Jews in foreign cities. Damascus, the capital city of Syria and believed to be the oldest, continuously inhabited city in the world, is about 150 miles from Jerusalem. Damascus seems to be just one of the foreign cities to which Saul carried his persecution (Acts 26:11). However, as Saul journeyed to Damascus, something happened on the way which changed his life forever.

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. Saul, a man who was persecuting the followers of Jesus, was on his way to Damascus, when a light from heaven shone down on him, and Jesus's voice said, "Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting me?"
2. Paul opened his eyes, but he was blind! He was led by his companions into a house in Damascus, where he sat for three days in the dark, without eating or drinking.
3. God sent a man named Ananias to lay his hands on him. Ananias obeyed, and when he laid hands on Saul, Saul's sight was restored, and he received the Holy Spirit.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Hand out sheets of paper labeled "Jesus Speaks to Saul on the Road to Damascus" on the bottom. Give the students pipe cleaners to fashion into a stick figure laying on the ground. Have them use bright foil or tissue paper to make beams of light coming down from the sky. Talk about how amazing and frightening it must have been for Saul to have this experience, and how he would never forget the words Jesus spoke to him.

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

"My God is So Big"

## **Lesson 11**

### **The Preaching of Saul**

#### **Acts 9:19-31**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

After Saul was baptized, he remained with the disciples in Damascus and began to preach Jesus to the Jews in the synagogues. All who heard him were amazed, for they knew he was the one who had persecuted followers of Jesus. After a while the Jews plotted to kill him, but with the help of the disciples he escaped the city during the night.

Saul then went to Jerusalem, but the disciples there were afraid of him. They did not believe that he was now a disciple of Jesus. Barnabas, however, took him to the apostles and told them how Saul had seen the Lord on the road to Damascus, that the Lord had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly in Damascus.

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. Many of the Jews didn't trust Saul and his teachings about Jesus, because they remembered that he used to be an enemy of all who followed Jesus.
2. Some Jews who didn't believe that Jesus is the Messiah plotted to kill Saul. Some believers helped Saul escape from Damascus by lowering him out of the city walls in a basket.
3. Barnabas was a believer who stood up for Saul in Jerusalem. He convinced the apostles that Saul could be trusted as a true follower of Jesus.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Have the students create a moving picture depicting Saul's escape from Damascus in a basket being lowered down the city walls. Have them decorate a thin, small piece of cardboard like a stone wall. Poke a small hole in the wall. Knot one end of a piece of yarn or string, and thread the other through the hole. Have the students make the outline of a basket out of a piece of brown construction paper and tie it to the other end of the string. Then the students can raise and lower the basket like Saul's friends did when they helped him escape.

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

“Rescue”

“Change My Heart, Oh God”



## **Lesson 12**

### **Peter, Aeneas, Tabitha (Dorcas)**

#### **Acts 9:32-43**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

After the Jerusalem brethren sent Saul away to Tarsus for his safety, the story turns again to the labors of Peter. First, Peter traveled to Lydda and Joppa, then to Caesarea—he passed throughout all “quarters” or “parts of the country” (Acts 9:32)—preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**LYDDA.** Lydda is the Greek name of the Old Testament city of Lod (I Chron. 8:12; Ez. 2:33; Neh. 7:37; 11:35). The city was about ten miles southeast of Joppa in the fertile plain of Sharon. It was located on two trade routes—one that led from Egypt to Babylon, and the other that went from Joppa to Jerusalem. Thus the city was strategically important throughout the centuries, particularly in times of war. The only New Testament reference to the city concerns Peter's visit (Acts 9:32-35).

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. Peter went to the town of Joppa, and, by Jesus Christ's power, healed two people there. The healings amazed the people of Joppa, and many people believed in Jesus as a result.
2. Peter healed Aeneas, a man who was paralyzed and had been in bed for eight years, saying "Jesus Christ heals you! Get up and roll up your sleeping mat!"
3. Peter also went to the home of Tabitha, a woman who had died. When she was alive, she helped many poor people by making clothing for them. Peter prayed, then said, "Get up, Tabitha." And she came back to life!

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Tabitha was a Godly woman who made clothing for the poor. Make copies of a sheet of paper that says "Peter Heals Tabitha" at the top, and large capital "T" (for Tabitha) in the center. Use a hole punch to make holes outlining the T at one-inch intervals. Give the students yarn to thread in and out of the holes. Have them talk about how Tabitha cared for the poor by sharing her talent of sewing. Talk to the students about the talents God has given them, and how they can use them to help others.

Alternatively, have the students help make a felt banner and do some simple sewing or gluing to represent both Tabitha's talent as a seamstress and how God wishes for us to care for others.

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

"They Will Know We are Christians by Our Love"

## Lesson 13

### The Conversion of Cornelius

Acts 10:1-11:18

#### INTRODUCTION

After restoring Tabitha (Dorcas) to life, Peter remained for many days in Joppa, living with Simon, a tanner (Acts 9:43). So far in Luke's narrative, Peter and the other apostles had taken the gospel message to their Jewish brethren, preaching salvation in the name of Jesus Christ, and baptizing those who believed. Then unexpectedly, a new and remarkable mission faced Peter—one so momentous it required a vision to prepare him to accept the task, for the Spirit directed Peter to preach to the Gentiles. Thus the scene of Luke's account of the early church turns to Caesarea and a Gentile named Cornelius (Acts 10).

**CAESAREA.** About thirty miles north of Joppa on the Mediterranean seacoast, the city of Caesarea was built by Herod the Great on the site of an ancient Phoenician city, Strato's Tower. Herod took twelve years to build the magnificent seaport city and its artificial harbor which provided safe anchorage for ships year round. The Roman governors who ruled Judea after A.D. 6 made Caesarea their political capital and military headquarters. Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor who condemned Jesus to death, resided at Caesarea from A.D. 26 to 36.

Cornelius was a Roman soldier, a centurion or officer in command of 100 men, garrisoned in Caesarea. The Italian regiment to which Cornelius belonged was composed of soldiers from Italy. A cohort or regiment consisted of about 600 men. There were three thousand Roman troops stationed in Caesarea.

Cornelius, although a Roman and a Gentile, had apparently rejected the heathen idolatry and immorality of Roman religion and had embraced the worship of the one true God of the Jews. He is described by Luke as devout, one that feared God with his household, praying to God, and giving alms to the people.

God sent a vision to both Cornelius and Peter. Cornelius, obeying his vision, sent to Joppa for Peter. Peter, obeying his vision, went to Caesarea to Cornelius. Peter told Cornelius and his household words whereby they might be saved (Acts 11:14).

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. Peter had a vision that a sheet came down from heaven with all sorts of food on it, including food the Jews were not allowed to eat according to Jewish law. God told Peter that nothing would be unclean if He called it clean.
2. About this time, a Roman Soldier, Cornelius, sent for Peter to come to him. Cornelius was a Gentile, and it was against Jewish law for Peter to enter his house. Peter understood that, because of Jesus, everyone was clean, and went to Cornelius's house.
3. At the home of Cornelius, Peter shared all about Jesus and the Holy Spirit came upon the Jews AND the Gentiles there. Cornelius and his family were baptized, demonstrating that the good news of Jesus is for everyone, not just for the Jews!

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Download a coloring page from the internet featuring a picture of an ancient Roman soldier to represent Cornelius. Talk about how Jesus came to not only to save the Jewish people, but all people who put their trust in Him.

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

“They Will Know We are Christians by Our Love”  
“Mighty to Save”

## Lesson 14

# The Persecution of Herod Agrippa I

### Acts 12

#### INTRODUCTION

Following the death of Stephen, the followers of Jesus were scattered because of persecution by the Jews. Wherever these disciples went, they preached the gospel, converting souls to Jesus Christ (Acts 8:1, 4). Philip first went to Samaria where Simon the sorcerer and others were baptized. Then Philip was directed by the Spirit to go to the road leading from Jerusalem to Gaza where he met the Ethiopian nobleman. Eventually, he arrived in Caesarea, preaching in "all the cities" along the way (Acts 8:5-40). Saul went to Damascus, and after his conversion to Jesus Christ, he preached in that city. When his life was in danger, he went to Jerusalem, but being in danger there, too, the brethren sent him to Tarsus, his birthplace (Acts 9:1-31). Peter journeyed to Samaria (Acts 8:14), then went to Lydda, Joppa, and Caesarea (Acts 9:32-10:48). After baptizing Cornelius, the Roman centurion, Peter returned to Jerusalem to relate to the brethren there the events surrounding the conversion of that Gentile and his household (Acts 11:1-18). Other followers of Jesus went north to Phoenicia, the island of Cyprus, and Antioch in Syria. When many people in Antioch were added to the Lord, Barnabas went to Tarsus to find Saul and bring him back to Antioch. For a year they taught many people, and the disciples were called *Christians* first in Antioch (Acts 11:19-26).

**HEROD AGRIPPA I.** "About that time," Herod Agrippa I began to persecute the church (Acts 12:1). The time was A.D. 44, about twelve to seventeen years after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Herod Agrippa I was a grandson of Herod the Great, the ruler who killed the male children in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:16). Herod Agrippa I was given the title of king by the Roman emperor in A.D. 37. He first ruled over the area north and east of the Sea of Galilee. Two years later, Galilee and Perea were added to his territory. In A.D. 41, the Roman emperor gave him the provinces of Judea, Samaria, and Idumea. From that time to his death in A.D. 44, Agrippa I reigned over the whole of his grandfather's kingdom. Luke records that Agrippa's first act of persecution against Christians and the church was to kill the apostle James with the sword (Acts 12:1-2). Next Agrippa imprisoned Peter, but Peter was miraculously released from the prison by an angel of the Lord (Acts 12:3-19). Luke concludes his narrative of Herod Agrippa I with the event of Agrippa's death (Acts 12:20-23).

Upon a certain day, Agrippa attended a festival in honor of the Roman emperor. According to the Jewish historian Josephus, Agrippa was arrayed in a robe made of silver which shone brilliantly in the morning sun. As he sat upon his throne, Agrippa made a speech to the people at the festival. The excited crowd, dazzled by his glistening garments, shouted praise to him and called him a god. When Agrippa accepted this flattery and honor, which belonged to God, an angel of the Lord smote him with an incurable disease. Josephus records that Herod Agrippa I died a horrible death five days later, his rotting flesh producing worms.

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. King Herod Agrippa was an evil ruler who hated followers of Jesus, killing them or putting them in jail. He had Peter thrown in Jail.
2. While Peter was in jail, other Christians prayed for him, and God sent an angel who set him free!
3. One day King Herod Agrippa was speaking in front of a large group of people and they started worshipping him like a god. He accepted their worship instead of giving glory to God, and he was "consumed with worms and died" (v. 23).

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Make copies of an outline of a head on white paper, one for each student. At the bottom, print "Herod Agrippa: One Bad King." Talk to them about Herod Agrippa, and his pride in himself, how he persecuted the followers of Jesus, and even let people worship him like a god. Have the students draw a face and crown on him. Bring a large bag of gummy worms. Allow the students to choose a few gummy worms and place them in a baggie (a snack to take home). Staple the bag to the paper as a reminder of how Herod Agrippa died.

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

Ask the students to help compile a list of God's virtues, then lead a prayer time praising God for these virtues.

"God is so Good"

"Lord I Lift Your Name on High"

# Lesson 1

## Paul's First Journey (Part 1)

### Acts 13

#### INTRODUCTION

While Barnabas and Saul were in Antioch, a famine occurred in Judea. The church in Antioch then sent Barnabas and Saul to Judea and Jerusalem with relief (contributions) for the needy Christians there (Acts 11:19-30). When they had fulfilled their ministry in Jerusalem, they returned to Antioch, taking with them a young man named John Mark (Acts 12:25).

**ANTIOCH OF SYRIA.** In New Testament times, Antioch was the capital of the Roman province of Syria. Approximately 300 miles north of Jerusalem, the city was located on the Orontes River about sixteen miles from the Mediterranean Sea. Called the "queen of the East," Antioch was a splendid city, the third largest in the Roman Empire. When the gospel was preached in Antioch, a great number of people believed, and the disciples were called *Christians* first in that city (Acts 11:26).

In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers. One day the Holy Spirit said, "Dedicate Barnabas and Saul for the special work to which I have called them." After fasting, praying, and laying hands on them, the church sent Barnabas and Saul away (Acts 13:1-3). The men embarked upon a journey of about 1200 to 1400 miles over a period of two to three years, preaching the gospel to the world.





## TEACHING

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. Saul (who would be called Paul later in this story) and Barnabas, along with their assistant, John Mark, sailed to the island of Cyprus to preach about Jesus.
2. In Cyprus, they met with the governor to tell him about Jesus. However, their was an evil sorcerer there who told the governor to pay no attention to the word of God.
3. Paul was filled with the Spirit and looked the sorcerer in the eye. He said the sorcerer was full of lies and was an enemy of God. Then the sorcerer was struck blind.

*\*\*\*If possible, purchase a map of Paul's missionary journeys to keep on the wall of the teaching area for the next two months.*

## ART/CRAFT STATION

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

For this month's lessons, purchase a photo album and label it "Paul's Missionary Journey Scrapbook." Show the students where Cyprus is on the map (it is an island in the eastern portion of the Mediterranean Sea). Hand out 4"x6" pieces of thick paper and have the students draw "photos" of this first stop in Cyprus. They could draw pictures of:

- Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark together
- Paul and Barnabas preaching
- an outline of the island of Cyprus
- Paul calling the sorcerer a liar
- the sorcerer being struck blind

Alternatively, bring a few props and clothes to use as costumes and have the students pose in some of the scenarios listed above. Take photos of them and have them developed later in the week and place them in the photo album. Label this section "In Cyprus."

## WORSHIP TIME:

"I Have Decided to Follow Jesus"

"Where You Go, I Go"



## Lesson 3

### Paul's Second Journey (Part 1)

Acts 15:36-16:40

#### INTRODUCTION

After some time Paul and Barnabas decided to return to the cities where they had preached earlier, visit the brethren in those places, and see how the churches fared. Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them, but Paul disagreed since John Mark had left them at Perga on their first journey (Acts 13:13). Therefore, Paul and Barnabas separated. Barnabas took Mark and sailed to the island of Cyprus while Paul chose Silas and went by land through Syria and Cilicia (Acts 15:36-41).

Beginning at Derbe and Lystra, Paul and Silas visited the churches Paul and Barnabas had established on their first journey. At Lystra, the place where Paul had been stoned, they found a disciple named Timothy whom they took with them as they continued their journey. The churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in number daily (Acts 16:1-5).

**PAUL'S VISION.** Paul, Silas, and their companion Timothy traveled through the regions of Phrygia and Galatia proclaiming the word of God, but the Holy Spirit forbade them to continue further west to Asia to preach (Acts 16:6). Asia was the Roman province that occupied nearly one-third of the western end of the Asia Minor peninsula (modern Turkey). The exact borders are hard to determine because they were continually shifting, but Asia was a center of trade and commerce and the wealthiest province of the Roman Empire in New Testament times.

Instead of going west into Asia, the travelers then turned north to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus forbade that too. Therefore, the men passed through the area to Troas, a city on the western seacoast of Asia. Here Paul had a vision in the night—a man of Macedonia beseeching him to come to Macedonia. The travelers concluded that God had called them to preach the gospel to the Macedonians. At this point in the narrative Luke joins Paul, Silas, and Timothy, for "we" endeavored to go to Macedonia to preach the gospel (Acts 16:7-10).

**PHILIPPI.** After Paul saw the vision of the man of Macedonia, he, Silas, Timothy, and Luke sailed to Samothrace, an island in the Aegean Sea, and from there to Neapolis, a seaport in eastern Macedonia (modern Greece). The travelers continued about ten miles inland over a rocky ridge to the city of Philippi (Acts 16:11-12). Philippi was a Roman colony which meant that its citizens had the same rights and privileges as those who lived in Italy. The main east-west road from Asia to Rome, the Via Egnatia, ran through Philippi, and the ruts of wagons and chariot wheels can still be seen there.

## TEACHING

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. On his first journey, Paul traveled with Barnabas. On his second trip, he traveled with Silas, Timothy, and Luke.
2. On their journey they met Lydia, a woman who sold expensive purple cloth. She accepted the message of Jesus and opened her home to Paul and his friends.
3. Paul and Silas were put in jail for preaching about Jesus, and they sang songs of praise to God while they were in chains! Even the jailer ended up believing in Jesus because he was amazed by Paul and Silas's faith!

## ART/CRAFT STATION

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Continue to work on the photo album labeled "Paul's Missionary Journeys." Have the students pose for photos depicting the story of things that happened during this second missionary journey:

- Bring purple cloth to drape around girls who can pose with a big sign that says "Lydia."
- All the children can work on making a long paper chain out of construction paper. Then allow two boys at a time pose as Paul and Silas in prison singing praises while they are wearing the "chains."

## WORSHIP TIME:

"I Have Decided to Follow Jesus"

"The Fruit of the Spirit" by JoLinda Crump

## Lesson 4

### Paul's Second Journey (Part 2)

#### Acts 17

#### INTRODUCTION

After being released from prison, Paul and Silas departed Philippi while Timothy and Luke remained behind. As Paul and Silas traveled westward on the Via Egnatia, they passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, then came to Thessalonica about seventy miles distant from Philippi.

**THESSALONICA.** Situated on the Thermaic Gulf (Gulf of Salonika), Thessalonica in New Testament times was a commercial center, the chief seaport, the capital and largest city of the Roman province of Macedonia. The Romans had declared Thessalonica a free city (*civitas libera*), enabling the citizens to choose their own rulers or magistrates, levy its own taxes and mint its own coins. The rulers of the city are called *politarchs* by Luke in the Greek (Acts 17:6, 8), a term found on inscriptions discovered at Thessalonica, dated in this period.

While in Thessalonica, Paul and Silas preached that Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah of the Old Testament scriptures. After a while the unbelieving Jews created a riot, accusing the men of disturbing the peace and treason against Caesar.

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. The Greek people in Athens were pantheists, that is, they worshipped many false gods.
2. Paul went to the high council, where the Athenians discussed the latest ideas, and told them that there was a God they didn't know about...the one true God, who died and was resurrected.
3. Some Greeks laughed at him, some wanted to hear more about it later, and some believed him right away.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Continue to work on the photo album labeled "Paul's Missionary Journeys." Have the students pose for photos depicting the story of things that happened during this second missionary journey:

- Have the students reenact Paul's sermon in Athens: Have some students pose as statues of false gods, one student posing as Paul with a sign saying "There is ONE true God," and other students posing as the Athenians listening.
- Have the students color 4"x5" pictures of line-drawings of buildings from the Acropolis to represent this stop in Athens.

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

"My God is So Big, So Strong, and So Mighty"  
"The Fruit of the Spirit" by JoLinda Crump

## **Lesson 5**

### **Paul's Second Journey (Part 3)**

#### **Acts 18:1-22**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Sometime after preaching in the midst of the Areopagus in Athens, Paul went to Corinth. Athens was the intellectual center of Greece, but Corinth was its greatest commercial center—it was also the wealthiest and the most immoral.

**CORINTH.** Corinth was located on a narrow strip of land (isthmus) connecting central Greece and the rest of Europe with the Peloponnesus, the southern peninsula of Greece. On the eastern side of the isthmus was a seaport where ships from Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt docked, and on the western side of the isthmus was another harbor which served the ships of Italy, Sicily, and Spain. The distance between the two ports was less than ten miles in contrast to the two hundred mile journey around the peninsula. While the cargo of large ships had to be transported across the narrow strip of land, the smaller boats could be hauled across on a type of tramway. Thus the Isthmus of Corinth was sometimes called "the bridge of the sea," and Corinth was the "master of two harbors," one leading to Asia and one to Italy, making it possible to trade goods between the two, far distant regions.

Although the idea of digging a canal across this isthmus was considered by many ancient rulers, and even begun by some, it was not until 1881-1893 that the present canal was cut. The canal was built across the narrowest point and is four miles long.

Corinth was a Roman colony in New Testament times and the capital of the province of Achaia. With a population of about 500,000, a melting pot of many nations and cultures, there were merchants, sailors, gamblers, athletes, slaves, government officials, businessmen, and many immoral men and women. Corinth offered all the vices, and the temple of Aphrodite (Venus, goddess of love) on the summit of the mountain overlooking the city, Acrocorinth, was the center of its immorality and corrupt culture.

While Paul was in Corinth, the Jews rose against him and brought him before Gallio, the Roman governor, accusing him of persuading men to worship God contrary to the law. Gallio refused to make a judgment, leaving the Jews to settle their own disputes. An inscription found in Delphi, another city of Achaia, lists Gallio as proconsul of Achaia in A.D. 52. He probably began his term in A.D. 51, arriving in Corinth in the summer. Since Paul had been in Corinth a year and six months when he was brought before Gallio, he must have arrived in the city about A.D. 50 (Acts 18:11).

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. Paul's next stop on his journey was Corinth (in Greece). There he met a husband and wife, Aquila and Priscilla, Jewish tentmakers who became his friends.
2. Some of the Jews in Corinth opposed and insulted Paul, and he got very frustrated. However, God spoke to him and told him to not be afraid and to keep speaking. He stayed in Corinth for a year and a half.
3. When Paul left Corinth, Aquila and Priscilla came with him.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Continue to work on the photo album labeled "Paul's Missionary Journeys" (speak to the art teacher from the previous month.) Have the students pose for photos depicting the story:

- Bring in sheets and blankets and have the students make tents around the room. Take pictures of the students posing in the tents with a sign that says "Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth." Talk to the students about how tent-making was an important skill in those days (and still is in some countries).

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

Lead a prayer time asking God for encouragement when we feel discouraged or scared. Talk about how in today's story, Paul will feel those things, and that God spoke to him to remind him that God is in control!



## Lesson 6

### Paul's Third Journey (Part 1)

Acts 18:23-19:41

#### INTRODUCTION

After spending some time in Antioch of Syria upon the completion of his second journey, Paul departed on his third journey traveling through Phrygia and Galatia. Paul likely revisited the churches he had established on his first journey—Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia. His purpose on this third visit to these congregations was to strengthen the disciples (Acts 18:23).

**APOLLOS.** Meanwhile in Ephesus, Apollos, a Jew from Alexandria, very eloquent and "mighty in the scriptures," was speaking and teaching things concerning Jesus. However, this man knew only the baptism of John. Aquila and Priscilla who had accompanied Paul from Corinth to Ephesus at the close of his second journey heard Apollos, took him aside, and taught him the way of God more accurately. Apollos then went on to Achaia and strengthened the disciples in that region (Acts 18:24-28).

**EPHESUS.** When Paul completed his visits to the churches in Phrygia and Galatia, he continued on his journey to Ephesus, thus keeping the promise he had made to the brethren there at the close of his second journey (Acts 18:20-21). When Paul worked in Ephesus, one of the most significant reasons for the commercial prosperity of the city was the temple of Artemis (Diana, the Roman name), one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. This temple was built about 350 B.C. and lasted until A.D. 262 when it was destroyed by the Goths (Germanic tribes from northern Europe). Worshipers and tourists came in vast numbers to this magnificent, pagan shrine, while craftsmen and peddlers in Ephesus made their living selling souvenirs and images of the goddess Diana. Paul's preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ threatened the income of these Ephesian tradesmen, and as a result a riot occurred in the city.

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. Ephesus was a city famous for a temple to a false goddess, Artemis (Diana). The town was a tourist attraction, and many people there made money by selling souvenir idols honoring this false goddess.
2. When Paul preached the good news of the one true God, the people selling souvenirs got angry with him because they thought his preaching would ruin their business of selling idols.
3. The townspeople started to riot, but their mayor finally calmed them down and sent Paul and his friends on their way...once again, God protected Paul!

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Continue to work on the photo album labeled "Paul's Missionary Journeys." Talk with the students about times they have been to an attraction that sells souvenirs (amusement parks, landmarks, etc.) Have the students draw 4"x6" pictures depicting advertisements for cheap idol souvenirs from Ephesus. Then have them draw a big cross over top of the drawing to represent how God is the one true God, not a lifeless idol. Add the drawings to the scrapbook.

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

"You Are Worthy of My Praise"

## Lesson 7

### Paul's Third Journey (Part 2)

Acts 20:1-21:17

**INTRODUCTION** Following the uproar in Ephesus, Paul bid farewell to the disciples then left the city to go to Macedonia (Acts 20:1). Apparently he stopped at Troas expecting to meet Titus there, but when Titus could not be found, Paul went on to Macedonia (II Cor. 2:12-13). In Macedonia Paul met Titus (probably in Philippi) who brought him news of the church at Corinth (II Cor. 7:5-7). After spending some time with the churches at Macedonia, Paul came to Greece (particularly Corinth in Achaia) where he stayed three months (Acts 20:2-3). He planned to sail from Corinth to Syria, but discovering a plot by the Jews against him, he went by land back through Macedonia (Acts 20:3).

Paul was accompanied by seven men who were carrying a contribution from the churches. These men apparently went ahead of Paul and waited for him at Troas. Luke, who had remained in Philippi during Paul's second journey (Acts 16:10-17:1), probably rejoined Paul at Philippi for "us" and "we" are introduced into the narrative again. After the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread (the latter, a seven day festival, immediately followed the Passover), these two sailed from Philippi to Troas where they stayed for seven days (Acts 20:4-6).

**TROAS.** Troas was a Roman colony on the coast of the Aegean Sea in the northwestern part of the province of Asia. An important port city, Troas offered the shortest route from Asia to Europe. It was at Troas on his second journey that Paul had the vision in the night of the man of Macedonia, beseeching him to come to Macedonia to preach (Acts 16:8-9). Paul remained in Troas this time to meet with the church on the first day of the week.

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. One night, Paul was preaching in a house full of people. He was leaving the next day, so he preached late into the night.
2. A young man who listening while sitting in the window dozed off, and fell three stories to his death!
3. Paul went to the young man and took him in his arms. The young man came back to life! Everyone rejoiced, and Paul kept preaching until dawn.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Create the final installment for the photo album labeled "Paul's Missionary Journeys." Have the students create a mural-sized comic strip showing the young man who was sitting in the window while Paul was preaching and fell three stories. Have them end with Paul holding him and the young man coming back to life. Take photos of this story and put them in the photo album.

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

"You Are Worthy of My Praise"

## Lesson 8

### Paul's Arrest and Defense Before the Jews

Acts 21:17-22:29

#### INTRODUCTION

When Paul came to Jerusalem at the close of his third journey, the year was probably A. D. 58. The brethren received Paul and his companions gladly. Paul rehearsed to James and the elders of the church one by one the things God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry, and when they heard his words, they glorified God (Acts 21:17-20).

James and the elders, however, were concerned for Paul's safety. The believing Jews in Jerusalem had been informed that Paul taught the Jews who were dispersed among the Gentiles to forsake the Law of Moses. These charges were untrue, for to the Jews and Gentiles alike Paul preached Jesus Christ—the Gentile Christians were free from the Old Testament law and customs, while the Jewish Christians could continue to observe the law as long as they did not regard those matters of the law necessary to salvation (Acts 21:21-26).

**PAUL'S ARREST.** Several days later some Asian Jews saw Paul in the temple and started a riot. When the mob began to beat Paul and was about to kill him, the chief captain in charge of the Roman soldiers at the fortress Antonia rescued him. The captain commanded that Paul be bound with two chains, and when he could not determine the reason for the uproar, he commanded his soldiers to carry Paul to the castle (Acts 21:27-36).

The fortress Antonia had been built by Herod the Great at the northwest corner of the temple area. The castle overlooked the temple and was connected to the outer court of the temple by two flights of stairs. The Romans garrisoned their troops at the fortress to keep order in Jerusalem and to protect the city from outside invaders. The chief captain had 1000 troops under his command.

As the soldiers carried Paul up the stairs to the fortress, Paul asked permission of the chief captain to speak to the mob. The captain, who thought Paul was a Jewish desperado, was surprised to hear Paul speaking to him in the Greek language (Acts 21:37-40).

## TEACHING

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. After three long journeys of telling Jews and Gentiles about Jesus, Paul finally returned to Jerusalem.
2. False rumors had been spreading among the Jews there that Paul had been preaching that everyone should ignore the rules of the Old Testament, and they ganged up on him and beat him.
3. The commander of the Roman regiment in Jerusalem broke up the fight and arrested Paul. However, he gave Paul one more opportunity to talk to the crowd, and Paul told everyone there the story of how God had changed his heart long ago on the road to Damascus.

## ART/CRAFT STATION

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Gossiping and spreading rumors about people is wrong and hurtful. In Paul's case, people were more interested in listening to rumors *about* Paul rather than what Paul himself had to say. They beat him and ridiculed him for things he'd didn't do.

Play the "telephone" game to demonstrate how words can be twisted as they're passed from person to person. Talk with the students about times when they may be tempted to gossip about people (friends at school, neighbors) or times when someone may have been talking about them behind their backs. Spend time in prayer, asking for forgiveness for times our tongues get us in trouble, and for courage to stand up to gossiping when we see it occurring.

## WORSHIP TIME:

"Open the Eyes of My Heart"  
"Create in Me a Clean Heart"

## Lesson 9

### Paul Before the Council –The Plot to Kill Paul

Acts 22:30-23:35

#### INTRODUCTION

The day after Paul was rescued by the Roman captain from the Jewish mob in the temple, the captain commanded the council (Sanhedrin) to come together. Since the captain was a Roman, he did not understand the problem or why the Jews had tried to kill Paul. He wished to know the reason Paul was accused by the Jews (Acts 22:30).

***PAUL'S DEFENSE BEFORE THE COUNCIL.*** When Paul stood before the council, he said he had lived in all good conscience until "this day." The high priest Ananias commanded that Paul be slapped on the mouth. Paul angrily rebuked the high priest, for it was against Jewish law to strike a prisoner before he was condemned. However, those attending the high priest reproved Paul for his remarks against the high priest. Paul then stated he did not know it was the high priest who ordered him to be smitten. Quoting from Ex. 22:28, he acknowledged, not that his remarks were wrong, but that he had improperly addressed a ruler of God's people (Acts 23:1-5).

Paul observed that the council which had gathered was composed of Sadducees and Pharisees. In a loud voice he said he was a Pharisee, and he was called before this council concerning the hope of the resurrection of the dead. These remarks created a great dissension among the members of the council, for the Pharisees who believed in the resurrection defended Paul against the Sadducees who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. The clamor became so intense the chief captain feared for Paul's safety and ordered him back to the fortress (Acts 23:6-10).

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. While Paul was still imprisoned at the Roman fortress, about 40 Jewish men made a vow not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul.
2. Paul's nephew heard about the plot and told the Roman commander about it.
3. The commander wanted Paul to have a fair trial because he was a Roman citizen, so he decided to protect Paul by sneaking him out of Jerusalem. God even used people who didn't believe in Jesus to protect Paul!

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

Even though 40 men plotted to kill Paul in Jerusalem, God used even unbelieving people to protect Paul and the message he was preaching! God is our protector!

Trace small (6" length) shield onto poster board. Have the students each cut out one and cover it with aluminum foil to represent armor. Give them foam or felt pieces to create a cross to glue to the front. On the back have them glue small scraps of paper with the words "God is my protector" printed on them. Attach beading wire at the top to create a loop for hanging the shield on a doorknob at home.

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

"Mighty to Save"

"My God is So Big"



## Lesson 10

### Paul Before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa II

**Acts 24:1-26:32**

**INTRODUCTION** After the plot by the Jews to kill Paul became known to Lysias, the Roman captain in Jerusalem, he sent Paul under heavy guard to the Roman governor Felix in Caesarea. After five days the high priest, Ananias came to Caesarea with certain elders and a Roman orator (lawyer) Tertullus. This group brought charges against Paul to the governor. Paul was called before the court and the proceedings began (Acts 24:1).

**FELIX.** Antonius Felix, a Greek who was made a freedman by Claudius Caesar, was the Roman governor of Judea from about A. D. 52 to 60. He is known in history as a cruel and corrupt ruler whose greed and selfishness resulted in perverted justice. Felix's third wife was Drusilla, the youngest daughter of Herod Agrippa I, the one who had killed James with the sword (Acts 12:1-2). Felix desired Drusilla, who was already married, for her great beauty and persuaded her to leave her husband and become his wife.

**PAUL BEFORE FELIX.** As Paul's trial began, the lawyer Tertullus commenced by heaping flattery upon Felix. He then accused Paul of causing insurrection and profaning the temple. Tertullus continued by stating that the Jews had arrested Paul, but Lysias, the chief captain, took him out of their hands. Felix could now examine him and determine if the accusations were true (Acts 24:2-9). The governor then allowed Paul to speak in his own defense.

Felix, who had knowledge of the Way, should have released Paul, but he postponed judgment to please the Jews. His excuse was to wait for Lysias, the chief captain, to come to Caesarea at which time he would determine the matter. Meanwhile Paul would remain a prisoner. However, Felix ordered the centurion to treat Paul with kindness and to allow his friends to minister to him (Acts 24:22-23). Sometime later Felix and his wife Drusilla sent for Paul to hear more concerning the faith in Jesus Christ. Paul reasoned with them of "righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come." This terrified Felix, and he sent Paul away, saying he would call him again when it was more convenient. Luke then reveals the real reason that Felix continued to keep Paul a prisoner—Felix hoped for a bribe. After two years Felix was replaced by Porcius Festus (Acts 24:24-27).

Later, Herod Agrippa II, the king, and his sister Bernice came to Caesarea to visit Festus. While they were there, Festus discussed Paul's case with Agrippa. Festus related how the Jews in Jerusalem had requested him to pass sentence. Since he could not give up the prisoner who was a Roman citizen without a trial, he conducted court proceedings the day after he returned to Caesarea. However, the charges against Paul were matters of Jewish religion and "one Jesus," who was dead but who Paul said was alive. Paul refused to go to Jerusalem to be judged and instead appealed to Caesar. When Festus finished speaking, Agrippa said he wished to hear Paul, and Festus agreed to a meeting for the following day (Acts 25:13-22). Agrippa II found nothing worthy of death in Paul. Since Paul had appealed to Caesar, Festus planned to send him to the emperor.

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. After Paul was sneaked out of Jerusalem to the Caesarea, he stood trial before the governor Felix. Felix couldn't find any fault with Paul, but kept him in custody for two years anyway.
2. Governor Festus and King Agrippa II also heard Paul's story and couldn't see any fault in Paul.
3. Paul was a Roman citizen, and he asked to speak before Caesar, the emperor of all of the Roman Empire, so Festus had to send Paul to Rome.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

People lied about Paul, falsely accusing him of making trouble and dishonoring God. Even though Paul was hurt by these people, he knew that God was watching over him and wanted Paul to continue telling people about Jesus.

Make photo copies of a landscape-oriented page with a large outline of a cross on the left side. Use the cross to form a "t" at the beginning of the words "trust" on the upper right side and "truth" on the lower right side. Have the students glue bits of colored tissue paper in the cross shape to create a colorful pattern. Talk to the students about how Jesus, by dying on the cross and rising again, shows us that he IS truth, and that we can trust Him, no matter what is going on around us. We can think about the "t" in "truth" and "trust" when we see the cross.

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

"You Are Worthy of My Praise"

## **Lesson 11**

### **Paul Shipwrecked**

**Acts 27:1-28:10**

**INTRODUCTION** When it was time for Paul's long journey to Rome and Caesar, he and other prisoners were placed under the guard of a centurion named Julius. In Caesarea they boarded a ship bound for places on the coast of Asia Minor. Accompanying Paul was Luke and Aristarchus, both of whom had been with Paul when he had come to Jerusalem (Acts 20:4-6; 21:15-17). Luke's description of the journey and shipwreck is a literary masterpiece, revealing more about ancient seafaring than any other record.

## TEACHING

After the lesson, each child should know:

1. Paul was finally sent to Rome to tell his story to Caesar, and headed there by boat through the Mediterranean Sea.
2. Paul was shipwrecked on the island of Malta and stayed there for three months.
3. While on Malta, Paul was bitten by a venomous snake, but didn't die. God took care of Paul and his companions, making sure that Paul could share the gospel in Rome.

## ART/CRAFT STATION

Experiences/Craft Suggestion:

While shipwrecked on the island of Malta, Paul was bitten by a venomous snake, but didn't die. Give each student a piece of construction paper. Have them draw a large spiral on it, then have them cut along the line they've drawn. Show them how to shape one end as a "head" of a snake, then have them paint or color bright stripes or diamonds on its back to represent that it is poisonous. When the paper snake is held by its head, its body will hang down in a spiral.

## WORSHIP TIME:

"When I am Afraid I Will Trust in You" (Steve Green, *Hide 'Em in Your Heart*)

**Lesson 12**  
**Celebrate the Birth of Jesus**  
**Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1-2:20**

**INTRODUCTION**

*This week we celebrate Christmas. Share the story of Christ's birth with the class.*

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## **Lesson 13**

### **Paul in Rome**

#### **Acts 28:11-31**

**INTRODUCTION** When Paul entered Rome about A.D. 60 or 61, the Roman Empire extended from the Atlantic Ocean to the Persian Gulf, and from North Africa to Britain and northern Europe. Rome, the capital city of the vast empire, had over one million inhabitants. Founded in 753 B.C., Rome was situated on the Tiber River about sixteen miles from the Mediterranean Sea.

Roman government was first a monarchy ruled by kings (753-509 B.C.), and next a republic governed by elected consuls who presided over a Senate (509-27 B.C.). The republic was replaced in 27 B.C. by the empire when the Senate gave Octavian (a relative of Julius Caesar) the title Augustus, meaning august or majestic. During the reign of Caesar Augustus, the first emperor, Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea (Luke 2:1). Tiberias Caesar, the second emperor, ruled during the time of Jesus's ministry on earth (Luke 3:1). When Paul was in Rome, Nero, the fifth emperor, reigned over the empire.

Although Paul was a prisoner while in Rome, he lived in a rented house and was permitted to receive visitors. After he had been in Rome for three days, he called together the leaders of the Jews to explain his imprisonment. When the Jews expressed their desire to hear about the new "sect," Paul then preached to them about Jesus. Some of the Jews believed and some disbelieved. Paul quoted Isaiah (Isa. 6:9-10), applying the prophecy to the disbelievers, and then stated that the salvation of God was sent unto the Gentiles. The Jews departed and reasoned among themselves (Acts 28:17-29).

The book of Acts closes with Paul in Rome as a prisoner for two years (Acts 28:30-31). The result of his appeal to Nero is unknown. Some believe Paul was released, preached the gospel for some years, then returned to Rome and was beheaded by Nero who began to persecute the Christians about A.D. 64. Others believe Paul remained a prisoner for several years before he appeared before Nero and then died a martyr without regaining his freedom.

## **TEACHING**

**After the lesson, each child should know:**

1. After a long and dangerous trip by ship, Paul finally arrived in Rome, the most important city in the world, and the home of the Emperor, Nero.
2. Paul lived there as a prisoner in a rented house, awaiting his trial before Nero. He took this time to tell people about Jesus.
3. Paul waited for two years to speak with Nero. The Bible doesn't tell us what happened when he finally saw Nero, but Paul was eventually killed for believing in Jesus.

## **ART/CRAFT STATION**

**Experiences/Craft Suggestion:**

This is our last lesson about Paul, a very important servant of God, with an amazing story. Take some time with the students to go over what they can remember about Paul's story. List the events/characteristics on scraps of paper. If necessary, prompt them to remember some of the following major points:

1. Paul started out as Saul, and he hated and hurt the followers of Jesus.
2. God called Saul on his way to Damascus.
3. Saul was blinded and restored to sight.
4. Saul's name was changed to Paul
5. He preached about Jesus everywhere he went
6. He went on three journeys to tell Jews and Gentiles about Jesus
7. Jews lied about him to get him in trouble
8. He survived a shipwreck
9. He survived a poisonous snake bite
10. He traveled to Rome to be tried before the Emperor Nero

Divide the students into several small groups. Give each group a scrap of paper and have them make up a little skit to convey that part of Paul's story. Have the other groups try to guess what part of Paul's story the actors are portraying.

## **WORSHIP TIME:**

**"They Will Know We are Christians By Our Love"**