

# Leader BIBLE STUDY

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Jesus' ministry had begun. His first miracle was at a wedding in Cana, turning water into wine. He cleansed the temple in Jerusalem and performed signs, and "many trusted in His name" (John 2:23). Jesus likely spent a large part of His day teaching. When the day was done, He spent time alone or with His disciples. One night, however, a man named Nicodemus approached Jesus.

Nicodemus was a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews; that is, he was a religious leader who taught God's law, and he was a member of the Sanhedrin—a Jewish governing body. Nicodemus was part of an exclusive group of religious elite who appeared to be moral men. He held to the belief that if a person was a law-abiding Jew, then he would be accepted by God. Jesus gave Nicodemus a lesson that would turn his belief system on its head.

Jesus was a carpenter (Mark 6:3), so the religious teachers likely assumed He didn't know theology. But they had seen Jesus' miraculous signs in Jerusalem. Nicodemus, a representative of the teachers, had to conclude, "You are a teacher come from God" (John 3:2).

Nicodemus initiated the conversation, but Jesus chose the subject. His words perplexed Nicodemus: "Unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Jesus explained that spiritual birth is not unlike physical birth in that a person cannot do it himself. It is something that happens to him.

Jesus reminded Nicodemus of an Old Testament account, the disobedient Israelites and the bronze snake. The Israelites could not help themselves, but when they trusted in God and looked to the bronze snake lifted up on the pole, they were healed. (Num. 21:4-9)

Every person is born a sinner—spiritually dead and alienated from God. It is by God's Spirit—not our own effort—that we are born again. We look to Christ and His finished work on the cross for our salvation.

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# Preschool WORSHIP OVERVIEW

**Session Title:** Jesus Met Nicodemus

**Bible Passage:** John 3:1-21

**Big Picture Question:** How do you know God loves you? God sent Jesus to save us.

**Key Passage:** John 3:16

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus was revealed as the fulfillment of Scripture, the promised Savior.

## Large Group Worship

(15–20 minutes)

## Small Group Activities

(25–30 minutes)

## Large Group Closing

(10+ minutes)

Additional suggestions for specific groups are available at [gospelproject.com/kids/additional-resources](http://gospelproject.com/kids/additional-resources). For free online training on how to lead a group, visit [ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject](http://ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject).

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# The BIBLE STORY

## Jesus Met Nicodemus

*John 3:1-21*

Jesus was in the city of Jerusalem. **One night, a man came to visit Jesus. The man's name was Nicodemus** (NIK uh DEE muhs). Nicodemus was a religious man. He studied God's law. He taught the law and tried very hard to obey the law. And Nicodemus wanted to know more about Jesus.

**"Teacher," Nicodemus said, "we know where You came from. You came from God. You are a teacher, and You do miracles. Only people whom God is with can do miracles. God must be with You."**

Nicodemus was right. Jesus was a teacher, and He was very good at teaching. Jesus came to earth from heaven, and God *was* with Him.

Jesus decided to teach Nicodemus an important lesson. **Jesus said, "A person cannot see God's kingdom unless he is born again."**

**Nicodemus was confused. He thought that a person got to go to heaven if he was good and obeyed all of God's laws.** Jesus' words did not make sense.

**"How can anyone be born again when he is old?" Nicodemus asked Jesus.** Nicodemus knew that babies are small when they are born. How can a grown man be born again? That sounded awfully silly.

**Jesus told Nicodemus that when a baby is born, the baby gets life from his parents. But that kind of life doesn't last forever. Nobody lives forever. Jesus said that people can get life from God. This kind of life means people can live with God forever.**

"Do not be surprised at what I am saying," Jesus said.

Nicodemus still did not understand. **"How is it possible to get life from God?" Nicodemus asked.**

Jesus was teaching Nicodemus a hard lesson. He told Nicodemus, "When I tell you about things we have seen on earth, you do not believe Me. Will you believe Me when I tell you about things I have seen in heaven?" Jesus had come down to earth from heaven.

**Then Jesus reminded Nicodemus of a story. Many years before, God had rescued His people from slavery in Egypt, and the people lived**

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**for awhile in the wilderness. While they were there, they did not obey God. They complained to God. God sent snakes, and the snakes bit the people. The people got sick. God told Moses, their leader, to make a bronze snake and put it on a pole. When the people got sick, they could look up at the bronze snake on the pole. Then they would be healed.**

**Jesus said that He would be raised up like the snake so that everyone who believes in Jesus will have eternal life.**

Jesus told Nicodemus about God's great plan. **Jesus said, "God loved the world so much that He sent His One and Only Son to save the world. Everyone who believes in Him will not perish but will have eternal life."** Jesus was talking about Himself; He is God's One and Only Son!

*Christ Connection: Jesus taught Nicodemus about God's kingdom. God loves the world, and He sent Jesus to earth to rescue people from sin. Jesus said that people who believe in Him will be with God forever.*

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# Large Group WORSHIP

**Session Title:** Jesus Met Nicodemus

**Bible Passage:** John 3:1-21

**Big Picture Question:** How do you know God loves you? God sent Jesus to save us.

**Key Passage:** John 3:16

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus was revealed as the fulfillment of Scripture, the promised Savior.

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## Large Group Worship (15–20 minutes)

### Welcome and sing

- “The Only Name (Yours Will Be)” song
- “Made for Tappin’” song
- Follow your church’s security procedures.

Welcome the kids to worship time by playing “The Only Name (Yours Will Be).” Greet kids with a smile. When all the kids arrive, ask: “Which would you like to do first: sing a song or say hello to a friend?” Take an informal vote. In whichever order the kids choose, greet a friend and sing “Made for Tappin’.”

### Practice the key passage and a Bible skill

- Bible
- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- “God So Loved” song

Point to John 3:16 in the Bible. Read the key passage aloud two times. Define *eternal life* or *everlasting life* as “life forever with God.”

**Say** • You’ve probably heard our key passage before, but did you know that our key passage is talking about Jesus, God’s One and Only Son? This key passage tells us why God sent Jesus to earth: to make the way for us to have life forever with God!

Sing “God So Loved” with the children, using hand motions if you prefer.

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- “Jesus Met Nicodemus” video (optional)
  - Bible Story Picture Slide or Poster
  - Timeline Map

### **Watch or tell the Bible story**

Before telling the Bible story, invite the children to play the telephone game as they sit in a line, whispering the phrase “God gives new life.”

**Say** • In today’s Bible story, a man named Nicodemus had questions for Jesus. Listen closely because we are going to learn about how to have new life with God! God loves us so much and wants us to be a part of His family. Tell the Bible story in your own words using the script provided, or show the video “Jesus Met Nicodemus.”

### **Worship with song and pray**

- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster
- “The Only Name (Yours Will Be)” song
- “Sing a Song to God” song
- “God Is” song
- offering basket

**Say** • Jesus told Nicodemus something very important. Jesus said that God loves us so much, He sent Jesus to save us! That’s our big picture question and answer. ***How do you know God loves you? God sent Jesus to save us.***

Let’s sing about that wonderful news!

Sing a joyful song such as “The Only Name (Yours Will Be)” or “Sing a Song to God.” Invite the kids to move happily to the music.

Sing “God Is” as you collect an offering if you choose. Invite volunteers to share any prayer requests they may have and then pray.

**Say** • God, thank You for sending Jesus to save us. Thank You for loving us so much that You sent Your own Son to die for us. Would You help us to trust You and trust Jesus for what He did on the cross?

### **Transition to small groups**

- countdown video (optional)

Do activities one of these ways:

- as a group, all at the same time
- in small groups that rotate through each activity
- set up as centers, allowing preschoolers to browse and choose

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# Small Group ACTIVITIES

**Session Title:** Jesus Met Nicodemus

**Bible Passage:** John 3:1-21

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Tip: Select activities that you can staff and your class will enjoy.



## Small Group Activities (25–30 minutes)

### Sing a song

Sing “Praise Him All Ye Little Children” with the kids. If you are not familiar with the song, look it up on the Internet.

**Say** • We sing praises to God because He loves us. God is love. *How do you know God loves you? God sent Jesus to save us.*

### What do you know about God?

Print out the timeline pictures and place them around the room. Lead the children to sit in the center of the room. Select one child to run, grab a picture, and bring it to you. Ask the children to tell you what they remember from that Bible story. You may choose to use pictures of familiar Bible stories, such as Noah’s ark, David and Goliath, or Jesus’ birth. Briefly summarize each story.

**Say** • These are pictures of true Bible stories. Every story in the Bible is true. All these Bible stories show us what God is like. In fact, Jesus came to show the whole world that God loves us. *How do you know God loves you? God sent Jesus to save us.*

• “Timeline Pictures”

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- paper
  - art supplies

### **Talk about families**

Invite the children to draw pictures of their families. As they draw, ask them questions about their pictures. (Be sensitive to kids' family situations.) If the kids have younger siblings, ask if they remember when their younger brother or sister was born.

**Say** • Everyone is born into a family. Jesus told Nicodemus that to be a member of God's family, he needed to be born again. Did that mean Nicodemus had to become a baby? No! God sent Jesus to save us and make us part of God's family forever! *How do you know God loves you? God sent Jesus to save us.*

### **Tell a story with dolls**

- pair of dolls, male and female

Use a pair of dolls to play out a story about a family. Ask for input from the children, such as "What is the daddy's name?" or "What is the mommy's name?" As you tell the story, show what a loving family might look like.

**Say** • Did you know that God loves you and wants you to be a part of His family? *How do you know God loves you? God sent Jesus to save us.*

### **Review with a partner**

- craft sticks
- markers
- jar

Color the tips of several craft sticks, using one color per two sticks. Place the sticks in a jar, colored-tip facing down. Ask the children to draw a stick out of the jar to determine who their review partner is. Tell the children to take turns asking each other the big picture question. You may need to say the question and answer and invite kids to echo it to their partners.

**Say** • *How do you know God loves you? God sent Jesus to save us.*

- countdown video (optional)

### **Transition to large group closing**

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# Large Group CLOSING

**Session Title:** Jesus Met Nicodemus

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## Large Group Closing (10+ minutes)

### Review

- Bible
- Timeline Map
- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster
- “God So Loved” song
- “The Only Name (Yours Will Be)” song

Point to the Bible story picture on the timeline map as you review the Bible story.

- Where did Nicodemus say Jesus came from? (*from heaven*)
- How did Jesus say we can see God’s kingdom? (*We need to be born again.*)
- What does it mean to have new life with God? (*You can live with God forever.*)
- How can we have new life with God? (*We can love and trust in Jesus as our Savior.*)
- **How do you know God loves you? God sent Jesus to save us.**

Read the key passage from the poster or sing “God So Loved” together.

**Say** • Jesus told Nicodemus why He had come to earth: to save people from their sins! Isn’t that great news?  
Sing “The Only Name (Yours Will Be).”

### Pray

Invite kids to tell you any prayer requests they have.

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Remind kids that God is always ready to listen when we pray to Him.

**Say** • Thank You, Jesus, for coming to earth and dying for our sins. Thank You for loving us so much that You died for us when we didn't deserve it. Please help us to love and obey You. Amen.

### **Missions story**

If your children's ministry is planning a missions activity, introduce the activity. If you do not have a missions activity planned, talk about how God loves people all over the world and wants everyone to know Him. Talk about how we know God loves us: He sent Jesus to save us!

**Say** • Did you know that even in our own country, some people have never heard how much Jesus loves them?

Close your eyes and think about someone you know who doesn't come to church. [*Give kids a few moments to think.*] Pray that God will give you the opportunity to tell him or her about God's love. ***How do you know God loves you? God sent Jesus to save us.*** God sent Jesus because He loved every person in the whole world!

### **Play "Invite a Friend"**

Line up the children at one end of the room. Ask a child: ***How do you know God loves you? God sent Jesus to save us!*** Walk the child to other side of the room. Then instruct that child go to the child at the front of the line and tell her the big picture question and answer.

Then he should lead her to the other side of the room. She will return to tell the next child the big picture question and answer. Repeat until every child moves to the other side of the room.

**Say** • I invited you, my friends, to come with me by telling you the good news: ***God sent Jesus to save us!***

• Follow church security rules for dismissing children.

# Leader BIBLE STUDY

Following His encounter with Nicodemus, Jesus went with His disciples into the countryside of Judea. Jesus oversaw His disciples as they baptized people. (Jesus Himself did not baptize. See John 4:2.) At the same time, people came to John, and he was baptizing them. These baptisms were an outward sign of cleansing for people who had repented from their sins.

**2** Some of John's disciples came to John. They had noticed that the man John had reluctantly baptized was now baptizing others. Perhaps they felt the need to defend John's ministry, but John explained the purpose God had for his life. John had been chosen by God long before he was born to be a forerunner—one who prepares the way. (See Mal. 3:1; Isa. 40:3.)

John the Baptist understood who he was and who Jesus is. Consider these comparisons as John explained that Jesus was greater than John.

First, who were they? John was clear: "I am not the Messiah" (John 3:28). John was not the bridegroom, but the groom's friend. Jesus is the bridegroom. (John 3:29)

Where did they come from? John was from the earth, and he belonged to the earth. Jesus comes from above and is above all. (John 3:31)

Next, what did they do? John said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." As the predecessor, John was a witness to the Light. (John 1:7-8) He was a voice in the wilderness, and Jesus is the Word. (John 1:14,23) John baptized with water, but Jesus baptized with the Spirit. (John 1:33)

Finally, why were they here? John went before Jesus and rejoiced with Him. (John 3:28-29) Jesus came to give eternal life. (John 3:36)

In the scope of God's plan of salvation, it was time for John to step aside for Jesus to do His work on earth. Jesus' earthly ministry had begun, and He would obediently do God's will to bring salvation to sinners.

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# Preschool WORSHIP OVERVIEW

**Session Title:** Jesus and John the Baptist

**Bible Passage:** John 3:22-36

**Big Picture Question:** Where did Jesus come from? Jesus came from heaven.

**Key Passage:** John 3:16

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus was revealed as the fulfillment of Scripture, the promised Savior.

## Large Group Worship

(15–20 minutes)

## Small Group Activities

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# The BIBLE STORY

## Jesus and John the Baptist

*John 3:22-36*

Jesus and His friends, the disciples, left the city of Jerusalem. **Jesus spent time with His friends in the countryside. People came to see them, and Jesus taught the people about God. Many people were baptized.**

**John the Baptist was nearby. He was baptizing people too! John had people who followed him around and learned from him.** These people started to argue. **They had a question for John.**

**“Teacher,” they said, “remember the man you talked about, the One who was with you on the other side of the Jordan River? He is baptizing people, and people are starting to follow Him.”**

**John’s followers were talking about Jesus. John answered them, “A person can only have what God gives him. I told you that I am not the Messiah. I am the messenger who goes before the Messiah to announce that He is coming.”**

**It was good that people were being baptized and following Jesus. That’s what they were supposed to do! Jesus is the Messiah God promised.**

**John told his followers to think about a wedding. When two people get married, the man who married the bride is called the groom. His friend stands with him at the wedding, and the friend is happy to be there and to hear the groom’s voice. This was how John felt—like a groom’s friend—and Jesus was the groom. John was happy that Jesus, the Messiah, had come.**

John also knew that a wedding is the groom’s special day. The groom’s friend should not make it about himself. **John said, “Jesus must become greater, and I must become less.”**

But why was Jesus more important than John? Well, John was from the earth, and he could only tell people about things on earth. Jesus came to earth from heaven, and He could talk about things in heaven because He had seen them!

**John said, “God sent Jesus to earth, and Jesus speaks God’s words.”**

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Everything Jesus says is true because God always tells the truth.

**Then John said, “God the Father loves His Son, Jesus. He has given Jesus power over everything. Whoever believes in Jesus will live forever with God in heaven, but whoever does not believe in Jesus will not live forever.”**

*Christ Connection: God gave John the Baptist a special job. John told people, “Get ready for Jesus! Jesus is coming!” God sent Jesus to earth from heaven. When Jesus was older, He went out to teach people about God. Jesus was here, and John’s job was finished.*

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# Large Group WORSHIP

**Session Title:** Jesus and John the Baptist

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**Big Picture Question:** Where did Jesus come from? Jesus came from heaven.

**Key Passage:** John 3:16

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## Large Group Worship (15–20 minutes)

### Welcome and sing

- “The Only Name (Yours Will Be)” song
- “Sing a Song to God” song
- Follow your church’s security procedures.

Welcome the kids to worship time by playing “The Only Name (Yours Will Be).” Greet kids with a smile. When all the kids have arrived, sing a fun song such as “Sing a Song to God” to help them feel welcomed.

### Practice the key passage and a Bible skill

- Bible
- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- “God So Loved” song

Point out where the key passage is found in the Bible. Review the key passage. If you wish, use the motions created in the Bible study hour. Sing “God So Loved” together.

**Say** • Jesus is God’s One and Only Son. The kind of life our key passage is talking about means life forever with God, which is the best kind of life!

### Watch or tell the Bible story

- Timeline Map
- “Jesus and John the Baptist” video (optional)
- capes or blankets
- tiaras or paper crowns

Lead a few volunteers outside the room, and then let them come into the room. Boys may wear capes, and girls may wear tiaras. Declare loudly that the child has arrived (using his or her name) and invite the rest of the kids to applaud and welcome each child.

**Say** • It is fun to cheer for our friends coming into the

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room, but today we are going to learn about the most important person to ever come to us! He is more important than princesses and superheroes. In our Bible story today, we are going to learn that Jesus came all the way from heaven to earth.

Tell the Bible story in your own words with your Bible open or show the Bible story video “Jesus and John the Baptist.”

### **Worship with song and pray**

- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster
- “The Only Name (Yours Will Be)” song
- “Love Like Jesus” song
- “Made for Tappin’” song
- offering basket

**Say** • We learned today that John had a special job. He got the people ready and announced that Jesus was coming. And then Jesus came! *Where did Jesus come from? Jesus came from heaven.* He came all the way from heaven to die on the cross and come back to life again so we can have new life with God.

Sing a joyful song, such as “The Only Name (Yours Will Be)” or “Made for Tappin’.” Invite the kids to move happily to the music. Sing “Love Like Jesus” as you collect an offering if you choose. Invite volunteers to share any prayer requests they may have and then pray.

**Say** • Thank You, God, for sending John the Baptist to get people ready for Jesus. Thank You for showing us that Jesus must be greater, and we must be less. Thank You, Jesus, for coming to earth to die on the cross and coming back to life. Thank You, Jesus, for offering us life forever with God. Amen.

### **Transition to small groups**

- countdown video (optional)

Do activities one of these ways:

- as a group, all at the same time
- in small groups that rotate through each activity
- set up as centers, allowing preschoolers to browse and choose

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# Small Group ACTIVITIES

**Session Title:** Jesus and John the Baptist

**Bible Passage:** John 3:22-36

**Big Picture Question:** Where did Jesus come from? Jesus came from heaven.

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Tip: Select activities that you can staff and your class will enjoy.



- play dough
- play dough tools (optional)

- art supplies
- building supplies
- toy dishes

Tip: After each group has set up its station, allow kids to play at whatever station they choose.

## Small Group Activities (25–30 minutes)

### Sculpt with play dough

Give the children play dough to make John the Baptist and Jesus figures. Use this time to reenact the Bible story and ask the children questions about Jesus and John the Baptist.

**Say** • Even though Jesus came from heaven, He knew exactly what it was like to be a person like us. But Jesus was different because He is also God! *Where did Jesus come from? Jesus came from heaven.*

### Get ready

Place the children in groups of two to four and assign them to a station. Set up a few stations around the room. At each station, place materials so the children can get the activity ready for others to use. Tell the children not to do the activity but only help prepare it. Sample stations: Stack fresh paper and set out boxes of crayons, open a bucket of interlocking bricks, set out toy dishes.

**Say** • Just like we are getting these things ready for someone else to use for our activities, John the Baptist got people ready for Jesus. *Where did Jesus come from? Jesus came from heaven.*

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## Experiment with water

- water
- various objects
- towels (for spills)

Fill a container with water and collect various objects around the room. Talk briefly about baptism. Allow kids to submerge some of the objects.

**Say** • John the Baptist baptized Jesus, even though Jesus never sinned. Jesus' friends also baptized people who believed that Jesus is God's Son, the Messiah. Some of John's friends wondered if that was OK, but John explained that Jesus is the Messiah. *Where did Jesus come from? Jesus came from heaven.*

## Where was Jesus?

- Timeline Map or Small Group Visual Pack

To illustrate the concept that Jesus wasn't created but has always existed, show the children pictures of Old Testament stories from the timeline. Describe the Bible story and then ask: "Where was Jesus?" (*Jesus was in heaven with God.*)

**Say** • Jesus is God's Son, and He lived in heaven at the time of these Bible stories. The Bible says at just the right time, Jesus was born on earth like God planned. *Where did Jesus come from? Jesus came from heaven.*

## Talk about *greater than* and *less than*

- candy-coated chocolate pieces, 1 small pack per kid
- Allergy Alert

Option: If some kids can't have chocolate, substitute other colored candy pieces.

Give each kid a package of candy-coated chocolate pieces. Invite them to sort the candies by color. Talk about how the number of red candies may be *greater than* the number of green candies, and the number of blue candies may be *less than* the number of yellow candies. Talk about how *greater than* means more.

**Say** • John said that Jesus is greater than anybody! Jesus is God's Son! *Where did Jesus come from? Jesus came from heaven.*

- countdown video (optional)

## Transition to large group closing

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# Large Group CLOSING

**Session Title:** Jesus and John the Baptist

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**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus was revealed as the fulfillment of Scripture, the promised Savior.

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## Large Group Closing (10+ minutes)

### Review

- Bible
- Timeline Map
- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster
- “God So Loved” song
- “The Only Name (Yours Will Be)” song

Point to the Bible story picture on the timeline map. Review the Bible story this week by asking the following questions:

1. What did Jesus do with His friends in the countryside? (*He taught people about God and baptized them.*)
2. Who is Jesus? (*Jesus is the Messiah that God promised. He is God’s Son.*)
3. Why is Jesus more important than John? (*Jesus died on the cross to take away our sins.*)
4. **Where did Jesus come from? Jesus came from heaven.**
5. What was John the Baptist’s special job? (*to get people ready for Jesus*)

Read the key passage again to the children. Sing the key passage song or “The Only Name (Yours Will Be)” song.

**Say** • Today we learned that **Jesus came from heaven** to save us. Jesus is God’s Son, and He is alive with God in heaven today. Let’s pray and thank God for sending Jesus to live with us and teach us how to have new life.

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- “God Is” song

### Pray and sing

Sing the “God Is” song. Ask the kids if they have any prayer requests and be sure to mention them as you pray.

**Say** • Thank You, God, for sending Your Son, Jesus, to earth from heaven. Thank You for John the Baptist, who helped get people ready for Jesus. Help us to tell our friends and family members about Jesus. We love You, Jesus. Amen.

- Key Passage Slide or Poster

### Missions story

If your children’s ministry is planning a missions activity, introduce the activity. If you do not have a missions activity planned, talk about how God planned to send Jesus to save people from sin.

**Say** • God created the world and people. People sinned and disobeyed God, but God had a plan to send Jesus to save us from sin and death. Before God sent Jesus, He gave John the Baptist a special job: to get people ready for Jesus. Do you know that we can help people get ready for Jesus, too? We can tell people that Jesus is God’s Son and that He loves them. We can tell them our key passage. Practice it with me!

Say the key passage together again. Remind kids that John 3:16 is the good news about Jesus!

### Play a game

Line up the children on one side of the room. Choose a few to stand with you on the opposite side. Instead of encouraging the children to “break the line” as in traditional “Red Rover,” make a spot for them on your side. Do this until all the children are on your side.

- Follow church security rules for dismissing children.

**Say** • We made room for our friends, getting ready for them to come like John the Baptist did for Jesus. *Where did Jesus come from? Jesus came from heaven.*

## Leader BIBLE STUDY

At the time Jesus was on earth, the social food chain went like this: Jews don't talk to Samaritans. The strife between the two groups stretched back hundreds of years, to the Babylonian exile.

When the Babylonians attacked Judah, they moved a large group of God's people away from their homes. But some of the people—the poorest, sickest, least able to work—were left behind in the region that became known as Samaria. The exile lasted 70 years. During that time, those left in Samaria began to mingle with their neighbors to the north. They intermarried and practiced foreign customs. While the Samaritans still believed in God, they adapted their beliefs. They set up their own place of worship on Mount Gerizim. (See 2 Kings 17:29-41; Ezra 9:1-2.)

The Jews who returned home from Babylon to rebuild God's temple in Jerusalem rejected this new way of life. They were dedicated to obeying and worshiping God, and they didn't agree with the Samaritans' practices. The Samaritans opposed the Jews' efforts to reestablish their nation. In time, the Jews' hate for the Samaritans grew—so much so, that a Jew traveling from Judea to Galilee would take a longer route to travel around Samaria rather than through it.

Jesus broke down barriers when He traveled to Galilee by way of Samaria. Even more surprising, Jesus stopped at a well around noon and asked a Samaritan woman for a drink. Jewish men did not speak to women in public.

But Jesus was kind to her, and He offered a gift—living water. The woman didn't understand, but Jesus revealed His knowledge of her past. He even gave her a glimpse of the future. The Samaritan woman expected a Messiah to come and fix everything. Jesus said, "I am He."

The living water Jesus offers is the Holy Spirit. (See John 7:37-39.) It is a gift that He is eager to give us when we ask Him. Those who receive His grace will never be thirsty again.

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# Preschool WORSHIP OVERVIEW

**Session Title:** Jesus Met a Samaritan Woman

**Bible Passage:** John 4:1-26

**Big Picture Question:** Whom does Jesus love? Jesus loves everyone.

**Key Passage:** John 3:16

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus was revealed as the fulfillment of Scripture, the promised Savior.

## Large Group Worship

(15–20 minutes)

## Small Group Activities

(25–30 minutes)

## Large Group Closing

(10+ minutes)

Additional suggestions for specific groups are available at [gospelproject.com/kids/additional-resources](http://gospelproject.com/kids/additional-resources). For free online training on how to lead a group, visit [ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject](http://ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject).

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# The BIBLE STORY

## Jesus Met a Samaritan Woman

*John 4:1-26*

**Jesus had been teaching in the land of Judea**, and a special group of men started to follow Him. The men were Jesus' friends, and they were called His disciples. Many people began following Jesus, and they listened to Him teach. **Now it was time for Jesus to leave Judea.**

**So Jesus began traveling back to the land of Galilee.** Between the land of Judea and the land of Galilee was the land of Samaria. Usually God's people, the Jews, stayed away from Samaria. Even though traveling through Samaria was the fastest way home, they traveled around the land. The Jews did not get along with the people in Samaria.

But Jesus was not like the other Jews. **On His way home, He traveled right through the land of Samaria. He even stopped at one of the towns where there was a well.** A well is a deep hole where people can get water out of the ground. Jesus stayed at the well, and His friends went into town to buy food.

**The sun was high in the sky, and Jesus was tired from traveling. A woman who lived in Samaria came to the well to get water. Jesus said to the woman, "Give Me a drink."**

**The woman was surprised.** "You are a Jew," she said. **"Why are you talking to me? I am a Samaritan."**

**Jesus said, "I asked you for a drink. You do not know who I am. If you did, you would have asked Me for a drink. I would give you living water."**

The woman was confused. Jesus did not have any water with Him. He did not even have a bucket to get water out of the well.

**"Sir," the woman said, "this well is deep, and you do not have a bucket. Where do You get 'living water'?"**

**"Anyone who drinks the water from this well will be thirsty again," Jesus said, "but anyone who drinks the water I give will never, ever get thirsty again!"** That sounded wonderful! Jesus wasn't talking about actual water. He said that living water is like a well in your heart that never runs out. Anyone who has living water will have eternal life. Now, Jesus was

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talking about God's Spirit, but the woman did not know that.

**“Sir, I want living water,” she said. “If I am never, ever thirsty again, I won’t have to keep coming to this well to get water with my bucket.”**

“Go get your husband and come back here,” Jesus said.

“I do not have a husband,” the woman said.

Jesus knew she was telling the truth. Jesus knew everything about the woman. **The woman could tell Jesus was wise**, so she asked Him a question about worshiping God. Then **she said, “I know the Messiah is coming.** When He comes, He will explain everything to us.”

**Jesus said, “The Messiah is talking to you now. I am the Messiah.”**

*Christ Connection: Jesus was different from other people on earth. He was kind to the woman at the well even though she didn't have many friends. Jesus loves everyone, and He came to give people a free gift: salvation from sin.*

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# Large Group WORSHIP

**Session Title:** Jesus Met a Samaritan Woman

**Bible Passage:** John 4:1-26

**Big Picture Question:** Whom does Jesus love? Jesus loves everyone.

**Key Passage:** John 3:16

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus was revealed as the fulfillment of Scripture, the promised Savior.

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## Large Group Worship (15–20 minutes)

### Welcome and sing

- “The Only Name (Yours Will Be)” song
- “Made for Tappin’” song
- Follow your church’s security procedures.

Welcome the kids to worship time by playing “The Only Name (Yours Will Be).” Greet kids with a smile. When all the kids have arrived, sing an action song such as “Made for Tappin’ ” to help them feel welcomed.

### Practice the key passage and a Bible skill

- Bible
- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- “God So Loved” song

Point out where the key passage is found in the Bible. Read the key passage aloud two times, using any hand motions you have created.

**Say** • Jesus told Nicodemus in our key passage why He came to earth: so people who believe in Jesus can have eternal life. That means life forever with God, and it’s only found through Jesus.

Sing the key passage song together.

### Watch or tell the Bible story

- “Jesus Met a Samaritan Woman” video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Slide or Poster
- Timeline Map

Remind the children of where you are on the timeline, reviewing with them what happened in last week’s Bible story.

**Say** • Have any of you ever been on a trip? [*Allow a few volunteers to answer.*] In our Bible story today, Jesus took a trip. He did not ride in a plane or a car. He walked on

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His own two feet. Stand up and walk in place with me. [Use exaggerated motions, bringing your knees up high and swinging your arms back and forth.] Phew! Walking is pretty tiring. Show me your tired faces. Well, Jesus stopped to rest a while. [Instruct the children to sit down.] While Jesus was resting, He met a woman, and the two of them talked about some interesting things!

Tell the Bible story or watch the video “Jesus Met a Samaritan Woman.”

### **Worship with song and pray**

- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster
- “The Only Name (Yours Will Be)” song
- “Love Like Jesus” song
- “Sing a Song to God” song
- offering basket

**Say** • Jesus told the woman at the well about living water.

He wasn’t talking about water we drink—He was talking about God’s Spirit! Jesus talked to a woman other people wouldn’t talk to because He loved her. **Whom does Jesus love? Jesus loves everyone!**

Sing a joyful song, such as “The Only Name (Yours Will Be)” or “Sing a Song to God.” Invite the kids to move happily to the music.

Sing “Love Like Jesus” as you collect an offering if you choose. Invite volunteers to share any prayer requests they may have and then pray.

**Say** • Thank You, Jesus, for being kind to this Samaritan woman and for loving all of us. Give us this living water You spoke of—God’s Spirit—so that we can love and worship You forever with people from all over the world. We love You, Jesus! Amen.

- countdown video (optional)  
Tip: Do activities one of these ways:
- as a group, all at the same time
- in small groups that rotate through each activity
- set up as centers, allowing preschoolers to browse and choose

### **Transition to small groups**

Before going to small groups, count together all the people in the room. Then say: “How many people in this room does Jesus love?” Kids should shout out the number. Say: “Are you sure it’s not [a few less]?” Ask: **Whom does Jesus love? Jesus loves everyone.** Then move to small groups.

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# Small Group ACTIVITIES

**Session Title:** Jesus Met a Samaritan Woman

**Bible Passage:** John 4:1-26

**Big Picture Question:** Whom does Jesus love? Jesus loves everyone.

**Key Passage:** John 3:16

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus was revealed as the fulfillment of Scripture, the promised Savior.

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Tip: Select activities that you can staff and your class will enjoy.



## Small Group Activities (25–30 minutes)

### Sing “Jesus Loves Me”

Stand up and sing “Jesus Loves Me” together. If you are unfamiliar with the lyrics, look them up on the Internet. Sing the song a few times. On the second or third time, substitute the word *you* instead of *me* and point to each child as you sing.

**Say** • *Whom does Jesus love? Jesus loves everyone.*

### Make dazzling drinking cups

Assist each child as she uses a foam brush to spread glue onto the outside of a plastic cup. When the outer surface is covered in glue, help her place various colors of tissue paper squares on the outside of the cup. Set aside the children’s cups to dry.

**Say** • Every time you look at this cup, remember our Bible story. Whom did Jesus speak to? (*the Samaritan woman*) What did Jesus tell this woman to give Him? (*a drink of water*) Was Jesus her friend even when she had made wrong choices? (*Yes!*) **Whom does Jesus love? Jesus loves everyone.** What kind of water did Jesus say He could give the woman? (*living water*) What is this living water? (*God’s Spirit*)

- plastic cups, 1 per kid
- glue
- foam brushes
- tissue paper squares

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- paper
  - crayons or markers

### **Better than life**

Remind the children that when someone is thirsty, he or she really wants something to drink. Mention that Jesus felt thirsty after His long journey. Invite the children to draw pictures of things they really want. Look at the pictures together.

**Say** • Jesus promised to give this woman something even better than what she really wanted. He knew she needed God most of all. God is better than everything else! The Bible says God’s love is better than life! [See Psalm 63:3.] *Whom does Jesus love? Jesus loves everyone.*

### **Measure water**

- large plastic tub
- water
- buckets, measuring cups, measuring spoons
- plastic tablecloth
- towels

Provide a large plastic tub of water and a variety of buckets, measuring cups, and measuring spoons. Invite the children to measure and pour water from container to container. You might place a plastic tablecloth or some towels beneath the large tub of water.

**Say** • Water is good for you. Jesus talked about living water, which is God’s Spirit. He said God’s Spirit is like a well in your heart that never runs out! God gives His Spirit to the people who love Him. *Whom does Jesus love? Jesus loves everyone.*

### **Walk through Samaria**

- “Map of Samaria”

Look at the map together and find Samaria in between Galilee and Judea. “Finger walk” from Galilee to Judea through Samaria. Review the Bible story as the kids’ fingers travel. Remind the kids that Jews avoided Samaria, but Jesus went to Samaria because He loves all people.

**Say** • *Whom does Jesus love? Jesus loves everyone.*

- countdown video (optional)

### **Transition to large group closing**

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# Large Group CLOSING

**Session Title:** Jesus Met a Samaritan Woman

**Bible Passage:** John 4:1-26

**Big Picture Question:** Whom does Jesus love? Jesus loves everyone.

**Key Passage:** John 3:16

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus was revealed as the fulfillment of Scripture, the promised Savior.

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## Large Group Closing (10+ minutes)

### Review

- Bible
- Timeline Map
- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster
- “God So Loved” song
- “The Only Name (Yours Will Be)” song

Play a guessing game, either “Guess the number between 1 and 10” or “I Spy.” When a child selects the correct number or object, say “Good guess!” After a few rounds, talk about how the kids didn’t know the answer right away—they just made a good guess. Jesus knew everything about the Samaritan woman because Jesus is God’s Son. Tell the kids that Jesus knows everything about them, and He loves them.

Point to the timeline map as you ask review questions:

1. Where did the woman live? (*Samaria*)
2. Did Jews go to Samaria much? (*No!*)
3. Was the Samaritan woman surprised when Jesus spoke to her? (*Yes!*)
4. What is the living water Jesus spoke about? (*God’s Spirit*)
5. ***Whom does Jesus love? Jesus loves everyone.***

Invite kids to sing “God So Loved” or “The Only Name (Yours Will Be).”

### Pray

- “Love Like Jesus” song

Remind kids that ***Jesus loves everyone***. As Jesus’ followers, we should love everyone too. Sing “Love Like Jesus” and

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then take prayer requests.

**Say** • Thank You, Jesus, for showing love and kindness to the Samaritan woman and to all people. Thank You for coming to earth and dying on the cross to save us from sin and death. Thank You for giving us Your Spirit. Amen!

### **Missions story**

• information from the Internet about an unreached people group (optional)

If your children's ministry is planning a missions activity, introduce the activity. Otherwise, talk about how God loves people all over the world. Talk about how groups of people around the world have never had the chance to hear about Jesus. If you'd like, you may print out information from the Internet about a specific unreached people group. Commit to pray for that unreached people group over the next week.

**Say** • Did you know groups of people all over the world—and even in our own country—have never heard about Jesus? Let's pray together that God would send Christian missionaries to tell these groups of people that Jesus loves them. *Whom does Jesus love? Jesus loves everyone.*

### **Call out "Jesus loves everyone!"**

Tell the kids to follow along as you do the following motions. When you put your hand to your ear, they should say, "No! *Jesus loves everyone!*"

Does it matter if you're short [*squat*] or tall [*reach high*]?

Does it matter if you're big [*spread arms wide*] or small [*tuck arms in*]?

**Kids:** No! *Jesus loves everyone!*

Does it matter if your shirt is blue [*tug on shirt*]?

Does it matter if your shoes are new [*lift and point toes*]?

**Kids:** No! *Jesus loves everyone!*

Does it matter if you've been bad [*shake finger*]?

Does it matter if you're feeling sad [*frown*]?

**Kids:** No! *Jesus loves everyone!*

• Follow church security rules for dismissing children.

# Leader BIBLE STUDY

Jesus was about thirty years old when He began His ministry. After John baptized Jesus in the Jordan River, Jesus was tempted in the desert. Jesus traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover. Then, He headed north to Galilee. He went through the region of Samaria, stopping at Jacob's well to talk to a Samaritan woman.

Jesus began teaching in the synagogues. He went to the town of Nazareth. Nazareth was a small village in the hills between the Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean Sea. This was the place Jesus grew up.

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On the Sabbath day, Jesus went into the synagogue. He read aloud the words of the prophet Isaiah. (See Isa. 61:1-2.) Jesus sat down. Everyone's eyes were on Him as He explained, "Today as you listen, this Scripture has been fulfilled." What was Jesus saying? Jesus was saying, *It's Me*. The words Jesus read were coming true. Some of the people might have remembered Jesus from His youth. They asked, "Isn't this Joseph's son?"

Jesus knew their thoughts; Jesus had performed miracles in Capernaum, and the people wanted Jesus to do miracles in His hometown too. Jesus reminded them of two Old Testament accounts. Many widows lived in Israel when the prophet Elijah was there, but God sent Elijah to help a widow in another country. And Elisha likely encountered Israelites who had leprosy, but he healed Naaman the Syrian.

Jesus wanted the people to understand that His miracles were an act of grace—a gift. No one deserves God's grace, so God may show grace to whomever He pleases. The people were angry. They drove Jesus away, intending to kill Him, but Jesus escaped through the crowd.

Jesus came to give sight to the blind and to set the captives free. He came preaching good news. Finally, the Messiah had come! Jesus is God's plan to save sinners.

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# Preschool WORSHIP OVERVIEW

**Session Title:** Rejection at Nazareth

**Bible Passage:** Luke 4:16-30

**Big Picture Question:** What does the word gospel mean? Gospel means “good news.”

**Key Passage:** John 3:16

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus was revealed as the fulfillment of Scripture, the promised Savior.

## Large Group Worship

(15–20 minutes)

## Small Group Activities

(25–30 minutes)

## Large Group Closing

(10+ minutes)

Additional suggestions for specific groups are available at [gospelproject.com/kids/additional-resources](http://gospelproject.com/kids/additional-resources). For free online training on how to lead a group, visit [ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject](http://ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject).

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# The BIBLE STORY

## Rejection at Nazareth

*Luke 4:16-30*

**Jesus went to the town of Nazareth.** Nazareth was special to Jesus. He grew up there as a young boy. But Jesus wasn't a young boy anymore; He was a man. Jesus had grown up, and now He traveled and taught people about God.

**On the Sabbath day, Jesus went to the synagogue, a special building where Jews met together to pray, worship, and learn about the Scriptures.** The Sabbath day was a special day—a day set apart for God's people to rest. On that day, God's people—the Jews—all went to the synagogue to worship God. One of the ways people worshiped God was by listening to God's Word.

That day, **Jesus stood up to read God's Word. He opened a scroll.** The scroll had words on it that the prophet Isaiah had written long ago. **Jesus read the words: "God's Spirit is on Me. He has chosen Me to tell good news to the poor. He has sent Me to tell the captives that they are free, to help the blind people see, to free people who have been treated badly, and to announce that God's favor is on us."**

Then **Jesus rolled up the scroll.** He gave the scroll to a man who worked in the synagogue, **and then He sat down.** The people in the synagogue stared at Jesus, waiting for Him to do something. **Jesus said, "These words came true today."** Yes, Isaiah's words came true because Isaiah's words were about Jesus! God was with Jesus, and **God had chosen Jesus to tell people good news!**

**Many of the people in the synagogue were happy.** Jesus was saying wonderful things! **But some people** said, "Isn't this Joseph's son?" Those people had grown up with Jesus. They knew Him when He was a young boy. They **did not think there was anything special about Him.** But Jesus is very special! Jesus' father on earth was Joseph, but His true Father is God!

**Jesus knew the people in Nazareth would not accept Him.** "No prophet is accepted in his hometown," He said. **When Jesus was done talking, the people listening to Him were angry. They forced Jesus to**

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**leave Nazareth. They wanted to hurt Jesus, but Jesus walked away.**

*Christ Connection: Long before Jesus was born, Isaiah the prophet talked about God's plan to send Jesus to earth. Jesus would bring good news and help people who were hurting. Jesus read Isaiah's words. Jesus said that He is the One God promised to send.*

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# Large Group WORSHIP

**Session Title:** Rejection at Nazareth

**Bible Passage:** Luke 4:16-30

**Big Picture Question:** What does the word *gospel* mean? *Gospel* means “good news.”

**Key Passage:** John 3:16

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus was revealed as the fulfillment of Scripture, the promised Savior.

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## Large Group Worship (15-20 minutes)

### Welcome and sing

- “The Only Name (Yours Will Be)” song
- “Sing a Song to God” song
- Follow your church’s security procedures.

Welcome the kids to worship time by playing “The Only Name (Yours Will Be).” Greet kids with a smile. When all the kids have arrived, sing an action song such as “Sing a Song to God” to help them feel welcomed.

### Practice the key passage and a Bible skill

- Bible
- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- “God So Loved” song
- red construction paper heart

Before kids arrive, fold a construction paper heart so that it resembles a red square. Invite a kid to come forward, unfold the square, and hold up the heart.

**Say** • What shape is this? (*a heart*) What do you think about when you see a heart? (*love*) When you see a heart, think about our key passage. Our key passage talks about the greatest love in the whole world: God’s love for us! Invite kids to say the key passage from memory, using any hand motions you’ve created. Sing “God So Loved.”

### Watch or tell the Bible story

- “Rejection at Nazareth” video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Slide or Poster
- Timeline Map

Introduce the Bible story by playing “Imagine If.” Provide a variety of pretend situations, instructing the children to give a thumbs-up if the idea makes them happy and a thumbs-down if the idea makes them sad or upset. Suggestions

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include “Imagine if it never rained again”; “Imagine if there were no more strawberries”; “Imagine if you had six fingers instead of five”; or “Imagine if you were given a pig for a present!”

**Say** • In our Bible story today, Jesus talked to two groups of people. He told them something very important. Some of the people were happy about Jesus’ words, and some of them were upset.

Tell the Bible story in your own words or show the video “Rejection at Nazareth.”

### **Worship with song and pray**

**Say** • Jesus traveled to the city of Nazareth, where He had grown up. Jesus read God’s message about the Savior from the prophet Isaiah’s scroll. Then Jesus surprised everyone when He said that Isaiah was talking about Him. Jesus said He came to tell good news, or the gospel. ***What does the word gospel mean? Gospel means “good news.”*** The good news about Jesus is that Jesus came to save us because He loves us.

Sing a joyful song such as “The Only Name (Yours Will Be)” or “Made for Tappin’.” Invite the kids to move happily to the music.

Sing “God Is” as you collect an offering if you choose.

Invite volunteers to share any prayer requests they may have, then pray.

**Say** • Dear God, thank You for sending Jesus. Thank You for giving us the gospel, Your good news. Thank You that we can be forgiven of sin and live forever with You in heaven because of Jesus. Help us to tell this good news wherever we go to whomever we meet. Amen.

### **Transition to small groups**

- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster
- “The Only Name (Yours Will Be)” song
- “God Is” song
- “Made for Tappin’” song
- offering basket

- countdown video (optional)

Tip: Do activities one of these ways:

- as a group, all at the same time
- in small groups that rotate through each activity
- set up as centers, allowing preschoolers to browse and choose

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# Small Group ACTIVITIES

**Session Title:** Rejection at Nazareth

**Bible Passage:** Luke 4:16-30

**Big Picture Question:** What does the word *gospel* mean? *Gospel* means “good news.”

**Key Passage:** John 3:16

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus was revealed as the fulfillment of Scripture, the promised Savior.

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Tip: Select activities that you can staff and your class will enjoy.



• “Face Cards”

Tip: For younger preschoolers, set up the cards with the pictures faceup.

- paper plates, 1 per kid
- crayons

## Small Group Activities (25–30 minutes)

### Play a matching game

Provide sets of face cards to groups of children. Position all 16 cards in a 4-by-4 grid. One at a time, kids will flip over two cards. If the cards match, the kid keeps the pair and the next kid takes a turn. If the cards do not match, flip them back over. Invite the kids to look at the cards in their hands. Do the faces look happy, sad, or surprised?

**Say** • Everyone was amazed at Jesus’ teaching. Show me your surprised or amazed face. [*Applaud kids for their amazed faces.*] Jesus said, “God’s Spirit is on Me. He has chosen Me to tell good news to the poor.” ***What does the word gospel mean? Gospel means “good news.”***

### Make paper plate faces

Give each child crayons and a paper plate. On one side, kids will draw a happy face. On the other side, they will draw an angry face. Say that in the Bible story, people felt happy or angry when they heard Jesus’ words. The people either loved Jesus more, or they became angry with Him. Pray that God would give the children hearts to love His gospel.

**Say** • As you grow up, sometimes you might hear words

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from the Bible that you don't want to obey. But God's words are always good. When you don't want to obey, ask God to help you obey, and He will!

### **Take a trip**

- "Map of Jesus' Early Life"
- "Map Signs"
- tape

Show kids a map of Galilee, Judea, and Samaria. Place signs with names of the places on the map around the room, in the general direction (north, east, south, west) that they appear on the map. As a class, take a trip from the south (Bethlehem) all the way up north (Nazareth). Point out the places you pass as you go along. Remind the children that Jesus traveled to the city where He grew up.

**Say** • Jesus went to Nazareth and told the people He was bringing good news from God. *What does the word gospel mean? Gospel means "good news."*

### **Make play dough scrolls**

- play dough
- rolling pins or cans
- craft sticks or unsharpened pencils

Using rolling pins or sides of cans, roll out play dough into a large, flat shape to resemble scrolls. Provide craft sticks or unsharpened pencils for the children to "write" messages.

**Say** • Isaiah wrote down a message from God about Jesus long before Jesus came to earth. Isaiah said that Jesus would come to bring the gospel. *What does the word gospel mean? Gospel means "good news."*

### **Announce the good news**

- heavyweight paper
- tape
- art supplies to decorate megaphones (optional)

Provide heavyweight paper so each child can make cone shapes and then tape them. Invite the children to "announce" the good news about Jesus. Ask the big picture question so they can answer through their megaphones.

**Say** • *What does the word gospel mean? Gospel means "good news."*

- countdown video (optional)

### **Transition to large group closing**

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# Large Group CLOSING

**Session Title:** Rejection at Nazareth

**Bible Passage:** Luke 4:16-30

**Big Picture Question:** What does the word *gospel* mean? *Gospel* means “good news.”

**Key Passage:** John 3:16

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus was revealed as the fulfillment of Scripture, the promised Savior.

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## Large Group Closing (10+ minutes)

### Review

- Bible
- “Unit 25 Bible Story Pictures”
- Timeline Map
- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- “God So Loved” song
- Unit 25 Big Picture Question Posters (optional)

Ask the questions below about the Bible stories. Hold up the Bible story picture or refer to the timeline map for each question to help kids remember.

“Jesus Met Nicodemus”

- Who came to visit Jesus and ask questions about God? (*Nicodemus*)
- ***How do you know God loves you? God sent Jesus to save us.*** [Review the key passage or sing “God So Loved.”]

“Jesus and John the Baptist”

- Who got the people ready for Jesus? (*John*)
- ***Where did Jesus come from? Jesus came from heaven.***

“Jesus Met a Samaritan Woman”

- Whom did Jesus speak to at the well? (*a Samaritan woman*)
- ***Whom does Jesus love? Jesus loves everyone.***

“Rejection at Nazareth”

- Who said that Jesus would bring good news? (*Isaiah*)
- ***What does the word gospel mean? Gospel means “good news.”***

- 
- “God Is” song

## Pray

Sing the “God Is” song together. Then take prayer requests.

**Say** • Thank You, God, for giving us Your Word. Thank You that Your words are always true and always good. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to preach good news to all people. We love you, Jesus. Amen!

## Missions story

- “Filling an Empty Glass” missions video (optional)

Option: Talk about how Jesus brought good news to the people in Nazareth. Some people were happy to hear Jesus’ good news, but some people were angry. Talk about how missionaries bring Jesus’ good news to others. Show the missions video.

If your children’s ministry is planning a missions activity, introduce the activity. If you do not have a missions activity planned, talk about how we can read the Bible in our language.

**Say** • Did you know that in some places in the world, people do not have a Bible in the language they speak at home? Would it be easier to understand the gospel if they could read the Bible in their own language? ***What does the word gospel mean? Gospel means “good news.”***

Do you want to hear some really good news? Some missionaries study many languages so they can write the Bible in these languages. Let’s pray for missionaries who work hard and share God’s Word with people who do not have Bibles in the languages they speak!

Pray for Bible translators and missionaries who take the good news to unreached people groups.

## Play “Hot Scroll”

- paper
- yarn or ribbon
- “The Only Name (Yours Will Be)” song

Roll up a piece of paper and tie it with yarn or ribbon. Play “Hot Scroll” instead of “Hot Potato.” Play “The Only Name (Yours Will Be)” as kids pass around the scroll. If the music stops, the child holding the scroll is not out, but she should give the answer to the big picture question. ***What does the word gospel mean? Gospel means “good news.”***

- Follow church security rules for dismissing children.

# Leader BIBLE STUDY

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Jesus entered Galilee after traveling through Samaria. The Galileans had seen Jesus in Jerusalem at the Passover feast, and they welcomed Him. Jesus went to the town of Cana, where He had performed His first miracle—turning water into wine. News spread of Jesus’ whereabouts, and an official hurried to find Him.

The official’s son was sick in Capernaum, about 20 miles away. The boy was so sick, the official knew he would die if he didn’t get help. So the official went to Jesus. Imagine the urgency in his voice when he pleaded for Jesus to come heal his son.

But Jesus didn’t rush away to Capernaum. Instead, He challenged the official and the Galileans: “You people must see miracles and signs before you believe in Me.”

It was true; many people who saw Jesus’ miracles followed Him and believed in Him. (See John 2:11,23; 3:2; 6:2,14; 12:11,18.) Jesus was willing to help people, but He didn’t want them to miss the point. The miracles were great, but Jesus had come to offer something greater. The miracles were signs that pointed to who Jesus is: the Son of God who offers eternal life.

The official pleaded again, “Sir, come down before my boy dies!” Jesus answered, “Go. Your son will live.” The official believed what Jesus said. He headed home, and his servants confirmed the truth: His son was well. The fever had left him at the same time Jesus said, “Your son will live.” So the official and everyone in his household believed in Jesus.

Jesus’ miracles are one of the main ways God brought people to faith in Him. Jesus demonstrated His power and authority when He healed the sick and set captives free. Jesus performed more miracles than the apostle John recorded. John concludes his Gospel by explaining that “these are written so that you may believe Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and by believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:31).

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# Preschool WORSHIP OVERVIEW

**Session Title:** Jesus Healed an Official's Son

**Bible Passage:** John 4:46-54

**Big Picture Question:** Who can heal sick people? Jesus can heal sick people.

**Key Passage:** John 20:30-31

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus' miracles demonstrated His divine authority.

## Large Group Worship

(15–20 minutes)

## Small Group Activities

(25–30 minutes)

## Large Group Closing

(10+ minutes)

Additional suggestions for specific groups are available at [gospelproject.com/kids/additional-resources](http://gospelproject.com/kids/additional-resources). For free online training on how to lead a group, visit [ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject](http://ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject).

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# The BIBLE STORY

## Jesus Healed an Official's Son

*John 4:46-54*

Jesus spent time in the city of Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. Then He traveled to the land of Galilee. On the way there, He stopped in the land of Samaria, where He met a woman at a well. Then Jesus went to His hometown of Nazareth, but the people there did not welcome Him. Now **Jesus went to Cana (KAY nuh), a city in the land of Galilee.**

**At this time, a man living nearby needed Jesus' help.** The man was one of the king's important officials, and **his son was very sick.** Many people had heard that Jesus had the power to heal people who are sick, so when the official heard that Jesus had come to the land of Galilee, the official went to see Jesus.

**The official said to Jesus, "Please come heal my son! He is very sick. He is about to die!"**

Jesus said, "You and everyone else in the land of Galilee must see miracles before you will believe in Me."

Yes, many people who saw Jesus' miracles believed in Him. Jesus was happy to help people. But Jesus did not want people to think He came to earth only to do miracles. Jesus' miracles were good; He healed people who were sick or hurting. But Jesus had come to earth to do something even better. Jesus had come to save people from sin and to give them a home with God forever.

**The official said again, "Sir, please come heal my son before he dies."**

**Jesus answered, "Go home. Your son will live."**

**The man believed that Jesus was telling the truth.** Even though his son was not with him, the man believed that Jesus had healed him.

**The man began his journey back home. He couldn't wait to be with his son again! Before he even got home, the man's servants came out to meet him. They had very good news!**

**"Your son is alive!" they said. "He is not sick anymore!"**

**"What time did he get better?" the official asked. The servants told him when his son got better. It was the same time Jesus had said,**

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**“Your son will live.”** Jesus had healed the boy! **The man believed in Jesus, and so did everyone who lived in his house.**

*Christ Connection: Jesus saved a boy from dying. Then the boy's father knew who Jesus is: the Savior God promised. Jesus said that the boy was healed, and the father believed Him. Jesus showed that He is powerful. Jesus is God's Son.*

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# Large Group WORSHIP

**Session Title:** Jesus Healed an Official's Son

**Bible Passage:** John 4:46-54

**Big Picture Question:** Who can heal sick people? Jesus can heal sick people.

**Key Passage:** John 20:30-31

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus' miracles demonstrated His divine authority.

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## Large Group Worship (15–20 minutes)

### Welcome and sing

- "This Is Amazing Grace" song
- "Clap Your Hands All Together" song
- Follow your church's security procedures.

Welcome the kids to worship time by playing "This Is Amazing Grace." Greet kids with a smile. When all the kids arrive sing an action song such as "Clap Your Hands All Together" to help them feel welcomed.

### Practice the key passage and a Bible skill

- Bible
- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- "Written" song

Point out where the key passage is found in the Bible. Read the key passage aloud two times.

**Say** • Our key passage for the next few weeks comes from the Book of John. John was one of Jesus' friends. He followed Jesus when Jesus lived on earth. John spent three years with Jesus, going everywhere Jesus went and seeing Jesus perform miracles! How exciting! John said that Jesus is powerful and can perform miracles that no one else can. Jesus did many miracles to help people believe that He is God's Son.

Sing "Written" together, creating any hand motions to help kids remember the words.

- "Jesus Healed an Official's Son" video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Slide or Poster
- Timeline Map

### Watch or tell the Bible story

Point to the timeline map. Inform the kids that over the next

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six weeks, they are going to learn about some of Jesus' miracles.

**Say** • Today's Bible story is about a miracle that Jesus did.

*A miracle* is an amazing event that only God can do.

Jesus did this miracle to help people believe that He is God's Son and to show His power!

Open your Bible to John 4 and tell the Bible story in your own words or show the Bible story video "Jesus Healed an Official's Son."

### **Worship with song and pray**

**Say** • Imagine how scared the official must have felt when his boy was so sick! Jesus said that the boy was healed, and the father believed Him. ***Who can heal sick people? Jesus can heal sick people!*** Because Jesus healed the little boy, the official and his whole family believed that Jesus is God's Son!

Sing a fun song such as "This Is Amazing Grace" or "Jesus Helped 1-2-3." Invite kids to clap, hop in place, or move to the music.

Sing "He Cares" as you prepare the kids to pray. You may also collect an offering at this time.

**Say** • Jesus, You are powerful. No one can do the miracles You did. You healed the boy who was sick and helped his father believe that You are God's Son. Thank You for the miracles You performed. Show these children how powerful and special You are.

### **Transition to small groups**

Do activities one of these ways:

- as a group, all at the same time
- in small groups that rotate through each activity
- set up as centers, allowing preschoolers to browse and choose

- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster
- "This Is Amazing Grace" song
- "Jesus Helped 1-2-3" song
- "He Cares" song
- offering basket

- countdown video (optional)

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# Small Group ACTIVITIES

**Session Title:** Jesus Healed an Official's Son

**Bible Passage:** John 4:45-54

**Big Picture Question:** Who can heal sick people? Jesus can heal sick people.

**Key Passage:** John 20:30-31

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus' miracles demonstrated His divine authority.

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Tip: Select activities that you can staff and your class will enjoy.



• "Sickness Pictures"

## Small Group Activities (25–30 minutes)

### Hide and seek pictures

Before class, print the "Sickness Pictures" on heavyweight paper and cut them apart. Ask kids to close their eyes and count to 10 while you "hide" the pictures in plain sight around the room. Then invite kids to find the pictures and bring them to you. Help the children identify in what way the person in each picture is sick.

**Say** • What is wrong with the person in the picture? Yes, the person is sick. *Who can heal sick people? Jesus can heal sick people.*

### Draw a get-well mural

Help each child trace around a small paper plate on a large piece of paper. Invite kids to draw the faces of people they know who are sick and need to be healed. Beneath each drawing, print the name of the person a child drew. Use this mural as a reference to pray aloud for friends who are sick.

**Say** • We all know someone who is sick and needs to be healed. We also know who can heal sick people! *Who can heal sick people? Jesus can heal sick people.* Let's pray together for our friends and ask Jesus to heal them!

- large piece of paper
- small paper plates
- art supplies

- 
- construction paper
  - art supplies

### Decorate get-well cards

Offer the children different colors of construction paper. Help each child fold his paper in half to make a card. Encourage the children to think of someone they know who is sick to “write” (scribble) a message to.

**Say** • When we give a card to people who are feeling sick, it brings a smile to their face! *Who can heal sick people? Jesus can heal sick people.* Let’s give our friends who are sick these get-well cards!

### Spell JESUS

- index cards, 5
- clothespins, 5
- markers
- string
- tape

Print each letter of *JESUS* on an index card. Print the letters *J-E-S-U-S* on clothespins as well, one letter per clothespin. Hang a string at a child’s height along the wall, with the clothespins clipped in the correct order. Instruct the kids to clip the index cards with the matching letters to the string.

**Say** • What do the letters on the boxes spell? *JESUS. Who can heal sick people? Jesus can heal sick people.*

### Germ experiment

- washable toys
- ziplock bag of flour
- hand wipes or sink with soap and water

Provide the children with toys that can be washed easily. Invite kids to put their hands in the bag of flour. Ask them to imagine that the flour on their hands is like germs when they are sick. Ask them to touch the blocks and toys to see what happens and then wash the kids’ hands.

Now let them play with the flour-covered toys again. Talk about how germs spread and how we keep germs from spreading by washing hands. Wash kids’ hands and the toys.

**Say** • Washing is very important to keep germs away. But what can we do if we get sick? We can pray and ask Jesus to heal us! *Who can heal sick people? Jesus can heal sick people.*

- countdown video (optional)

### Transition to large group closing

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Jesus Performed Miracles

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# Large Group CLOSING

**Session Title:** Jesus Healed an Official's Son

**Bible Passage:** John 4:45-54

**Big Picture Question:** Who can heal sick people? Jesus can heal sick people.

**Key Passage:** John 20:30-31

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus' miracles demonstrated His divine authority.

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## Large Group Closing (10+ minutes)

### Review

- Bible
- Timeline Map
- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster
- "Written" song
- "This Is Amazing Grace" song

Refer to the timeline map as you review the Bible story by asking the questions below. Invite the children to say the answer as loudly as they can.

1. What did the official ask Jesus to do? (*He asked Jesus to heal his son.*)
2. Was Jesus powerful enough to heal the son? (*Yes, Jesus was powerful enough to heal the official's son from far away!*)
3. Did the official believe after Jesus healed the boy? (*Yes, the official and everyone in his house believed that Jesus is God's Son.*)
4. ***Who can heal sick people? Jesus can heal sick people!***

Review the key passage one more time. Sing "Written" or "This Is Amazing Grace" together.

### Pray

Invite kids to talk about any prayer requests they have. If kids mention a sick family member, remind kids that ***Jesus can heal sick people.***

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**Say** • Dear God, thank You for sending Jesus to heal the sick. Thank You that Jesus also saves us from sin and death. Thank You for this Bible story that shows us Jesus' power. Help us to always trust in Him. Amen!

### **Missions story**

- digital thermometer

Option: Consider collecting an offering for medical missionaries your church may know. Or gather health and hygiene supplies, such as adhesive bandages, hand sanitizer or soap, tissue boxes, toothbrushes and toothpaste, and so forth to give to a local homeless shelter.

If your children's ministry is planning a missions activity, introduce the activity. If you do not have a missions activity planned, hold up a digital thermometer. Ask kids to tell you what we use a thermometer to measure, and then talk about some of the ways we can treat a fever.

**Say** • Did you know many Christian doctors and nurses travel overseas to bring medical care to people who don't have doctors or hospitals? Sometimes these medical missionaries go to help people after a natural disaster like an earthquake, a hurricane, or a tsunami. They help the people recover from their sicknesses, but most importantly, they tell the people about Jesus, who died on the cross and came back to life to save them from sin and death. Let's pray for medical missionaries!

Pray that Christian doctors and nurses who travel overseas will tell the people they treat that Jesus is the true Healer; He saves people from sin and death. Pray that kids will tell others the good news about Jesus.

### **Play the "Royal Official Game"**

- "Royal Official Gameboard"
- buttons or scraps of paper
- brad or paper clip

Using the gameboard, the color wheel, and several buttons or squares of construction paper, play the game with the children. Everyone will start on the first square by Jesus and try to get the official to his son. Take turns. Spin the color wheel and move the button to the indicated color.

**Say** • *Who can heal sick people? Jesus can heal sick people.*

- Follow church security rules for dismissing children.

# Leader BIBLE STUDY

During His ministry, Jesus demonstrated His power and authority through miracles. Among Jesus' healing miracles, Jesus drove out demons, or unclean spirits. Demons are evil angels—created, spiritual beings—who sinned against God. The Bible identifies Satan as the head of the demons. (See Job 1:6.)

**2** Demons are enemies of God. They oppose God's work and try to turn people away from God and the gospel. When Jesus was preaching at the synagogue in Capernaum, an unclean spirit began to shout through a man. Jesus commanded the spirit to be quiet, and He drove the demon away.

Jesus' power over demons marked the launch of God's kingdom. When Jesus cast a demon out of a man who was blind and mute, He said, "If I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you" (Matt. 12:28).

Still today, demons try all sorts of strategies to keep believers from being effective witnesses for Christ, including doubt, temptation, pride, guilt, and fear. But we do not need to fear demons because Jesus gives believers authority over them. In the New Testament, Jesus gave His disciples authority over demons, and the demons submitted to them when they commanded them in Christ's name. (See Luke 9:1; 10:17,19; Acts 8:7; 16:18.)

Jesus said that Satan is "the father of lies" (John 8:44), and he is the accuser (Rev. 12:10). Satan's goal is to turn people away from God. When Satan accuses us as guilty before the Judge, he is right; our sin makes us guilty. But he leaves out the gospel: Jesus died for our sin. He took the punishment we deserve.

When Jesus died on the cross, He defeated Satan. (See Heb. 2:14-15.) One day Satan will be cast out forever. (Rev. 20:10)

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# Preschool WORSHIP OVERVIEW

**Session Title:** Jesus Drove Out Evil Spirits

**Bible Passage:** Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-37

**Big Picture Question:** How could Jesus make evil spirits go away? Jesus is more powerful than all evil.

**Key Passage:** John 20:30-31

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus' miracles demonstrated His divine authority.

## Large Group Worship

(15–20 minutes)

## Small Group Activities

(25–30 minutes)

## Large Group Closing

(10+ minutes)

Additional suggestions for specific groups are available at [gospelproject.com/kids/additional-resources](http://gospelproject.com/kids/additional-resources). For free online training on how to lead a group, visit [ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject](http://ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject).

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# The BIBLE STORY

## Jesus Drove Out Evil Spirits

*Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-37*

Jesus was grown up when He began teaching and helping people. When people met Jesus for the first time, they said, “Who is this man?” Some people thought Jesus was a prophet—a messenger from God—like the prophets God sent long ago. Yes, God sent Jesus to earth, but Jesus was more than a prophet. He was the Messiah God had promised!

**One day, Jesus and His friends went to a city called Capernaum** (kuh PUHR nay uhm). **Capernaum was a city near the sea. That particular day was a special day—the Sabbath day. Every week on the Sabbath, God’s people rested.** They stopped working and they worshiped God. **They went to the synagogue to pray and learn about God’s laws.**

**Jesus went into the synagogue, and He began to teach the people about God. The people there listened to Jesus, and they were amazed!** Other men had taught in the synagogue before, but Jesus was not like the other men. He taught like someone who was in charge, like He really knew what He was talking about.

**All of a sudden, a man in the synagogue started shouting. Something was wrong with the man. The man had an evil spirit inside him,** and the spirit was an enemy of God.

**“What do You want with us, Jesus?”** The words came out of the man’s mouth, but it was the spirit inside him that was talking. **“Did You come here to destroy us? I know who You are; You are the Holy One of God!”**

The spirit was right. Jesus is holy, and God sent Him to earth. But **Jesus told the spirit to stop. “Be quiet, and come out of him!”** Jesus said. **The man with the spirit fell to the ground** and started to shake. Then he shouted, **and the spirit left him. The man was not hurt.**

**The other people in the synagogue** watched, and they asked questions like **“What’s going on?”** They had never seen someone like Jesus before. **When Jesus told the spirit what to do, the spirit obeyed Him.**

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**Everyone started to talk about Jesus. They told their friends and neighbors what Jesus had said and what He had done. Soon many people who lived in that land heard about Jesus.**

*Christ Connection: Jesus made the evil spirit go away because He is more powerful than evil. One day, Jesus will come back and make all bad things go away forever.*

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# Large Group WORSHIP

**Session Title:** Jesus Drove Out Evil Spirits

**Bible Passage:** Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-37

**Big Picture Question:** How could Jesus make evil spirits go away? Jesus is more powerful than all evil.

**Key Passage:** John 20:30-31

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus' miracles demonstrated His divine authority.

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- "This Is Amazing Grace" song
- "Stand and Shout" song
- Follow your church's security procedures.

## Large Group Worship (15–20 minutes)

### Welcome and sing

Welcome the kids to worship time by playing "This Is Amazing Grace." Greet kids with a smile. When all the kids arrive, sing a fun song such as "Stand and Shout" to help them feel welcomed.

### Practice the key passage and a Bible skill

Point out where the key passage is found in the Bible. Read the key passage aloud two times.

**Say** • Jesus showed His power by performing miracles. A miracle is something amazing that only God can do. In our key passage, John said that Jesus' miracles show that Jesus is God's Son!

Today's Bible story is found in the Gospel of Mark and the Gospel of Luke. The Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—are all in the New Testament. They tell about Jesus' life on earth.

Sing the "Written" song together, using any hand motions you created the previous week.

- "Jesus Drove Out Evil Spirits" video (optional)

### Watch or tell the Bible story

Demonstrate to the children what a face of "awe and

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amazement” looks like. Then ask them to make a face that shows they are seeing something brand new, a face they would make when they see something amazing!

**Say** • In our Bible story today, Jesus did something amazing—so amazing that everyone around Him had never seen anything like it before. They went and told everyone what they saw. Let’s see what Jesus did.

Open your Bible. Tell the Bible story in your own words or show the Bible story video “Jesus Drove Out Evil Spirits.”

### **Worship with song and pray**

- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster
- “Jesus Helped 1-2-3” song
- “Clap Your Hands All Together” song
- “This Is Amazing Grace” song
- offering basket

**Say** • Jesus made the evil spirit go away because He is more powerful than evil. One day, Jesus will come back and make all bad things go away forever. ***How could Jesus make evil spirits go away? Jesus is more powerful than all evil.***

Sing a fun song such as “Jesus Helped 1-2-3” or “Clap Your Hands All Together.” Invite kids to clap, hop in place, or move to the music. Then sing “This Is Amazing Grace” as you prepare the kids to pray. You may also collect an offering at this time.

**Say** • Dear God, thank You for hearing our prayers and for always doing what You say You will do. Help us believe that You are more powerful than all evil. Thank You for being powerful so that we do not have to be afraid. In Jesus’ name, amen!

### **Transition to small groups**

- countdown video (optional)

Describe the small group activities and how kids will complete them. Do activities one of these ways:

- as a group, all at the same time
- in small groups that rotate through each activity
- set up as centers, allowing preschoolers to browse and choose

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# Small Group ACTIVITIES

**Session Title:** Jesus Drove Out Evil Spirits

**Bible Passage:** Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-37

**Big Picture Question:** How could Jesus make evil spirits go away? Jesus is more powerful than all evil.

**Key Passage:** John 20:30-31

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus' miracles demonstrated His divine authority.

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Tip: Select activities that you can staff and your class will enjoy.



• toys or cans of food (optional)

• timer or stopwatch

## Small Group Activities (25–30 minutes)

### Power workout

Tell the children to form one big circle. Announce that it is time to work out so they can get stronger. Do exercises such as jumping jacks, toe touches, leaps, and weight-lifting. (“Weights” can be anything from food cans to toys.)

**Say** • Good job working out! Working out is how we get stronger and more powerful. No one is more powerful than Jesus! *How could Jesus make evil spirits go away? Jesus is more powerful than all evil.*

### Play the quiet game

Tell the children that you will play a quiet game. The goal is to be quiet and still for as long as possible. Anytime someone laughs or talks, start over. Record how long the kids can last without saying anything. Each new round, encourage the children to beat their previous record time.

**Say** • Sometimes being quiet is hard. The man with the evil spirit inside of him wasn't quiet. Jesus made the evil spirit go away. *How could Jesus make evil spirits go away? Jesus is more powerful than all evil.*

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## Whisper good news

Whisper the phrase “Jesus can make evil spirits go away” into a child’s ear and tell him to repeat it. Then whisper into another child’s ear “Jesus is powerful” and let him repeat it. Whisper these phrases into several children’s ears. If you teach older preschoolers, guide them to whisper the phrases into a friend’s ear like a telephone game.

**Say** • After Jesus told the evil spirit to go away, people told others about what they saw. *How could Jesus make evil spirits go away? Jesus is more powerful than all evil.*

## Experiment with magnets

Provide the children with magnets of various sizes, none small enough for a preschooler to swallow. Instruct kids to find out which magnet is the most powerful by trying to pick up different objects such as a paper clip, a safety pin, a coin, a group of staples, and so forth.

**Say** • These magnets are powerful! Do you know who is more powerful than everything? Jesus! *How could Jesus make evil spirits go away? Jesus is more powerful than all evil.*

## Play with a parachute

Instruct the children to grab onto a large parachute (or sheet), spread out, and pull the parachute tight. Then call out commands for the kids to follow, such as “Hold the parachute high (or low),” “Walk fast (or slow),” and so forth. As you play, remind the children that you are in charge and give the commands for what to do.

**Say** • Jesus is in charge of everything! Jesus is powerful. *How could Jesus make evil spirits go away? Jesus is more powerful than all evil.*

## Transition to large group closing

- various magnets
- metal objects (paper clip, safety pin, coin, staples, and so forth)

Note: Make sure kids do not put magnets in their mouths. Swallowed magnets can cause serious internal damage.

- colorful parachute or large sheet

- countdown video (optional)

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# Large Group CLOSING

**Session Title:** Jesus Drove Out Evil Spirits

**Bible Passage:** Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-37

**Big Picture Question:** How could Jesus make evil spirits go away? Jesus is more powerful than all evil.

**Key Passage:** John 20:30-31

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus' miracles demonstrated His divine authority.

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## Large Group Closing (10+ minutes)

### Review

- Bible
- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster
- "Written" song
- "This Is Amazing Grace" song

Lead the children in singing "My God Is So Big, So Strong, and So Mighty." If you are unfamiliar with the action song, check it out on the Internet. Include hand motions for *big*, *strong*, and *mighty*. Sing through the song a few times, encouraging the children to say "big," "strong," and "mighty" as loudly as they can.

**Say** • Jesus is powerful. Even when Jesus lived on earth as a man, He was still powerful! *How could Jesus make evil spirits go away? Jesus is more powerful than all evil!*

Review the key passage. Sing "Written" or "This Is Amazing Grace."

### Pray

Invite kids to talk about any prayer requests with you. Remind kids that because of Jesus, we don't have to be afraid of evil.

**Say** • Thank You, God, for sending Your Son, Jesus, to perform miracles. Thank You that Jesus died on the cross and came back to life to rescue people from sin and death. Help us to always trust Jesus.

## Missions story

If your children's ministry is planning a missions activity, introduce the activity. If you do not have a missions activity planned, use the timeline map or visual pack to talk about past Bible stories that deal with sin. If you are just starting out with The Gospel Project, point out familiar stories such as "Sin Entered the World," "Noah and the Ark," and "Jonah, Prophet to Nineveh."

**Say** • In these Bible stories, God showed how He feels about sin. God hates sin, but God loves people. [*Point to "Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection."*] God planned to save people from sin by sending His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross and come back to life three days later. When we trust in Jesus, we don't have to be afraid of evil.

Missionaries are Christians who travel to different places to tell this good news to people. Did you know that we can be missionaries at home, at school, or anywhere we go? Let's pray that God will help us tell others about Jesus and His power.

Pray that the kids will understand Jesus' power over evil, sin, and death. Pray that they will tell others the good news about Jesus.

## "Match" faces

Invite kids to pair up and then guide them to stand back to back. Tell the kids that you are going to call out a feeling, such as happy, sad, amazed, scared, and so forth. You will count to three, and they will turn around quickly and make a face to match that feeling. It may take a few rounds of play before kids really get the hang of it. Praise them for their expressive faces!

**Say** • Show me your best "that's amazing" face! [*Pause.*] Jesus is amazing! *How could Jesus make evil spirits go away? Jesus is more powerful than all evil.*

# Leader BIBLE STUDY

Jesus' fame was increasing. His ministry had begun with the calling of His disciples. Now Jesus traveled with them in the region of Galilee, teaching and performing miracles. The people recognized that Jesus wasn't like other teachers; He taught with authority. He had even demonstrated His power over unclean spirits by healing a man in the synagogue. News about Jesus was spreading. The subject of conversation around Galilee was changing. Who was this Jesus?

3

Jesus was in Capernaum when He went into the house of Simon Peter and Andrew, two of His disciples. Peter's mother-in-law also lived in the house, but she was ill. A fever had confined her to bed. Jesus' disciples told Jesus about the woman's condition, and Jesus went to her side. Touching the woman's hand, Jesus healed her. She immediately got up and began to serve Jesus and the others in the house. Serving Jesus and living for Him is how we can show we are thankful to Him.

People in the area heard about the healing of Peter's mother-in-law, and they came to Jesus to be healed too. That evening, people came to Jesus afflicted by illness or unclean spirits, and Jesus healed them.

The Gospel of Matthew says that in doing this, Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: "He Himself took our weaknesses and carried our diseases" (Isa. 53:5). Isaiah described the promised Messiah as a suffering servant who would suffer—not for His sins, but for our sins. He would die the death we deserve to free us from sin and death.

Illness is an effect of man's sinful rebellion against God. God never intended for people to be crippled by the numerous physical ailments in this world. Jesus offered physical healings to the crowd, and He can heal us in this life or in the life to come. Jesus' healings brought a glimpse into the kingdom of God, the world in which Jesus makes all things new—the way God intended—when He comes again. (See Rev. 21:4-5.)

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# Preschool WORSHIP OVERVIEW

**Session Title:** Jesus Healed Peter's Mother-in-Law

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 8:14-17; Mark 1:29-31; Luke 4:38-39

**Big Picture Question:** How can we thank Jesus for His help? We can love Jesus and obey Him.

**Key Passage:** John 20:30-31

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus' miracles demonstrated His divine authority.

## Large Group Worship

(15–20 minutes)

## Small Group Activities

(25–30 minutes)

## Large Group Closing

(10+ minutes)

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# The BIBLE STORY

## **Jesus Healed Peter's Mother-in-Law**

*Matthew 8:14-17; Mark 1:29-31; Luke 4:38-39*

**Jesus was in the city of Capernaum** (kuh PUHR nay uhm) in the land of Galilee (GAL ih lee). **It was the Sabbath day, the day when God's people rested and worshiped God.**

**On that day, Jesus taught people in the synagogue about God.** The things Jesus taught and did made everyone talk about Him. No one had ever seen anyone like Jesus before.

**Jesus left the synagogue and went right away to the home of His friends, Peter and Andrew.** Peter and Andrew were brothers. **Peter's mother-in-law also lived at the house. But** something was wrong with Peter's mother-in-law. **She was sick and lying in bed. She had a high fever. The people in the house told Jesus about her, and Jesus went to see her.**

**Jesus touched the woman's hand, and her fever went away! Jesus helped Peter's mother-in-law get out of bed and stand up.** She didn't feel just a little better; she was completely better! She was not sick anymore because Jesus had healed her!

**Right away, Peter's mother-in-law began to serve Jesus and the other people in the house.**

**That evening, people brought to Jesus their friends and family members who needed help. So many people came; it looked as if the whole town was standing outside the door!** Everyone wanted to see Jesus!

**Some of the people were sick or hurt.** They did not want to be sick or hurt anymore. **They had heard that Jesus helped other sick and hurting people, and they wanted Jesus to help them too!**

**Jesus did help the people who came to Him. He put His hands on the people who were sick or hurt, and He healed them.** Jesus did these things, just like the prophet Isaiah said in the Old Testament. Isaiah had said, "He Himself took our weaknesses and carried our diseases." And that is exactly what Jesus did.

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*Christ Connection: Peter's mother-in-law showed she was thankful to Jesus by serving Him. When God created the world, He did not make sickness. Sickness came when sin entered the world, but Jesus came to take away sin. We can thank Jesus for saving us from sin. We can love Jesus and obey Him.*

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# Large Group WORSHIP

**Session Title:** Jesus Healed Peter’s Mother-in-Law

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 8:14-17; Mark 1:29-31; Luke 4:38-39

**Big Picture Question:** How can we thank Jesus for His help? We can love Jesus and obey Him.

**Key Passage:** John 20:30-31

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus’ miracles demonstrated His divine authority.

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## Large Group Worship (15–20 minutes)

- “This Is Amazing Grace” song
- “Clap Your Hands All Together” song
- Follow your church’s security procedures.

### Welcome and sing

Welcome the kids to worship time by playing “This Is Amazing Grace.” Greet kids with a smile. When all the kids arrive, sing an action song such as “Clap Your Hands All Together” to help them feel welcomed.

### Practice the key passage and a Bible skill

- Bible
- colorful adhesive bandage
- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- “Written” song

Place a colorful adhesive bandage at John 20:30-31 in your Bible. Invite a volunteer to open your Bible to the adhesive bandage. Point to the key passage in your Bible.

**Say** • Great job! You found our key passage. Does anyone remember the name of Jesus’ friend who wrote our key passage? (*John*)

In this verse, John said that Jesus’ healings and miracles showed people that Jesus is God’s Son. Our Bible story today is about a woman whom Jesus healed and how she thanked Jesus after He healed her.

Read the key passage from the poster two times. Sing “Written” together, using any hand motions you created in previous weeks. Invite a few volunteers to stand beside you and perform the hand motions.

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- “Jesus Healed Peter’s Mother-in-Law” video (optional)
  - Bible Story Picture Slide or Poster
  - Timeline Map

## Watch or tell the Bible story

Play out being sick in different ways (coughing, holding belly, shivering, and so forth). Kids will raise their hands if they think they know what is wrong.

**Say** • In our Bible story today, we are going to hear about a lady who was very sick. Have you ever been sick? What made you feel better? When Jesus came, He healed the lady right away. Jesus is more powerful than any sickness. Open your Bible to Matthew 8 and tell the Bible story in your own words or show the video “Jesus Healed Peter’s Mother-in-Law.”

## Worship with song and pray

- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster
- “This Is Amazing Grace” song
- “Stand and Shout” song
- “He Cares” song
- offering basket

**Say** • Peter’s mother-in-law showed she was thankful to Jesus by serving Him. Did you know God did not make sickness? Sickness came when sin entered the world, but Jesus came to take away sin. We can thank Jesus for saving us from sin. We can love Jesus and obey Him.

*How can we thank Jesus for His help? We can love Jesus and obey Him.*

Sing a fun song such as “This Is Amazing Grace” or “Stand and Shout.” Invite kids to clap, hop in place, or move to the music. Then sing “He Cares” as you prepare the kids to pray. You may also collect an offering at this time.

**Say** • Thank You, Jesus, for healing Peter’s mother-in-law. Thank You, Jesus, that You came to take away sin. Thank You that one day we will live with You forever, and no one will ever be sick again!

## Transition to small groups

Invite kids to give a friend a high five on the way to small groups. Mention that in the Bible story, Jesus touched the woman’s hand to heal her.

- countdown video (optional)
- Tip: Do activities one of these ways:
- as a group, all at the same time
- in small groups that rotate through each activity
- set up as centers, allowing preschoolers to browse and choose

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# Small Group ACTIVITIES

**Session Title:** Jesus Healed Peter's Mother-in-Law

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 8:14-17; Mark 1:29-31; Luke 4:38-39

**Big Picture Question:** How can we thank Jesus for His help? We can love Jesus and obey Him.

**Key Passage:** John 20:30-31

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus' miracles demonstrated His divine authority.

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Tip: Select activities that you can staff and your class will enjoy.



- masking tape

## Small Group Activities (25–30 minutes)

### Jump the line

Tape a masking tape line across the floor. Demonstrate how to hop over the line with one foot or jump with both feet.

Ask the children the big picture question and invite them to answer the question as they jump the line.

**Say** • When Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law, she jumped up and began serving Him. *How can we thank Jesus for His help? We can love Jesus and obey Him.*

### Work puzzles

Before class, print a Bible story picture for each child. Cut the picture into squares and place the "puzzles" into ziplock bags to give to each child or to groups of children. Invite the kids to put their puzzles together.

**Say** • What did we learn about Jesus in our Bible story today? What did Jesus do? Did He heal people? [*Pause for answers.*] *How can we thank Jesus for His help? We can love Jesus and obey Him.*

### Spell LOVE and OBEY

Print the words *LOVE* and *OBEY* on a piece of paper. Place magnetic letters for the words in a container of sand or rice.

- paper
- magnetic letters
- dry sand or rice
- plastic tub
- markers

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Encourage the children to take turns digging for the letters. When a child retrieves a letter, she should place it on the paper with a corresponding word.

**Say** • Jesus didn't only heal Peter's mother-in-law; He healed many people. He healed many people's bodies on the outside, but Jesus also heals our hearts on the inside. Jesus died to heal us from sin. *How can we thank Jesus for His help? We can love Jesus and obey Him.*

### Serve the leader

- paper or plastic plate
- balls, 1 per kid

Line up the children and give each one a ball. Give a paper or plastic plate to the first child in line, and then take your seat across the room. Tell the child to put the ball on the plate, walk to you, and serve you the "food." After the child hands you the ball, tell him to take the plate to the next child in line. Continue until each kid has served you.

**Say** • When Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law, she showed she was thankful by loving and serving Jesus. We can obey Jesus and thank Him! *How can we thank Jesus for His help? We can love Jesus and obey Him.*

### Paint on foil

- aluminum foil, 2 pieces per kid
- washable paint
- paintbrushes
- small cups of water
- painting smocks (optional)
- hand wipes (for cleanup)

Give each child two pieces of aluminum foil. Invite them to crumple one of the pieces. Tell them to feel the difference between the smooth foil and the wrinkled foil. Next, guide them to paint a picture on the smooth foil of what they would serve Jesus. Tell them to paint the same picture on the wrinkled foil.

**Say** • Jesus touched the hand of Peter's mother-in-law and healed her! She began serving Jesus right away. *How can we thank Jesus for His help? We can love Jesus and obey Him.*

- countdown video (optional)

### Transition to large group closing

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Jesus Performed Miracles

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# Large Group CLOSING

**Session Title:** Jesus Healed Peter's Mother-in-Law

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 8:14-17; Mark 1:29-31; Luke 4:38-39

**Big Picture Question:** How can we thank Jesus for His help? We can love Jesus and obey Him.

**Key Passage:** John 20:30-31

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus' miracles demonstrated His divine authority.

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## Large Group Closing (10+ minutes)

### Review

Review the Bible story this week by asking the following questions:

- Bible
- Timeline Map
- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster
- "Written" song
- "This Is Amazing Grace" song

1. What was wrong with Peter's mother-in-law? (*She was sick.*)
2. What did Peter's mother-in-law do when Jesus healed her? (*She began serving Jesus and the other people in the house.*)
3. ***How can we thank Jesus for His help? We can love Jesus and obey Him.***
4. When the people heard that Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law, what did they do? (*They brought their friends and family who needed help.*)

Read the key passage twice to the children. Sing "Written" or "This Is Amazing Grace."

### Pray

- "He Cares" song

Sing "He Cares" with the kids to prepare for prayer. Invite kids to tell you anything they want to pray about.

**Say** • Thank You, God, for sending Jesus to earth. The Bible says that Jesus carried our sicknesses when He died

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on the cross to save us from sin and death. Thank You that when Jesus returns, He will take away sickness and death forever. We love You, Jesus! Help us to love and obey You every day. In Your name we pray. Amen!

### **Missions story**

If your children's ministry is planning a missions activity, introduce the activity. If you do not have a missions activity planned, talk about how people who heard about how Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law brought many people to Jesus to be healed. Jesus healed them because Jesus is powerful.

**Say** • Jesus didn't just come to earth to heal people who were sick, though. Jesus came to do something even more important: Jesus died on the cross and came back to life to save people from their sins.

We all sin, or disobey God. The Bible says everyone disobeys God, except for Jesus. Jesus never did anything wrong! Jesus died to save us from sin and death because He loves us and wants us to be with Him forever in heaven. ***How can we thank Jesus for His help? We can love Jesus and obey Him.*** We can also tell our friends and family about Jesus.

### **Serve the "food"**

- buckets, 4
- colored sticky notes (red, blue, green, yellow)

Position four buckets in different areas of the room. Attach colored sticky notes to the buckets (red, blue, green, yellow). Call out one of the colors and instruct the children to run to that bucket. Tell them to name a food of that color that they could serve to Jesus.

**Say** • ***How can we thank Jesus for His help? We can love Jesus and obey Him.***

- Follow church security rules for dismissing children.

# Leader BIBLE STUDY

In ancient Israel, living with a skin disease wasn't easy. It was painful and isolating. Leprosy is a disease caused by bacteria, and it affects the skin, nerves, and mucous membranes. The disease can cause deformities in hands and feet and paralysis of some muscles. Leprosy is contagious, and the people of Israel had laws about what to do when a person becomes infected.

4 First, the person would go to a priest. The priest would examine him, and if the disease was confirmed, the priest would declare the person to be unclean. The law in Leviticus 13:45-46 says that the infected person must tear his clothes and let his hair hang loose. He must cover his mouth and cry out, "Unclean, unclean!" This was a warning for others to stay away from him. The infected person must live alone outside the camp.

When the person's disease was healed, he had to be declared "clean" by the priest. This involved an examination and the sacrifice of animals. The person had to wash his clothes, shave his hair, and take a bath. Then he had to wait outside the camp for a week and wash again. The priest would make an atonement for the person who was cleansed. (See Lev. 14:1-32.)

A man with a serious skin disease approached Jesus and fell down before Him. "If You are willing, You can make me clean," he said. The man's words were more of a truthful declaration than a request. He clearly trusted in Jesus' power to heal people, and he longed to be healed himself.

Jesus reached out and touched the man. "I am willing," He said. Typically, no one touched a leper. Touching an unclean person would make you unclean too. But Jesus didn't become unclean. Instead, the diseased man was immediately healed.

As you teach kids the story of Jesus cleansing a leper, help them consider how sin affects all of us. Like leprosy, its effects are painful. Sin separates us from God. Jesus willingly died on the cross and rose from the dead to rescue us from sin and gives us new life.

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# Preschool WORSHIP OVERVIEW

**Session Title:** Jesus Cleansed a Leper

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 8:1-4; Mark 1:40-45; Luke 5:12-16

**Big Picture Question:** How did Jesus help the man with leprosy? Jesus touched the man and healed him.

**Key Passage:** John 20:30-31

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus' miracles demonstrated His divine authority.

## Large Group Worship

(15–20 minutes)

## Small Group Activities

(25–30 minutes)

## Large Group Closing

(10+ minutes)

Additional suggestions for specific groups are available at [gospelproject.com/kids/additional-resources](http://gospelproject.com/kids/additional-resources). For free online training on how to lead a group, visit [ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject](http://ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject).

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# The BIBLE STORY

## Jesus Cleansed a Leper

*Matthew 8:1-4; Mark 1:40-45; Luke 5:12-16*

Jesus had been doing great things in the land of Galilee. He healed people who were sick or hurt, and He taught people in the synagogue about God. **One morning, Jesus got up early. He went up on a mountain to pray to God. When Jesus was done praying, He came down from the mountain.** Large crowds of people had come to see Jesus, and they followed Him around.

**Jesus traveled to other towns. A man who lived in one of the towns was very sick. He had a serious skin disease called leprosy. The sick man's life was very hard. God's people had laws about what to do when a person had a skin disease.** The sick person was "unclean." **He had to live by himself, far away from other people.** He had to tear his clothes, cover his mouth, and say, "Unclean! Unclean!" so no one would get too close. If the sick man touched anyone else, that person would be unclean too.

**The man with the skin disease saw Jesus, and he fell facedown in front of Him. The man begged Jesus to heal him and take away his skin disease. "If You are willing, Lord," the man said, "You can make me clean."**

**Jesus reached out His hand and touched the sick man.** What was Jesus doing? Didn't He know that touching an unclean person could make Him unclean too? But **Jesus said, "I am willing. Be made clean."**

Instead of the man making Jesus unclean, **Jesus' touch made the man clean. The man's skin disease was all gone. He was healed!**

**Jesus told the man to keep quiet. "Don't tell anyone what you have seen," Jesus said. "Go to the priest and do everything the law says you should do now that you are healed."**

**But the man did not keep quiet like Jesus asked him to do. He was so happy to be healed! Right away, he went out and told anyone who would listen that Jesus had taken away his skin disease.** Before long, people all over the land heard about Jesus and how He could heal people. **Big crowds of people came to Jesus. They wanted to learn from Him,**

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**and anyone who was sick or hurt wanted Jesus to heal them too.**

People recognized Jesus wherever He went. Jesus tried to go away to quiet places where He could pray, but people found Him there. People came from everywhere to see Jesus.

*Christ Connection: The man with the skin disease had to stay away from his friends and family. Jesus helped the man. Jesus touched the man and healed him. Sin is like a disease that keeps us away from God, but Jesus will take away our sin if we ask Him.*

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# Large Group WORSHIP

**Session Title:** Jesus Cleansed a Leper

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 8:1-4; Mark 1:40-45; Luke 5:12-16

**Big Picture Question:** How did Jesus help the man with leprosy? Jesus touched the man and healed him.

**Key Passage:** John 20:30-31

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus' miracles demonstrated His divine authority.

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## Large Group Worship (15–20 minutes)

### Welcome and sing

- “This Is Amazing Grace” song
- “Jesus Helped 1-2-3” song
- Follow your church’s security procedures.

Welcome the kids to worship time by playing “This Is Amazing Grace.” Greet kids with a smile. When all the kids arrive, sing a fun song such as “Jesus Helped 1-2-3” to help them feel welcomed.

### Practice the key passage and a Bible skill

- Bible
- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- “Written” song

Point out where the key passage is found in the Bible. Read the key passage aloud two times. Invite volunteers to try to say the key passage from memory. Praise them for their effort.

**Say** • Who wrote our key passage? (*John*)

Did Jesus do more miracles or fewer miracles than what John and Jesus’ other friends wrote? (*more*)

John said that Jesus’ miracles showed that He is whom? (*the Messiah, the Son of God*)

Jesus’ miracles helped people believe in Him. People praised God because of Jesus’ miracles!

Sing “Written” together, using any hand motions you’ve created. Invite kids to lead the hand motions with you.

- “Jesus Cleansed a Leper” video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Slide or Poster
- Timeline Map
- bookmarks or ribbons

## Watch or tell the Bible story

Place Bible markers in your Bible at Matthew 8; Mark 1; and Luke 5. Invite three volunteers to come forward and open your Bible to one of the passages.

**Say** • Today’s Bible story is found in three Gospels:

Matthew, Mark, and Luke. These Gospels told about Jesus healing a leper. Does anyone know what a leper is? *A leper* is a person who has a skin disease. Lepers were not allowed to touch other people; they had to live far away from others. Today we are going to learn what happened when Jesus met a leper.

Tell the Bible story in your own words or show the video “Jesus Cleansed a Leper.”

## Worship with song and pray

- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster
- “Stand and Shout” song
- “Clap Your Hands All Together” song
- “This Is Amazing Grace” song
- offering basket

**Say** • The man with leprosy fell down at Jesus’ feet and told Jesus that if He wanted to, Jesus could heal him of his skin disease. What did Jesus say? Jesus wanted to heal the man, and He did. ***How did Jesus help the man with leprosy? Jesus touched the man and healed him.***

Explain that sin is like a disease that keeps us away from God, but Jesus will take away our sin if we ask Him.

Sing a fun song such as “Stand and Shout” or “Clap Your Hands All Together.” Invite kids to clap, hop in place, or move to the music. Then sing “This Is Amazing Grace” as you prepare the kids to pray. You may also collect an offering at this time.

**Say** • Dear God, thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to the world. Jesus, thank You for loving us and wanting to heal us from our sins. Thank You for caring for us. We are so happy that You are our friend. Amen.

- countdown video (optional)
- Tip: Do activities one of these ways:
  - as a group, all at the same time
  - in small groups that rotate through each activity
  - set up as centers, allowing preschoolers to browse and choose

## Transition to small groups

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# Small Group ACTIVITIES

**Session Title:** Jesus Cleansed a Leper

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 8:1-4; Mark 1:40-45; Luke 5:12-16

**Big Picture Question:** How did Jesus help the man with leprosy? Jesus touched the man and healed him.

**Key Passage:** John 20:30-31

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus' miracles demonstrated His divine authority.

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Tip: Select activities that you can staff and your class will enjoy.



## Small Group Activities (25–30 minutes)

### Play out the Bible story

Select one child to play Jesus. Assign another to be the man with leprosy, a few kids to be Jesus' friends, and the rest of the kids to be the crowd following Jesus.

Allow Jesus and the crowd to walk around the classroom. Guide the leper to walk over to Jesus, fall on his knees, and beg Jesus to heal him. The child playing Jesus should touch the leper and say, "I will. Be clean."

Play again as time allows. Let other children take turns playing Jesus or the leper.

**Say** • Jesus has the power to heal by simply touching or speaking. He cared about the leper and healed him. ***How did Jesus help the man with leprosy? Jesus touched the man and healed him.***

### Make puppets

Give each preschooler a brown lunch bag and art supplies to make a leper puppet. Kids will lay the paper bag flat with the opening facing toward them, flap facing up. Instruct kids to draw the leper's face on their bags. They may also draw clothing and glue on googly eyes or yarn for hair.

- brown lunch bags, 1 per kid
- art supplies (crayons, markers, glue, yarn, googly eyes, and so forth)

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Demonstrate how to make the leper “talk.” Use the puppets to retell the Bible story.

**Say** • *How did Jesus help the man with leprosy? Jesus touched the man and healed him.*

### **Experiment with textures**

- soft items (cotton ball, feather, new toothbrush)
- rough items (sandpaper, fork, dish scrubber)
- blindfold (optional)

Set up a texture station. Include various soft and rough items. Allow the kids to touch the items carefully. After kids have touched all the items, blindfold a volunteer or ask her to close her eyes. Guide the volunteer to touch an item lightly. Encourage her to guess what it is.

**Say** • You used your sense of touch to identify these items.  
*How did Jesus help the man with leprosy? Jesus touched the man and healed him.*

### **Big picture question action cards**

- index cards
- marker

Print on an index card an action word such as *run, jump, spin, skip*, and so forth. Guide kids to stand in a line. Allow them to pick a card, one at a time, and then do the action while saying the big picture question and answer.

**Say** • *How did Jesus help the man with leprosy? Jesus touched the man and healed him.*

### **Jesus and the lepers**

- sticky notes
- “This Is Amazing Grace” song (optional)
- “Jesus Helped 1-2-3” song (optional)

Choose one child to be “Jesus.” The other kids will be “lepers.” Place two sticky notes on each leper. Play music as kids walk around the classroom. “Jesus” will walk around and remove the sticky notes. After all the lepers are “healed,” stop the music. Say the big picture question and answer together. Play again as time allows.

**Say** • *How did Jesus help the man with leprosy? Jesus touched the man and healed him.*

- countdown video (optional)

### **Transition to large group closing**

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# Large Group CLOSING

**Session Title:** Jesus Cleansed a Leper

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 8:1-4; Mark 1:40-45; Luke 5:12-16

**Big Picture Question:** How did Jesus help the man with leprosy? Jesus touched the man and healed him.

**Key Passage:** John 20:30-31

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus' miracles demonstrated His divine authority.

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## Large Group Closing (10+ minutes)

### Review

- Bible
- Timeline Map
- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster
- "Written" song
- "This Is Amazing Grace" song

Use a leper puppet from the small group activities to retell the Bible story. Refer to the timeline map as you review.

**Say** • Today we learned about a man with leprosy. What is leprosy? (*a skin disease*) The man knew Jesus could heal him if Jesus wanted to.

Did Jesus want to heal the man? (*Yes!*) ***How did Jesus help the man with leprosy? Jesus touched the man and healed him.*** Immediately, the man's disease was gone, and he was healed! What did Jesus tell the leper? (*Don't tell anybody.*)

Jesus told the man to keep quiet, but the man told anyone who would listen to him about Jesus. Before long, people all over the land heard about Jesus. They wanted to be healed by Him.

What is like a disease that keeps us away from God? (*sin*) Jesus will take away our sin if we ask Him.

If you have time, review the key passage. Remind kids that the miracles we read about in the Bible show that Jesus is God's Son. Sing "Written" or "This Is Amazing Grace."

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- “He Cares” song

## Pray

Sing “He Cares” with the kids. Take prayer requests and then pray.

**Say** • Thank You, Jesus, that You were willing to heal the man with leprosy. Thank You that You were willing to come to earth as a man so You could die on the cross to take away our sin. Thank You for following God’s plan to bring us back to Him.

## Missions story

- hand sanitizer
- “Happy Dance” missions video (optional)

Option: Talk about the importance of washing our hands or show the missions video. Consider collecting a missions offering for clean water missions groups. You may also check out videos online.

If your children’s ministry is planning a missions activity, introduce the activity. If you do not have a missions activity planned, show a bottle of hand sanitizer and talk about the importance of cleaning our hands. You may squirt hand sanitizer onto the kids’ hands as you show how to use it.

**Say** • How many of you use hand sanitizer or soap to wash your hands at home? [*Count the raised hands.*] How many of you take a bath at least once a week? [*Count hands.*] Did you know in some places of the world, people do not have clean water? God sends special missionaries to help people dig wells so they can have clean water. Those missionaries also tell the people about Jesus, who rescues people from sin and death.

## Play a singing game

Play a game to the tune “This Is the Way We Wash Our Clothes.” Tell the kids to close their eyes. An adult helper will take one kid into the hall. Sing the song and allow the kids to guess who is missing. Repeat as time allows. Sing:

“\*There was a girl [*boy*] who coughed and sneezed,  
Coughed and sneezed, coughed and sneezed  
There was a girl [*boy*] who coughed and sneezed  
And had to leave the room.”

- Follow church security rules for dismissing children.

# Leader BIBLE STUDY

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

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

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

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

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

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# Preschool WORSHIP OVERVIEW

**Session Title:** Four Friends Helped

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26

**Big Picture Question:** How did Jesus help the man who could not walk?

Jesus healed the man and forgave his sins.

**Key Passage:** John 20:30-31

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus' miracles demonstrated His divine authority.

## Large Group Worship

(15–20 minutes)

## Small Group Activities

(25–30 minutes)

## Large Group Closing

(10+ minutes)

Additional suggestions for specific groups are available at [gospelproject.com/kids/additional-resources](http://gospelproject.com/kids/additional-resources). For free online training on how to lead a group, visit [ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject](http://ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject).

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# The BIBLE STORY

## Four Friends Helped

*Matthew 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26*

**Jesus had been traveling, and He went back to Capernaum** (kuh PUHR nay uhm). **When the people in the town heard that Jesus was home, they went to hear Him teach. The religious leaders traveled from their homes all over the land of Galilee and all over the land of Judea to see Jesus. So many people came to the house that they stood in the doorway. There was no more room for anyone else.**

**Just then, four men came to the house. They were carrying their friend on a mat because he could not walk. Jesus had healed other people, and the four men tried to bring their friend to Jesus so He could heal their friend too. But there were so many people in the house that the four men could not get to Jesus. So they took their friend up to the roof and took the roof off above Jesus. Then they lowered their friend right down to Jesus.**

Jesus saw what the friends were doing. He was happy because the friends had faith. They believed Jesus could help their friend who couldn't walk. **Jesus spoke to the man lying on the mat. Jesus said, "Young man, your sins are forgiven!"**

**The religious leaders heard what Jesus said, and they thought, *Who does Jesus think He is? He is being disrespectful to God! Only God can forgive sins.*** Of course, the religious leaders were right. Only *God* can forgive sins. What they did not know is that Jesus *is* God—God the Son!

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

As God's Son, Jesus has the power to forgive people's sins. But how could He prove that the man's sins were really forgiven? So Jesus showed His power on earth too. **He turned to the man on the mat and said, "Get up. Pick up your mat and go home."**

**The man who had been unable to walk got up right away. He picked up his mat and went home, just like Jesus told him to do. Jesus had healed the man!**

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Everyone in the crowd could hardly believe what they had seen! They praised God and said, “We have never seen anything like this!”

*Christ Connection: The man who was paralyzed needed help. He needed to be healed. First, Jesus forgave the man’s sins. Jesus showed that He can forgive sins because He is God. Then Jesus healed the man so he could walk. Jesus has the power to heal and to forgive sins.*

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# Large Group WORSHIP

**Session Title:** Four Friends Helped

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26

**Big Picture Question:** How did Jesus help the man who could not walk?

Jesus healed the man and forgave his sins.

**Key Passage:** John 20:30-31

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus' miracles demonstrated His divine authority.

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## Large Group Worship (15–20 minutes)

### Welcome and sing

- "This Is Amazing Grace" song
- "Clap Your Hands All Together" song
- Follow your church's security procedures.

Welcome the kids to worship time by playing "This Is Amazing Grace." Greet kids with a smile. When all the kids arrive, sing a fun song such as "Clap Your Hands All Together" to help them feel welcomed.

### Practice the key passage and a Bible skill

- Bible
- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- "Written" song

Point out where the key passage is found in the Bible. Read the key passage aloud two times, inviting the boys to say it with you the first time and the girls to say it with you the second time. (Don't worry if a few boys or girls say the verse at the wrong moment.)

**Say** • Who wrote our key passage? (*John*)

Who was John? (*one of Jesus' friends*)

Did Jesus only do the miracles John wrote down? (*No, Jesus did more miracles.*)

John said that Jesus' miracles showed that Jesus is whom? (*God's Son, the Messiah*)

Sing the "Written" song together, inviting kids to join you as you perform the hand motions from previous weeks.

- “Four Friends Helped” video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Slide or Poster
- Timeline Map

## Watch or tell the Bible story

Open your Bible to Matthew 9. Mention that the Bible story is also in the Book of Mark and the Book of Luke.

**Say** • Today’s Bible story is about four men. They helped a friend who could not walk. Have any of you ever helped a friend before? The four men carried their friend on a mat to see Jesus. When they got to the house, a big crowd of people was already there. They could not get in to see Jesus! But they didn’t give up. Let’s find out what the four men did!

Tell the Bible story in your own words or show the video “Four Friends Helped.”

- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster
- “This Is Amazing Grace” song
- “Jesus Helped 1-2-3” song
- “He Cares” song
- offering basket

## Worship with song and pray

**Say** • How did the four friends help the man get to Jesus? (*They cut a hole in the roof.*) Jesus saw their faith and said the man’s sins were forgiven.

Wait a minute! The friends brought the man to Jesus so He would heal his legs, but Jesus did something even better. ***How did Jesus help the man who could not walk? Jesus healed the man and forgave his sins.*** Jesus showed that He can forgive sins because He is God. Then Jesus healed the man so he could walk. Jesus has the power to heal and to forgive sins.

Sing a fun song such as “This Is Amazing Grace” or “Jesus Helped 1-2-3.” Invite kids to clap, hop in place, or move to the music. Then sing “He Cares” as you prepare the kids to pray. You may also collect an offering at this time.

**Say** • Dear God, thank You for friends who are willing to help us in times of need. Thank You for Your Son, Jesus, who has the power to forgive sins and heal people. Amen.

- countdown video (optional)
- Tip: Do activities one of these ways:
  - as a group, all at the same time
  - in small groups that rotate through each activity
  - set up as centers, allowing preschoolers to browse and choose

## Transition to small groups

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# Small Group ACTIVITIES

**Session Title:** Four Friends Helped

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26

**Big Picture Question:** How did Jesus help the man who could not walk?

Jesus healed the man and forgave his sins.

**Key Passage:** John 20:30-31

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus' miracles demonstrated His divine authority.

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Tip: Select activities that you can staff and your class will enjoy.



- masking tape
- pillows, 2
- blankets, 2

## Small Group Activities (25–30 minutes)

### Run a mat relay

Form two groups of kids. Use masking tape to mark a start line and finish line a few feet away. Line up the two groups behind the start line. Give the first player in each group a pillow and a blanket. When you say “go,” a kid from each team will carry the pillow and blanket to the finish line and then back to start. When he returns to the start, he will pass the pillow and blanket to the next person in line.

**Say** • Jesus forgave the man’s sins. Jesus then told the man to pick up his mat and go home! *How did Jesus help the man who could not walk? Jesus healed the man and forgave his sins.*

### Make an adhesive bandage collage

Write the big picture question and answer on a piece of construction paper for each kid. Provide colorful bandages for the kids to stick on the paper to make a collage.

**Say** • When we get hurt, we sometimes need bandages. Jesus didn’t need bandages to heal the man. *How did Jesus help the man who could not walk? Jesus healed the man and forgave his sins.*

- construction paper
- markers
- colored adhesive bandages

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## Search and find

- small beanbags

Gather the kids and direct them to close their eyes. “Hide” small beanbags around the room in plain sight. Tell the kids to search for the beanbags—without opening their eyes. Make sure the kids don’t run into objects or each other.

After a few moments, instruct them to open their eyes and regroup. Pair up the kids for round two; one kid will close her eyes and another kid will guide her to find the beanbags.

**Say** • Was it easier to find the beanbags alone or with a friend? The four friends helped the man by carrying him to Jesus. *How did Jesus help the man who could not walk? Jesus healed the man and forgave his sins.*

## Toss a ball

- small foam ball

Stand in a circle with the kids. Say the big picture question and answer. Toss a foam ball to a kid. He will ask the big picture question. He will then pass the ball to the kid on his right, who will say the big picture answer. She will toss the ball to the leader. Continue until all the kids have asked or answered the big picture question.

**Say** • *How did Jesus help the man who could not walk? Jesus healed the man and forgave his sins.*

## Compare houses

- pictures of modern and Bible times houses from the Internet

Display a picture of a house from Bible times and a picture of a modern house that you have printed from the Internet. Talk about the similarities and differences between the two houses. Remind the kids that the four men cut a hole in the roof of the house where Jesus preached.

**Say** • *How did Jesus help the man who could not walk? Jesus healed the man and forgave his sins.*

- countdown video (optional)

## Transition to large group closing

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# Large Group CLOSING

**Session Title:** Four Friends Helped

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26

**Big Picture Question:** How did Jesus help the man who could not walk?

Jesus healed the man and forgave his sins.

**Key Passage:** John 20:30-31

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus' miracles demonstrated His divine authority.

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## Large Group Closing (10+ minutes)

### Review

- Bible
- Timeline Map
- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster
- "Written" song
- "This Is Amazing Grace" song

Guide the children to move around the room while the music plays. Stop the music and call out, "Four friends helped," "Jesus healed the man," or "People praised God." Guide the children to do a different motion for each phrase that you call out. Suggested motions:

"Four friends helped." [*Freeze and hold up four fingers.*]

"Jesus healed the man." [*March in place.*]

"People praised God." [*Clap hands or cheer.*]

**Say** • The man who could not walk needed help. He needed to be healed. First, Jesus forgave the man's sins. Jesus showed that He can forgive sins because He is God's Son. Then Jesus healed the man so he could walk.

Jesus has the power to heal and to forgive sins. ***How did Jesus help the man who could not walk? Jesus healed the man and forgave his sins.***

Sing "Written" or "This Is Amazing Grace" with the kids. Review the key passage if time permits.

### Pray

Invite kids to talk about any prayer requests they may have and then pray.

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**Say** • Thank You, Jesus, for helping the man who could not walk by forgiving his sins first. Thank You that You also healed the man and made him able to walk. Thank You that You forgive all of our sins if we ask and trust in You. We love You, Jesus. Amen!

### **Missions story:** A Day in the Life

- “A Day in the Life: Odupoi” missions video

If your children’s ministry is planning a missions activity, introduce the activity. If you do not have a missions activity planned, show the missions video “A Day in the Life: Odupoi.”

**Say** • Everyone needs to hear about Jesus! Some people are helping children in Africa who live in poverty. They work with the church to give the children clothes to wear to school and school supplies like pencils.

One of the kids who is going to school is named Odupoi (OH-duh-poy). His family does not have a lot of money, but Odupoi is happy to be going to school. He works hard to learn and help his family. Odupoi wants to grow up and help his friends and others who do not have a lot of money. Let’s pray for kids like Odupoi to hear about Jesus and trust in Him for everything they need.

Pray for missionaries. If your church has long-term missionaries serving overseas or in another state, consider assembling and sending a care package.

### **Make thank-you cards**

- construction paper
- art supplies

Supply the preschoolers with construction paper and art supplies. Guide the children to create thank-you cards for God, for parents, for teachers, and so forth.

**Say** • Imagine how thankful the man was when Jesus healed him! *How did Jesus help the man who could not walk? Jesus healed the man and forgave his sins.*

- Follow church security rules for dismissing children.

# Leader BIBLE STUDY

The Pharisees and scribes were keeping a close eye on Jesus. They watched Him on the Sabbath as He taught in the synagogue. A man there had a paralyzed hand. The religious leaders knew Jesus had power to heal people. They watched to see if He would heal on the Sabbath. According to the law, people should not do work on the Sabbath.

Maybe Jesus had been standing before the crowd when He noticed the religious leaders. He was not only aware of their presence, but He knew their thoughts as well. So Jesus called to the man with the paralyzed hand. “Stand up here,” Jesus said. So the man stood, and Jesus addressed the Pharisees and scribes.

“Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do what is good or to do what is evil, to save a life or to kill?” Jesus asked. The religious leaders did not answer. The hardness of their hearts made Jesus sad. They didn’t understand God’s purpose for the Sabbath. Jesus told the man, “Stretch out your hand.” The man’s hand was healed. The Pharisees and scribes were angry, and they discussed what they might do to Jesus.

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Jesus had distinguished Himself as the Lord of the Sabbath. (See Luke 6:5.) That Jesus is Lord means He has control. Jesus has control over everything. But Jesus hadn’t come to get rid of the Sabbath; He wanted to remind the people why God gave them the Sabbath. (See Ex. 20:8-11.) God intended for the Sabbath to be a blessing to His people, a day of rest from their hard work. But the Pharisees made the Sabbath all about following the rules, making the Sabbath a burden instead.

The Sabbath is not for our duty but for our delight. Jesus rejected the Pharisees’ legalism that made it impossible to do anything on the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a day to focus on Jesus. In Him, we have rest from striving to be good enough. True rest comes when we trust in Jesus’ finished work on the cross for our salvation.

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# Preschool WORSHIP OVERVIEW

**Session Title:** Jesus Healed a Man's Hand

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11

**Big Picture Question:** What is the Sabbath? The Sabbath is a day to rest.

**Key Passage:** John 20:30-31

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus' miracles demonstrated His divine authority.

## Large Group Worship

(15–20 minutes)

## Small Group Activities

(25–30 minutes)

## Large Group Closing

(10+ minutes)

Additional suggestions for specific groups are available at [gospelproject.com/kids/additional-resources](http://gospelproject.com/kids/additional-resources). For free online training on how to lead a group, visit [ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject](http://ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject).

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# The BIBLE STORY

## Jesus Healed a Man's Hand

*Matthew 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11*

**On the Sabbath, Jesus went into the synagogue—a special building where God's people met together. The Sabbath was a special day. God had told His people not to do any work on the Sabbath. The Sabbath was a day for God's people to rest from their work and to worship God.**

**Jesus taught the people in the synagogue. One of the men in the synagogue had a problem with his hand. He could not move his right hand. The religious leaders were in the synagogue, and they watched Jesus carefully. They wondered if Jesus was going to help the man by healing his hand. The religious leaders knew God's law said people should not do any work on the Sabbath, and they wanted to see if Jesus would heal the man. Then they could say Jesus broke the law.**

**The leaders asked Jesus a question. "Is it OK to heal people on the Sabbath day?" they asked.**

**Jesus asked the religious leaders a question. Maybe they could figure out the answer themselves. Jesus asked, "If you have a sheep and it falls into a ditch on the Sabbath, would you leave it there? Or would you grab the sheep and lift it out of the ditch?"**

That was an easy question. **Of course** they wouldn't leave the sheep lying in the ditch! **They would lift the sheep out of the ditch.** People who owned sheep took care of them. **No one would want to let his sheep get hurt or die.**

**Then Jesus said, "A man is much more important than a sheep, so it is right to do good on the Sabbath."** If you would help a sheep out of trouble on the Sabbath, of course you should help a person who is in trouble!

Jesus knew that the leaders were hoping to catch Him breaking God's law, but helping the man was not against the law. So **Jesus called out to the man who could not move his hand. "Stand up here where everyone can see you," Jesus said.**

**Then Jesus said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." So the man**

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**stretched out his hand! He had not been able to move his hand before, but now his right hand was just as good as his left hand!**

The religious leaders should have been happy that the man was healed. They should have praised God for giving Jesus the power to heal. Instead, **the religious leaders were angry! They did not like Jesus or what He was doing. They left the synagogue and made a plan about how they might kill Jesus.**

*Christ Connection: Jesus healed a man's hand on the Sabbath even though the religious leaders thought He shouldn't. Jesus showed that God gives us rules to help us, not to hurt us. The religious leaders made a plan to kill Jesus, but God planned to use Jesus' death to help people by saving them from their sin.*

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# Large Group WORSHIP

**Session Title:** Jesus Healed a Man's Hand

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11

**Big Picture Question:** What is the Sabbath? The Sabbath is a day to rest.

**Key Passage:** John 20:30-31

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus' miracles demonstrated His divine authority.

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## Large Group Worship (15–20 minutes)

### Welcome and sing

- "This Is Amazing Grace" song
- "Jesus Helped 1-2-3" song
- Follow your church's security procedures.

Welcome the kids to worship time by playing "This Is Amazing Grace." Greet kids with a smile. When all the kids arrive, sing a fun song such as "Jesus Helped 1-2-3" to help them feel welcomed.

### Practice the key passage and a Bible skill

- Bible
- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- "Written" song

Point out where the key passage is found in the Bible. Read the key passage aloud. Invite kids to try to say the key passage from memory. Praise kids for their efforts.

**Say** • Who wrote our key passage? (*John*) Who was John? (*Jesus' friend*) Who was John talking about? (*Jesus*) What did Jesus do that showed He is God's Son? (*He performed miracles.*)

Invite kids to perform the hand motions with you as you sing "Written."

### Watch or tell the Bible story

- "Jesus Healed a Man's Hand" video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Slide or Poster
- Timeline Map

Use the timeline map to review previous Bible stories where Jesus healed on the Sabbath ("Jesus Drove Out Evil Spirits," "Jesus Healed Peter's Mother-in-Law"). Explain that God made the Sabbath to be the most special day of the week. It is important to God and to God's people.

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**Say** • Did you know that God created a special day of rest for His people? That day is called the Sabbath. In Jesus' time, though, the religious people made the Sabbath about following a bunch of rules. Let's see what happened in this Bible story when Jesus healed someone on the Sabbath.

Tell the Bible story in your own words with your Bible open or show the video "Jesus Healed a Man's Hand."

### **Worship with song and pray**

- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster
- "This Is Amazing Grace" song
- "Stand and Shout" song
- "He Cares" song
- offering basket

**Say** • Why weren't the religious leaders happy that Jesus healed the man's hand? (*It was the Sabbath.*) **What is the Sabbath? The Sabbath is a day to rest.**

Jesus healed a man's hand on the Sabbath even though the religious leaders thought He shouldn't. Jesus showed that God gives us rules to help us, not to hurt us. The religious leaders made a plan to kill Jesus, but God planned to use Jesus' death to help people by saving them from their sin.

Sing a fun song such as "This Is Amazing Grace" or "Stand and Shout." Invite kids to clap, hop in place, or move to the music. Then sing "He Cares" as you prepare the kids to pray. You may also collect an offering at this time.

**Say** • Thank You, Jesus, for healing the man's hand on the Sabbath. Thank You for showing us that God gives us rules to help us. Thank You for dying on the cross and coming back to life so that we can truly have rest by trusting in You. We love You, Jesus! Amen!

- countdown video (optional)
- Tip: Do activities one of these ways:
- as a group, all at the same time
- in small groups that rotate through each activity
- set up as centers, allowing preschoolers to browse and choose

### **Transition to small groups**

Create a clapping, patting, and snapping beat as you move with kids to small groups. Invite kids to repeat the beat after you. Remind kids that Jesus healed a man's hand.

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# Small Group ACTIVITIES

**Session Title:** Jesus Healed a Man's Hand

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11

**Big Picture Question:** What is the Sabbath? The Sabbath is a day to rest.

**Key Passage:** John 20:30-31

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus' miracles demonstrated His divine authority.

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Tip: Select activities that you can staff and your class will enjoy.



\*For round 2, substitute "On which day did Jesus heal the man's hand?" (*the Sabbath*) Substitute the big picture question and answer for round 3.

- non-menthol shaving cream
- plastic tablecloth
- paper towels (for cleanup)
- Allergy Alert

Tip: Provide craft sticks for kids who don't want to use their hands.

## Small Group Activities (25–30 minutes)

### Clap to review

Clap a simple rhythm and instruct the children to repeat the rhythm after you. Ask a question about the Bible story. The children will repeat the clapping rhythm and then answer the question.

**Leader:** [*Clap hands, clap hands, pat legs, pat legs.*]

\*What part of the man's body needed healing?

**Kids:** [*Clap hands, clap hands, pat legs, pat legs.*]

\*His hand!

**Say** • Jesus healed a man's hand on the Sabbath to show that God gives us rules to help us, not hurt us. ***What is the Sabbath? The Sabbath is a day to rest.*** God loves us, and He showed His love by sending Jesus to save us from sin.

### Explore shaving cream

Cover a table with a plastic tablecloth. Spray a small amount of shaving cream in front of each child. Ask the kids to talk about what the shaving cream looks like and how it feels in their hands. While the children experiment with the shaving cream, remind them of all the things we can do with the hands God gave us.

**Say** • Jesus healed the man's hand on the Sabbath. Jesus

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said it is OK to do good things on the Sabbath. ***What is the Sabbath? The Sabbath is a day to rest.***

### **Church and the Sabbath**

- books about church

Option: Read Exodus 20:9-11 to the kids. Ask the kids if there is a difference between working and helping someone on the Sabbath. That is similar to the question Jesus asked the Pharisees.

Set out several books about church. Read the books to the children or allow them to explore the books individually. Explain how God's people rested and worshiped God on the seventh day, the Sabbath.

**Say** • Jesus died on the cross, and He came back to life three days later. Many Christians rest on Sundays because Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday. ***What is the Sabbath? The Sabbath is a day to rest.***

### **Examine hands**

Ask the children to raise both hands in the air. Tell them you are now going to explore the amazing hands God gave us. Ask the children to count their fingers and point out how their fingers bend. Instruct them to find their knuckles and feel the different bones in their hands. Ask them if the skin on their hands is smooth or rough.

**Say** • Jesus healed a man's hand on the Sabbath even though the religious leaders were mad. Jesus showed that God gives us rules to help us, not hurt us. ***What is the Sabbath? The Sabbath is a day to rest.***

### **Play Sabbath tag**

Modify the rules of freeze tag to play a game of "Sabbath tag." When *It* tags someone, she will yell "Sabbath," and the tagged child must "rest" by sitting down. The child who was tagged may rejoin the game when someone who is not *It* tags him.

**Say** • ***What is the Sabbath? The Sabbath is a day to rest.***

- countdown video (optional)

### **Transition to large group closing**

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Jesus Performed Miracles

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# Large Group CLOSING

**Session Title:** Jesus Healed a Man's Hand

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11

**Big Picture Question:** What is the Sabbath? The Sabbath is a day to rest.

**Key Passage:** John 20:30-31

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus' miracles demonstrated His divine authority.

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## Large Group Closing (10+ minutes)

### Review

- Bible
- Timeline Map
- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster
- "Written" song
- "This Is Amazing Grace" song

Review the story by playing a game. Read each of the following statements. If a statement is true, the kids raise their hands in the air and wave, just like the man whose hand was healed might have done. If the statement is false, the kids must stand still with their arms behind their backs.

- The man couldn't use his right hand. (*true, raise hand*)
- Jesus healed the man on the Sabbath. (*true, raise hand*)
- ***The Sabbath is a day to rest.*** (*true, raise hand*)
- The religious leaders were happy Jesus healed the man's hand. (*false, stay still*)
- The religious leaders thought the rules were more important than healing the man. (*true, raise hand*)
- The man was mad at Jesus for healing his hand. (*false, stand still*)
- Jesus showed that God gives us rules to help us. (*true, raise hand*)

Review the key passage together. Sing "Written" or "This Is Amazing Grace."

### Pray

- "He Cares" song

Invite kids to sing with you "He Cares." As you prepare to

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pray, remind kids that God gives us good rules because He cares for us.

**Say** • Thank You, Jesus, for coming to earth to save us from sin. Thank You for healing people and for showing us that God's rules are to help us. Thank You for always obeying God's rules! Please forgive us when we don't obey You. We love You, Jesus. Amen!

### **Missions story**

• books about church

If your children's ministry is planning a missions activity, introduce the activity. If you do not have a missions activity planned, show kids the books about church.

**Say** • We come to church to learn about God's Word and to worship Jesus with our friends and family members.

Did you know that in some countries Christians cannot meet together to worship Jesus? Those Christians can't even tell other people about Jesus! Even though the rules of the country say that they can't tell people about Jesus, the missionaries trust God to protect them as they spread the good news about Jesus in secret churches.

Let's pray that those Christians will continue to do what God says is right, even if they get in trouble for it.

Pray for missionaries serving in places where the gospel is not accepted or welcomed. Pray that Christians imprisoned for sharing the gospel will trust Jesus to take care of their needs. Pray for peace and safety for underground churches.

### **Make Sabbath art**

• paper  
• crayons and markers

Ask the children to draw different ways to rest on the Sabbath. Help them think of ideas if they are having trouble. Ideas include reading the Bible, going to church, taking a nap, going on a walk, and so forth.

• Follow church security rules for dismissing children.

# Leader BIBLE STUDY

1 During His time on earth, Jesus spent time preaching about God's kingdom. One of Jesus' most well-known sermons is the Sermon on the Mount. On that day, crowds of people had come to hear Jesus. Jesus went up on a mountain in Galilee, and He sat down and began to teach.

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount is recorded across three chapters in the Gospel of Matthew. In Matthew 5–7, Jesus taught how believers should live. While Matthew 5:1-2 specifies that Jesus taught His disciples, Matthew 7:28 reveals that the crowds listened to His sermon as well.

First, Jesus began with the Beatitudes. The Beatitudes describe God's great blessings for believers. God's kingdom belongs to the spiritually needy, God will comfort those who are sad, and God will give mercy to those who show mercy to others. Jesus gives believers reason to be glad when life on earth is hard because great rewards await in heaven.

Jesus also taught how believers should live in a world that does not honor Him. Jesus called believers "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" (Matt. 5:13-14). He said the good works of His followers should cause others to give glory to God.

Jesus taught about a righteousness that comes from the inside. God's people had the law of Moses, but some of them—the Pharisees, in particular—were concerned mostly with the appearance of being righteous. They tried hard to look righteous on the outside, but it was all an act. Jesus warned against hypocrites, people who pretend to be something they're not. When a person knows and loves Jesus, he or she has a changed heart that wants to honor Jesus.

As you teach kids Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, emphasize that this moral teaching was not a list of requirements for being accepted by God. Rather, Jesus described what a person's life looks like when he or she follows Jesus and lives to honor Him. God's standards remind us that we rely on His grace through the gift of salvation in His Son.

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# Preschool WORSHIP OVERVIEW

**Session Title:** The Sermon on the Mount

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 5–7

**Big Picture Question:** Who can keep all of God’s laws? Only Jesus obeyed God perfectly.

**Key Passage:** Matthew 6:33

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus taught people that the kingdom of God had come and that salvation is available to all.

## Large Group Worship

(15–20 minutes)

## Small Group Activities

(25–30 minutes)

## Large Group Closing

(10+ minutes)

Additional suggestions for specific groups are available at [gospelproject.com/kids/additional-resources](http://gospelproject.com/kids/additional-resources). For free online training on how to lead a group, visit [ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject](http://ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject).

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# The BIBLE STORY

## The Sermon on the Mount

*Matthew 5–7*

**Big crowds of people followed Jesus wherever He went.** The people wanted to know more about Jesus, and they wanted to hear Him teach. **One day, Jesus went up on a mountain. He sat down and began to teach His friends, the disciples, about God’s kingdom.** Jesus taught about how people should live, how they should treat each other, and how to love God.

**First, Jesus said that people who believe in Him will be blessed.**

Jesus said:

“The poor in spirit are blessed, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.  
Those who mourn are blessed, for they will be comforted.

**The gentle are blessed, for the earth will be theirs.**

**Those who hunger and thirst for what is right are blessed, for they will be filled.**

The merciful are blessed, for they will be shown mercy.

The pure in heart are blessed, for they will see God.

The peacemakers are blessed, for they will be called God’s children.

**Those who are hurt for doing what is right are blessed, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.”**

**Then Jesus taught how people who believe in Him should live.**

People who believe in Jesus should not live in the same way as people who do not believe in Him live. Jesus said that believers are a light in a dark world. “Let your light shine so that others may see the good things you do. Those who see what you do will praise God,” Jesus said.

**Then Jesus talked about God’s law. Jesus** did not come to take away the law, but to obey it. **He said that a person can’t go to heaven just because he or she does the right things, like the religious leaders. Why a person does those things is just as important.**

**Jesus taught the people how to follow Him.** He taught them how they should live.

**“Love your enemies and pray for them,” Jesus said.** “Whenever you give to people who are poor, give in secret so others don’t see you. And

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when you pray, don't pray just so other people will hear you." **Then Jesus taught the people how to pray.**

**Jesus also taught about forgiveness. He said, "Forgive others. If you forgive those who do the wrong thing to you, God will forgive you too. But if you don't forgive others, God will not forgive you."**

**Jesus said, "Don't collect treasures on earth. These things can be destroyed or stolen. Collect treasures in heaven instead. Wherever your treasure is, that's where your heart will be too."**

**Jesus taught that God provides for His people.** He told them not to worry about their lives. "Don't worry about what you will eat or drink or wear," Jesus said. **Jesus told the people that God takes care of the birds and the flowers, and people are worth more to God than plants and animals.**

**Jesus taught the people many things. When He finished teaching, the crowds of people were amazed.** Jesus didn't teach like the other religious leaders; He taught like He was in charge, like He really knew what He was talking about.

*Christ Connection: The religious leaders looked like good people, but Jesus knew what they were thinking. They were not doing good things for the right reasons. Jesus taught about doing right things for the right reasons. God changes people who know and love Jesus so they want to honor Him and do what is right.*

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# Large Group WORSHIP

**Session Title:** The Sermon on the Mount

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 5–7

**Big Picture Question:** Who can keep all of God’s laws? Only Jesus obeyed God perfectly.

**Key Passage:** Matthew 6:33

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus taught people that the kingdom of God had come and that salvation is available to all.

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## Large Group Worship (15–20 minutes)

### Welcome and sing

- “We Are” song
- “Jump” song
- Follow your church’s security procedures.

Welcome the kids to worship time by playing “We Are.” Greet kids with a smile. When all the kids arrive, sing an action song such as “Jump” to help them feel welcomed.

### Practice the key passage and a Bible skill

- Bible
- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- “Seek Ye First” song

Point out where the key passage is found in the Bible. Read the key passage aloud two times.

**Say** • Jesus said the words of our key passage in His Sermon on the Mount. Jesus said not to worry about anything. God knows what we need. We can trust God to provide everything we need!

Sing “Seek Ye First” together. Feel free to make up any hand gestures or motions that may help the kids remember the verse.

### Watch or tell the Bible story

- “The Sermon on the Mount” video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Slide or Poster
- Timeline Map

Point to the timeline map as you review previous Bible stories.

**Say** • Our Bible story today comes from the Book of Matthew. [*Open to Matthew in your Bible.*] In our Bible story, Jesus taught His friends on a mountain. He taught

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them about God’s kingdom. God’s kingdom is not like any other kingdom. You have to be perfectly holy to enter God’s kingdom. We are not perfect, but Jesus is. He invites us into God’s kingdom.

Tell the Bible story in your own words using the script provided or show the Bible story video “The Sermon on the Mount.”

### **Worship with song and pray**

- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster
- “We Are” song
- “Help One Another in Love” song
- “Lord, Teach Me” song
- offering basket

**Say** • Jesus taught His disciples how believers should live.

Some of the things Jesus said believers should do are difficult, like loving people who are mean. That’s tough!

We can’t obey God on our own. We need Jesus! ***Who can keep all of God’s laws? Only Jesus obeyed God perfectly.***

Sing praise songs such as “We Are” and “Help One Another in Love.” Invite kids to dance or hop in place to the music.

Sing “Lord, Teach Me” as you prepare to pray. You may also collect an offering at this time.

**Say** • Dear God, help us do what is right. We want to be holy like You are holy. We want to be truly happy by living the way You want us to live. Thank You, God, that when we disobey You, we can ask for forgiveness. Thank You for sending Jesus to obey all Your laws perfectly. Thank You for offering us new life through Him. In Jesus’ name, amen.

### **Transition to small groups**

- countdown video (optional)

Move to small groups. Do activities one of these ways:

- as a group, all at the same time
- in small groups that rotate through each activity
- set up as centers, allowing preschoolers to browse and choose

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# Small Group ACTIVITIES

**Session Title:** The Sermon on the Mount

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 5–7

**Big Picture Question:** Who can keep all of God’s laws? Only Jesus obeyed God perfectly.

**Key Passage:** Matthew 6:33

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus taught people that the kingdom of God had come and that salvation is available to all.

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Tip: Select activities that you can staff and your class will enjoy.



Note: The American Sign Language sign for *Jesus* is to touch the center of your right palm with your left middle finger, and then touch the center of your left palm with your right middle finger.

- “Jesus Preached Puppets,” 1 set per kid
- paper
- crayons or markers
- child-size scissors
- glue
- craft sticks

## Small Group Activities (25–30 minutes)

### Climb a mountain

Play a game similar to “Going on a Bear Hunt.” Say a phrase of the story with a motion and guide the children to repeat after you.

“Jesus taught about God’s kingdom. [*Point up.*]

The people followed Him. [*March in place.*]

Seeing crowds of people, [*Shade your eyes.*]

Jesus sat down on the mountain. [*Sit on the floor.*]

His friends came to Him. [*Wave for kids to come.*]

Jesus taught the people. [*Touch your lips.*]

**Who can keep all of God’s laws?** [*Shrug shoulders.*]

**Only Jesus obeyed God perfectly.”** [*Sign Jesus.*]

**Say** • The people had never heard the kinds of things Jesus taught on the mountain. Some of the things Jesus said, like “Love your enemy,” are hard to do! **Who can keep all of God’s laws? Only Jesus obeyed God perfectly.**

### Slider mountain craft

Provide “Jesus Preached Puppets” for each child. Let the kids cut out Jesus and the people to glue onto craft sticks. Help younger kids as needed. Encourage the children to

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draw a mountain on a piece of paper. Carefully cut a slit from the bottom to the top of the mountain. Place the craft stick puppets through the slit of the paper. Demonstrate how to move the craft stick puppets up the mountain. Invite the kids to retell the Bible story using their puppets.

**Say** • Can you remember something Jesus taught the people on the mountain? [*Take responses.*] ***Who can keep all of God's laws? Only Jesus obeyed God perfectly.***

### **Make play dough**

As a group, make homemade play dough by mixing together the ingredients. Cover the table with a plastic tablecloth. Ask: "Where did Jesus teach?" Encourage each child to form a mountain from the play dough.

**Say** • Jesus taught us to obey God and love Him. ***Who can keep all of God's laws? Only Jesus obeyed God perfectly.***

- ½ cup salt
- ½ cup water
- 1 cup flour
- bowl
- mixing spoon
- plastic tablecloth
- food color (optional)

### **Sort landscapes**

Give the kids pictures of different landscapes printed from the Internet. Provide at least one mountain. Guide the children to sort the pictures. Point out a picture of a mountain in a warm climate. Ask the kids what it might have been like to sit on a mountain and listen to Jesus.

**Say** • ***Who can keep all of God's laws? Only Jesus obeyed God perfectly.***

- landscape pictures from the Internet

### **Lace cards**

Print lacing cards onto heavyweight paper, one per kid. Punch holes about an inch apart around each card. Give each child yarn or a shoelace to lace around the card.

**Say** • God sent Jesus to be our Savior. ***Who can keep all of God's laws? Only Jesus obeyed God perfectly.***

- "Lacing Cards," 1 per kid
- heavyweight paper
- scissors
- hole punch
- yarn or shoelaces
- countdown video (optional)

### **Transition to large group closing**

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# Large Group CLOSING

**Session Title:** The Sermon on the Mount

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 5–7

**Big Picture Question:** Who can keep all of God’s laws? Only Jesus obeyed God perfectly.

**Key Passage:** Matthew 6:33

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus taught people that the kingdom of God had come and that salvation is available to all.

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## Large Group Closing (10+ minutes)

### Review

- Bible
- Timeline Map
- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- “Seek Ye First” song
- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster

Point to the timeline map as you review the Bible story. Ask review questions:

1. Who followed Jesus wherever He went? (*large crowds of people*)
2. Should people who believe in Jesus live just like people who don’t believe in Him? (*no*)
3. Did Jesus know what He was talking about when He taught people? (*Yes, Jesus is God’s Son.*)
4. ***Who can keep all of God’s laws? Only Jesus obeyed God perfectly.***

Mention some of the blessings Jesus talked about for those who love and follow Him. You may wish to read Matthew 5:3-11,43-45 to help kids remember. Ask the kids if it is easy or difficult to obey some of the things Jesus said for His followers to do.

**Say** • Remember, we have a hard time obeying God’s laws. ***Who can keep all of God’s laws? Only Jesus obeyed God perfectly.*** This is why we must trust in Jesus and ask Him for help to obey.

Read the key passage, and then sing “Seek Ye First.”

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- “Lord, Teach Me” song

## Pray

Sing “Lord, Teach Me,” and then pray.

**Say** • God, we thank You for being holy and good. We know that we disobey You and make bad choices. Thank You for loving us and sending Jesus to save us. Thank You that Jesus died and rose again so He can help us live the way You want us to live. In Jesus’ name. Amen!

## Missions story

- flashlight, LED candle, or small desk lamp
- “We Are” song (optional)

If your children’s ministry is planning a missions activity, introduce the activity.

If you do not have a missions activity planned, dim the lights. Hold up a flashlight, LED candle, or a small desk lamp. Ask the children what the object reminds them of. Remind the children that Jesus said people who love and follow Him are like lights.

**Say** • When we live how God wants us to live, we shine like lights in a dark room. [*Turn on the flashlight or light source*]. When we “shine for Jesus” at home or at school, people who do not know about Jesus see the way we live. They may ask us why we live differently, and we can tell them about Jesus!

Turn on the classroom lights. Pray that God will help the kids live in a way that shows Jesus’ love to others. Sing “We Are” if time permits.

## Play “Mother, May I?”

Play “Mother, May I?” with a twist. The “mother” will ask another kid: ***Who can keep all of God’s laws?***

The kid will respond: ***Only Jesus obeyed God perfectly.*** Then the mother may tell the kid how many and what type of steps to take (four baby steps, two bunny hops, and so forth).

- Follow church security rules for dismissing children.

# Leader BIBLE STUDY

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

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

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

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

Jesus' lesson still holds true today. People respond in various ways to the gospel, and not everyone who hears the gospel believes it. As you prepare to teach the parable of the sower, pray for the kids you lead. Pray that God will give them receptive hearts so that they will hear, understand, and receive the good news about Jesus.

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# Preschool WORSHIP OVERVIEW

**Session Title:** Parable of the Sower

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:4-15

**Big Picture Question:** What can you do when you hear the truth about Jesus? I can believe the truth about Jesus.

**Key Passage:** Matthew 6:33

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus taught people that the kingdom of God had come and that salvation is available to all.

## Large Group Worship

(15–20 minutes)

## Small Group Activities

(25–30 minutes)

## Large Group Closing

(10+ minutes)

Additional suggestions for specific groups are available at [gospelproject.com/kids/additional-resources](http://gospelproject.com/kids/additional-resources). For free online training on how to lead a group, visit [ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject](http://ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject).

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# The BIBLE STORY

## Parable of the Sower

*Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:4-15*

**Jesus came to earth to do an important job—to save people from their sins. God also wanted Jesus to teach people about God and His kingdom, so that is what Jesus did.** Jesus traveled from town to town. In each place, Jesus told people the good news about God’s kingdom, and crowds of people came to listen to Him teach.

**One day, Jesus was sitting by the sea. Lots of people came to hear Jesus, so He got into a boat and sat down to teach.** The people stood on the shore to listen to Jesus.

**Jesus used parables, or stories, to teach the people.** These stories helped people understand what is true about God’s kingdom. On this particular day, **Jesus told the people a story about a farmer working in a field.** Jesus told this story to teach the people about sharing the good news about God with others.

**Jesus said, “Think about this story. A farmer went out to plant seeds in the ground. He tossed the seeds back and forth. Some of the seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and ate up the seeds. Those seeds did not grow. Other seeds fell on rocky ground. The seeds sprouted quickly, but they did not have any roots because the soil was shallow. When the sun came out, the plants dried up.**

**“Other seeds fell among the thorns. The thorns grew and kept the seeds from growing. But some of the seeds fell on good ground. Those seeds grew up strong and healthy. These plants made grain, much more than what was planted!”**

After Jesus told this story, His friends asked Him, “Why do You use stories to teach the people?”

Jesus said, “Not everyone will understand what is true about God’s kingdom. I tell them stories because even though they look and hear, they do not see or understand.” Jesus told His friends that God had given them a special ability to understand the truth about God.

**Then Jesus told His friends what the story about the seeds really meant. Jesus said, “Some people hear what is true about God’s**

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**kingdom, but they do not understand.** God's enemy takes the truth away from them. **Those people are like the seeds that fell on the path.**

**“Some people hear what is true about God's kingdom and they are happy to believe it. But when hard times come, they stop believing. Those people are like the seeds that fell on the rocky ground.**

**“Some people hear what is true about God's kingdom, but they worry about life on earth and they love money more than God. Those people are like the seeds that fell among the thorns.**

**“But some people hear what is true about God's kingdom, and they understand it. They believe the truth, and it changes them. Those people are like the seeds that fell on good ground.”**

*Christ Connection: Not everyone who hears about Jesus believes in Him. Some people don't understand Jesus or they think they are happy without Him. People who hear the gospel—the good news about Jesus—and believe in Him will be blessed.*

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# Large Group WORSHIP

**Session Title:** Parable of the Sower

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:4-15

**Big Picture Question:** What can you do when you hear the truth about Jesus? I can believe the truth about Jesus.

**Key Passage:** Matthew 6:33

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus taught people that the kingdom of God had come and that salvation is available to all.

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## Large Group Worship (15–20 minutes)

### Welcome and sing

- “We Are” song
- “Help One Another in Love” song
- Follow your church’s security procedures.

Welcome the kids to worship time by playing “We Are.”

Greet kids with a smile. When all the kids arrive, sing an action song such as “Help One Another in Love” to help them feel welcomed.

### Practice the key passage and a Bible skill

- Bible
- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- “Seek Ye First” song

Point out where the key passage is found in the Bible. Read the key passage aloud two times and remind the kids that Jesus spoke these words in His Sermon on the Mount.

**Say** • Jesus told His friends not to worry; God would provide everything they need. Today, we are going to learn about another message that Jesus preached. It is called a parable. A *parable* is “a special story that tells us something true about God’s kingdom.”

Sing “Seek Ye First” together, using any hand motions you may have created last week.

### Watch or tell the Bible story

- Timeline Map
- Bible Story Picture Slide or Poster
- “Parable of the Sower” video (optional)

Point to the “Parable of the Sower” on the timeline map or show the Bible story picture. Talk about how farmers in Bible times sowed seeds by scattering seeds as they walked

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through their fields. Invite kids to pretend to sow seeds as they walk in place.

**Say** • In our Bible story today, Jesus told a story about a farmer sowing, or planting, seeds by scattering them in a field. Jesus wasn't just talking about a farmer and his crops, though. Listen carefully to hear what Jesus was really talking about!

Open your Bible to Matthew 13 and tell the Bible story in your own words using the script provided or show the Bible story video "Parable of the Sower."

### **Worship with song and pray**

**Say** • Jesus told the people who were following Him the parable of the sower, but then He explained the parable to His friends. Jesus explained that in His story, the seed was the good news about Jesus. The four different kinds of soil were the four different kinds of people who listen to the truth about Jesus. Sadly, not everyone who hears the truth about Jesus will believe it. ***What can you do when you hear the truth about Jesus? I can believe the truth about Jesus.***

Sing praise songs such as "We Are" and "Love the Lord." Invite kids to dance or hop in place to the music. Sing "Lord, Teach Me" as you prepare to pray. You may also collect an offering at this time.

**Say** • Dear God, thank You for giving us the Bible so we can know the truth about Your Son, Jesus. Thank You for sending Jesus to die on the cross for our sins. Thank You that Jesus came back to life so we can live forever with You. Help us believe the truth about Jesus. Amen.

### **Transition to small groups**

- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster
- "We Are" song
- "Love the Lord" song
- "Lord, Teach Me" song
- offering basket

- countdown video (optional)

Tip: Do activities one of these ways:

- as a group, all at the same time
- in small groups that rotate through each activity
- set up as centers, allowing preschoolers to browse and choose

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# Small Group ACTIVITIES

**Session Title:** Parable of the Sower

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:4-15

**Big Picture Question:** What can you do when you hear the truth about Jesus? I can believe the truth about Jesus.

**Key Passage:** Matthew 6:33

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus taught people that the kingdom of God had come and that salvation is available to all.

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Tip: Select activities that you can staff and your class will enjoy.



- Allergy Alert
- fruits and veggies with seeds
- plastic spoons
- plastic tablecloth

## Small Group Activities (25–30 minutes)

### Search for seed

Cut open several fruits and vegetables with seeds. Place a plastic tablecloth over the table and position the vegetables where kids can work. Allow the children to examine the fruits and vegetables and carve out the seeds with plastic spoons. Tell the kids they may only examine one fruit or veggie at a time. Remind them seeds are not for eating!

**Say** • Fruits and vegetables grow more fruits and veggies because of the seeds inside of them. The same is true for people who believe in Jesus. We tell others the good news about Jesus so more people will hear the truth and believe it. Will everyone believe? No, but we still tell people about Jesus. *What can you do when you hear the truth about Jesus? I can believe the truth about Jesus.*

### Soil texture walk

Prepare four plastic bins. In the first bin, place sand to represent the path. In the second, place smooth stones. In the third, place raffia. In the fourth, place lightly moistened potting soil. Invite the children to examine each of the four bins and look or feel inside. Review which ground made the seed grow and which ground did not.

- large plastic bins, 4
- sand
- smooth stones
- raffia
- potting soil
- spray bottle of water

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**Say** • *What can you do when you hear the truth about Jesus? I can believe the truth about Jesus.*

### **Make sand and seed art**

- paper
- clean sand or potting soil
- cups
- plastic spoons
- glue
- seed
- markers

Give each child a piece of paper. Provide cups of sand or potting soil and plastic spoons. Help the children spread glue on their pieces of paper and sift sand or soil on top. When the sand or soil is secure, assist the children in gluing seeds on top of the soil. Write the key passage or big picture question and answer on each paper.

**Say** • *What can you do when you hear the truth about Jesus? I can believe the truth about Jesus.*

### **Paint with vegetables**

- vegetables
- large knife (leader use only)
- paper
- marker
- paper plates
- tempera paint
- hand wipes (for cleanup)
- Allergy Alert

Select veggies such as asparagus, a large carrot, and a celery stalk with leafy tips. Slice the vegetables into chunks that the kids can grip. (Tip: Keep the knife in a safe place, out of kids' reach.)

Help the children dip the vegetables into paint and paint with them. Write the big picture question and answer on each kid's page.

**Say** • *What can you do when you hear the truth about Jesus? I can believe the truth about Jesus.*

### **Play hopscotch**

- index cards
- thick marker
- masking tape

Write the big picture question on index cards, one or two words per card. Use masking tape to mark a hopscotch grid. Tape the index cards in the grid, one card per box. As the kids hop, guide them to say the big picture question. When they reach the last square, they should say the answer.

**Say** • *What can you do when you hear the truth about Jesus? I can believe the truth about Jesus.*

### **Transition to large group closing**

- countdown video (optional)

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# Large Group CLOSING

**Session Title:** Parable of the Sower

**Bible Passage:** Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:4-15

**Big Picture Question:** What can you do when you hear the truth about Jesus? I can believe the truth about Jesus.

**Key Passage:** Matthew 6:33

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus taught people that the kingdom of God had come and that salvation is available to all.

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## Large Group Closing (10+ minutes)

### Review

- Bible
- Timeline Map
- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster
- "Seek Ye First" song
- "We Are" song

Invite the kids to practice good listening. Ask a question from the Bible story. Kids will repeat the question after you, and then a kid may raise her hand to provide the answer.

**Leader:** Who told the parable?

**Kids:** Who told the parable? (*Jesus*)

**Leader:** Who was in the parable?

**Kids:** Who was in the parable? (*a farmer*)

**Leader:** What did the farmer do?

**Kids:** What did the farmer do? (*He planted seeds on four types of ground.*)

**Leader:** What were the four types of ground?

**Kids:** What were the four types of ground? (*the path, rocky, thorny, good*)

**Leader:** Who is like the good ground?

**Kids:** Who is like the good ground? (*People who hear the truth about Jesus and believe it.*)

**Say** • *What can you do when you hear the truth about Jesus? I can believe the truth about Jesus.*

Point to the timeline as you review the Bible story. Sing "Seek Ye First" or "We Are" if time permits.

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## Pray

Invite kids to talk about any prayer requests they may have. Pray, thanking God for sending Jesus to save us. Thank Jesus for telling us the truth. Pray that God will prepare kids' hearts to believe the truth about Jesus.

## Missions story

If your children's ministry is planning a missions activity, introduce the activity. If you do not have a missions activity planned, hold up a trowel. Explain that a farmer or gardener uses a trowel to break up hard dirt and clay to reach the soft, moist soil underneath.

**Say** •Farmers and gardeners know they have to do a little work to get the soil ready before they do any planting.

[*Read aloud 1 Corinthians 3:6.*] This verse says we all have a different job when we tell others about Jesus.

Some people are the first ones to “get the soil ready.”

They talk about Jesus. They pray for their friends and family to know Jesus. In time, maybe God will save the people they are praying for! Don't ever give up praying for someone to hear and believe the truth about Jesus!

Pray over the children that God will get their hearts ready to receive the gospel. Pray that they will also tell their friends or family members about Jesus.

## Play a listening game

Ask the kids to lay on the floor with eyes closed, listening for a sound. Create a sound using an object in the room.

Once you create a sound, kids must wait until you tell them to open their eyes and sit up. Kids may raise their hands to guess the sound. Play several rounds with different objects.

- trowel
- “Firmly Planted” missions video (optional)

Option: You may also show the missions video, courtesy of the North American Mission Board.

- Follow church security rules for dismissing children.

# Leader BIBLE STUDY

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

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

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

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

Jesus taught what God is like. He seeks sinners who have wandered far from Him, and He seeks sinners who try to earn salvation by their good works. As you teach, help kids understand that being lost means not knowing Jesus as Lord and Savior. God loves us, and He actively seeks sinners to bring them to Himself.

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# Preschool WORSHIP OVERVIEW

**Session Title:** Three Parables

**Bible Passage:** Luke 15

**Big Picture Question:** What makes God happy? God is happy when we turn away from sin and love Jesus.

**Key Passage:** Matthew 6:33

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus taught people that the kingdom of God had come and that salvation is available to all.

## Large Group Worship

(15–20 minutes)

## Small Group Activities

(25–30 minutes)

## Large Group Closing

(10+ minutes)

Additional suggestions for specific groups are available at [gospelproject.com/kids/additional-resources](http://gospelproject.com/kids/additional-resources). For free online training on how to lead a group, visit [ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject](http://ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject).

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# The BIBLE STORY

## Three Parables

*Luke 15*

When Jesus taught, many people came to listen to Him. Tax collectors and sinners came to listen to Jesus. This made the religious leaders angry. They did not think Jesus should be friends with people who do wrong things. The religious leaders complained. “Jesus is friends with sinners, and He eats meals with them!” they said. So Jesus told the religious leaders three parables, or stories, to teach them about Himself.

Jesus’ first story was about a lost sheep. Jesus said, “If a man has 100 sheep and one of the sheep goes missing, what does the man do? He leaves the 99 sheep in the field and looks everywhere for his lost sheep until he finds it. And when he finds it, the man is so happy! He carries the sheep on his shoulders and goes home. Then he tells his friends and neighbors, ‘Be happy with me! Let’s celebrate because I have found my lost sheep!’”

The people who listened to Jesus’ story might have thought, *What does this story about a sheep have to do with Jesus?* So Jesus told them what the story meant. “This is what heaven is like,” Jesus said, “but there will be more joy in heaven when one person is sorry for his sin and turns back to God than when 99 good people don’t need to be sorry.”

Then Jesus told a second story. This story was about a lost coin. Jesus said, “If a woman has 10 silver coins and loses one of them, what does she do? She lights a lamp, sweeps the house, and searches everywhere until she finds it! And when she finds it, the woman is so happy! She tells her friends and neighbors, ‘Be happy with me! Let’s celebrate because I have found my lost coin!’”

The people who listened to Jesus’ story might have thought, *What does this story about a coin have to do with Jesus?* So Jesus told them what the story meant. “This is what heaven is like,” Jesus said. “God’s angels will be happy and celebrate when one person is sorry for his sin and turns back to God.”

Then Jesus told one more story. This story was about a lost son. Jesus said, “A man had two sons. The younger son told his father, ‘Father,

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**give me the part of your property that will be mine someday.’ So the father gave his son what was his.**

“A few days later, **the younger son left home.** He traveled to a faraway country. **He spent all his money and made wrong choices.** The son had nothing left, and the country he was in ran out of food. The son got a job feeding pigs, but he was still hungry. The pigs had better food than he did.

“**The younger son thought about what he had done.** He had made bad choices, and **he was sorry.** **So the younger son decided to go home** to his father. He would tell his father that he was sorry, and he would ask to work for the father and be like a servant instead of his son.

“**So the younger son went home. When he was still far away, his father saw him coming. His father ran to him and gave him a big hug and a kiss.** The son started to tell his father how sorry he was for making wrong choices. But **the father told his servants, ‘Hurry! Bring the best clothes for my son to wear. Give him a ring to wear on his finger and sandals to wear on his feet! Let’s celebrate with a big meal! My son was lost, and now he is found!’** The father was so happy that his son was home, and everyone celebrated.

“Well, almost everyone celebrated. **The older son came home from the fields** and he heard music coming from his father’s house. **‘What’s going on?’** he asked. **One of the servants said, ‘Your brother is home. Your father is celebrating because he is so happy.’**

“**The older son was angry!** He would not celebrate. **The father asked the older son to come inside. ‘Listen!’ the older son said. ‘I have worked hard for you! I always obeyed you, but you never threw a party for me.** And now your son comes home after wasting your money, and you celebrate with a big meal!’”

“**‘Son,’ the father said, ‘everything I have is yours. This is a day to be happy and to celebrate because your brother was lost, but now he is found.’”**

*Christ Connection: Jesus told stories about people who were looking for things that were lost. Jesus told these stories to teach about Himself. Jesus looks for people who are lost, people who do not know Him. Jesus gave His life to save people from sin.*

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# Large Group WORSHIP

**Session Title:** Three Parables

**Bible Passage:** Luke 15

**Big Picture Question:** What makes God happy? God is happy when we turn away from sin and love Jesus.

**Key Passage:** Matthew 6:33

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus taught people that the kingdom of God had come and that salvation is available to all.

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## Large Group Worship (15–20 minutes)

### Welcome and sing

- “We Are” song
- “Help One Another in Love” song
- Follow your church’s security procedures.

Welcome the kids to worship time by playing “We Are.” Greet kids with a smile. When all the kids arrive, sing a fun song such as “Help One Another in Love” to help them feel welcomed.

### Practice the key passage and a Bible skill

- Bible
- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- “Seek Ye First” song

Remind kids where to find the key passage in the Bible. Ask if any preschoolers can say the key passage from memory and invite them to do so. Say the key passage together one more time and then sing “Seek Ye First” together. Perform any hand motions you may have created in previous weeks.

**Say** • Remember that Jesus spoke these words in His Sermon on the Mount, which is in the Bible. [*Open your Bible to the Book of Matthew.*] Jesus told His followers not to worry about big things or little things—God will take care of all our needs! Today we are going to learn about three more stories Jesus told.

- “Three Parables” video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Slide or Poster
- blanket
- 3 to 5 random objects

### Watch or tell the Bible story

Introduce the Bible story today by selecting three to five random objects from the room. Show the children the

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objects, cover them with a blanket, and remove one object.

Uncover the objects and ask, “What’s missing?” Tell the children to raise their hands if they know what’s missing. You may reset all the objects and play again if desired.

**Say** • In our Bible story today, Jesus told some stories about people who were searching for lost things. Jesus’ stories were also about God’s kingdom. Listen to hear what Jesus said about what makes God happy in each story.

Tell the Bible story in your own words using the script provided or show the Bible story video “Three Parables.”

### **Worship with song and pray**

**Say** • Jesus told three stories about people who lost important things. Jesus explained that we are all like the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. We are important to God, and He gave His best—His own Son—to bring us back to Him. That is why Jesus came to earth: to save us and bring us back to God. Jesus said all of heaven celebrates when someone turns away from sin and loves God. *What makes God happy? God is happy when we turn away from sin and love Jesus.*

Sing praise songs such as “We Are” and “Jump.” Invite kids to dance or hop in place to the music.

Sing “Love the Lord” as you prepare to pray. You may also collect an offering at this time.

**Say** • Dear God, thank You for showing us how precious we are to You. Thank You for celebrating when we turn away from sin and love You. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to seek and save people. Amen!

### **Transition to small groups**

- Big Picture Question Poster
- “We Are” song
- “Jump” song
- “Love the Lord” song
- offering basket

- countdown video (optional)

Tip: Do activities one of these ways:

- as a group, all at the same time
- in small groups that rotate through each activity
- set up as centers, allowing preschoolers to browse and choose

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# Small Group ACTIVITIES

**Session Title:** Three Parables

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Tip: Select activities that you can staff and your class will enjoy.



- "Jesus Puzzle," 1 per kid
- ziplock bags

- robe
- ring
- sandals

## Small Group Activities (25–30 minutes)

### Work Jesus puzzles

Print a Jesus puzzle for each child. Before class, cut apart the pieces and place them in ziplock bags to give each child or group of children. Invite the kids to work the puzzles.

**Say** • Jesus said we are like the lost sheep, the lost coin, or the lost son. Sin keeps us away from God. We need Jesus to save us so that we can love Him and know Him. ***What makes God happy? God is happy when we turn away from sin and love Jesus.***

### Play "Robe, Ring, Sandals"

Play a version of "Red Light, Green Light." Line up the children on one side of the room while you stand on the other side. When you turn toward the children, they will walk toward you. When you turn away, they must stop. When one child reaches you, clothe him in a robe, a ring, and sandals. Then let him lead the next round of the game.

**Say** • Jesus told a story about a son who left home. When the son came back, the father was so happy that he celebrated with a feast! ***What makes God happy? God is happy when we turn away from sin and love Jesus.***

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- coins
  - paper
  - unwrapped crayons
  - tape

### **Make coin rubbings**

Tape a few coins to the table. Give each child an unwrapped crayon and piece of paper. Instruct the preschoolers to rub the crayon over the paper while the paper is on top of the coin. This will make an impression of the coin on the paper.

**Say** • Jesus told a story about a woman who lost a coin. She looked everywhere for it! When she found it, she was so happy! Jesus said that we are lost and need Jesus to save us. *What makes God happy? God is happy when we turn away from sin and love Jesus.*

- “Bible Story Figures,”  
1 set per kid
- crayons
- child-size scissors
- cotton balls
- plastic coins

### **Play out the Bible story**

Provide each child with a cotton ball “sheep” and a plastic coin. Give each child one cutout of the shepherd, the lost son, the father, and the woman to color. As some of the children color, lead a few children at a time to help you play out the stories using their Bible story figures.

**Say** • Jesus told three stories about people who lost things that were very important to them. He was really talking about Himself! We are lost and separated from God because of sin, but Jesus came to bring us back to God. *What makes God happy? God is happy when we turn away from sin and love Jesus.*

- “Bookmarks”
- Bible

### **Review bookmarks**

Place the bookmarks inside your Bible in random places. Tell a child to select a bookmark from the Bible. Depending on the image on the bookmark (sheep, coin, or lost son), help the children retell the story.

**Say** • *What makes God happy? God is happy when we turn away from sin and love Jesus.*

- countdown video  
(optional)

### **Transition to large group closing**

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# Large Group CLOSING

**Session Title:** Three Parables

**Bible Passage:** Luke 15

**Big Picture Question:** What makes God happy? God is happy when we turn away from sin and love Jesus.

**Key Passage:** Matthew 6:33

**Unit Christ Connection:** Jesus taught people that the kingdom of God had come and that salvation is available to all.

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## Large Group Closing (10+ minutes)

### Review

- Bible
- Timeline Map
- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster
- “Seek Ye First” song
- “We Are” song

Review the Bible story by asking the following questions:

1. Who came to listen to Jesus teach? (*tax collectors and sinners*)
2. How did that make the religious leaders feel? (*They were angry.*)
3. What did Jesus say the stories were really about? (*There is more joy in heaven when one sinner is sorry and turns to God. Jesus looks for people who are lost—people who need Him.*)
4. ***What makes God happy? God is happy when we turn away from sin and love Jesus.***

Read the key passage twice to the children. Sing “Seek Ye First,” “We Are,” or another song about Jesus.

### Pray

Invite volunteers to tell you any prayer requests. Mention the prayer requests as you pray over the kids.

**Say** • Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to earth to die on the cross to save sinners. Thank You for bringing Him back to life so we can be with You forever in heaven. Thank You for Your love for us, even

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when we don't always obey You. Help us to turn away from sin and love Jesus. In Jesus' name. Amen!

### **Missions story**

• globe or world map

If your children's ministry is planning a missions activity, introduce the activity. If you do not have a missions activity planned, show the kids a globe or world map and talk about how God planned for Christians to tell the gospel to people all over the world. God wants everyone to turn away from sin and love Jesus.

**Say** • God sent Jesus to earth to die on the cross and come back to life to take the punishment for our sins. Jesus and His friends traveled to many places in the promised land, but the world is so much bigger! Jesus told His disciples to go into all the world and tell others about Jesus.

Today, Christian missionaries go all over the world to tell others about Jesus. Did you know that you can be a missionary at home, at school, at the park, or anywhere else you go? You can tell someone about Jesus anywhere!

***What makes God happy? God is happy when we turn away from sin and love Jesus.***

Pray that God will give kids the opportunity to tell their family members and friends the good news about Jesus. It may not always be easy, but pray that God will remind kids how happy He is when one sinner turns away from sin and loves Jesus.

### **Play a hiding game**

Select one child to hide in the classroom and tell the other children to close their eyes. After you count to 10, invite the kids to open their eyes and locate the hiding child. Select another kid to hide and play again. Remind kids about the lost items in the Bible story as they play.

• Follow church security rules for dismissing children.