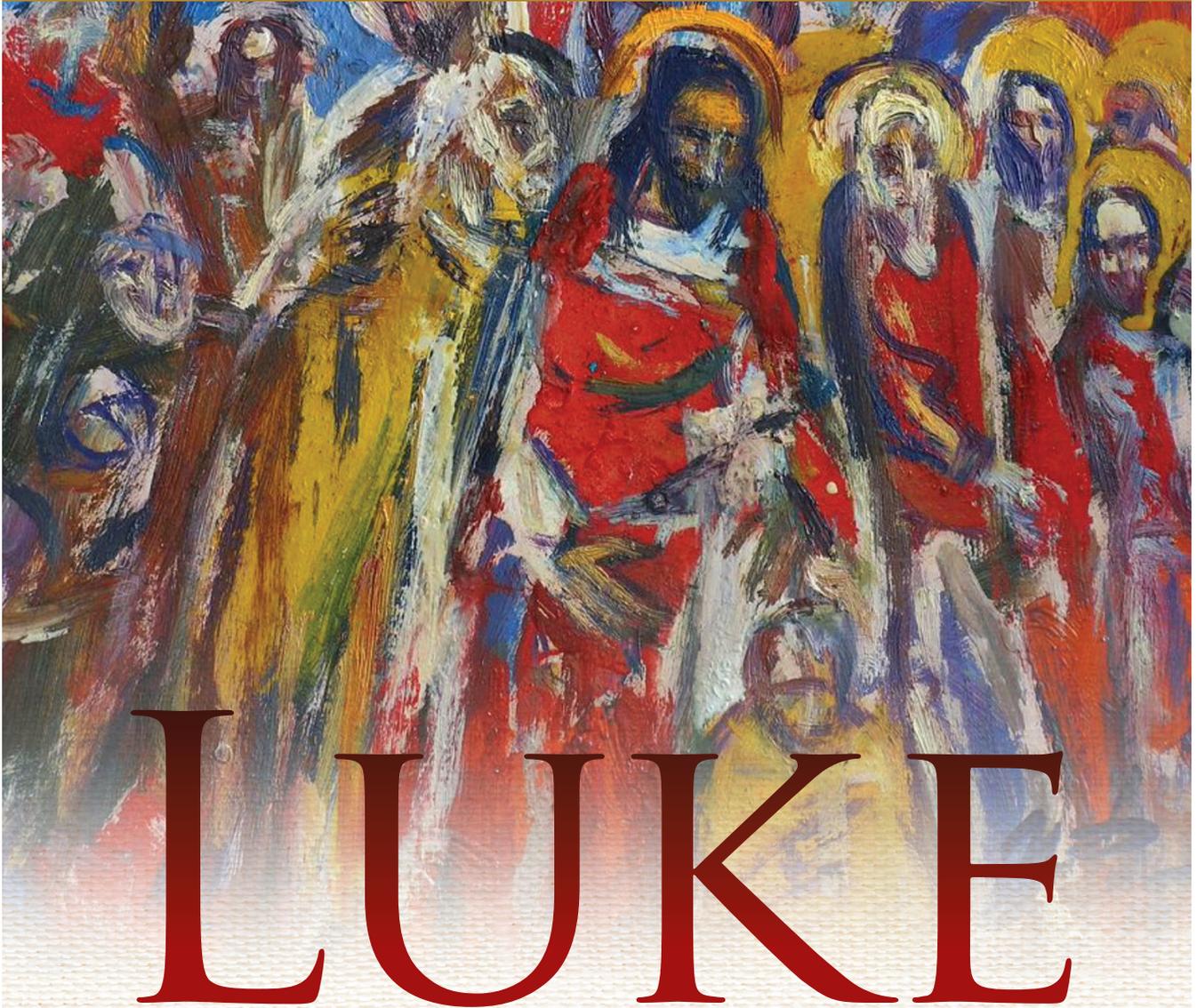


ADAM HAMILTON

Author of John, The Walk, and 24 Hours That Changed the World



LUKE

JESUS AND THE
OUTSIDERS, OUTCASTS,
AND OUTLAWS

CHILDREN'S LEADER GUIDE

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by Anita Peebles

Abingdon Press | Nashville

Luke:
Jesus and the Outsiders, Outcasts, and Outlaws
Children's Leader Guide Download

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INTRODUCTION

This downloadable children's leader guide is meant for use with *Luke* by Adam Hamilton. This guide includes six lessons, one corresponding to each chapter in the main book. The lessons in this guide, designed for children in kindergarten through sixth grade, require simple preparation and few materials.

The pattern of these lessons is as follows:

- **Lesson Objectives:** Lists the learning goals for the session.
- **Prepare:** Outlines the teacher's preparation, including gathering materials and making example crafts.
- **Opening Activity:** Welcome children to the space with care, calling each child by his or her name. The activity will introduce the scripture stories or themes that are the focus for the session.
- **Choice of Activities:** Each lesson has two to three activities suggested, ranging from discussions to games to crafts focused on the theme of the day. These activities can each be done in fifteen minutes, so feel free to choose as many or as few as fits the needs of your group.
- **Closing Prayer:** Gather the children into a circle to close your time together. Then, as children leave the space, dismiss and bless them by name.

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus emphasizes relationships, and not just with the most popular and powerful. The tax collectors, sinners, and others who are left behind by society encounter Jesus in profound ways. As you journey with Jesus through the Lenten season and as you encounter stories of his life in new ways, pay attention to your relationships with the lost, the outcast, the stranger, and the marginalized. While facilitating these sessions with the children in your care, encourage them to be present to the needs of those around them and their own needs for love and acceptance.

It is not necessary for you to read all of Luke before leading these sessions, but you are encouraged to read the focus chapter each week along with the 40-day scripture reading plan! (You can find the 40-day reading plan at www.AdamHamilton.com/Luke.) The Gospel of Luke, like the other Gospels, relates Jesus's life and ministry in story and parable, as well as his final journey to Jerusalem. If you are reading Luke and using this resource during the Lenten season, you will be aware that Lent is a journey patterned after Jesus's own. The closer you get to Good Friday, the closer Jesus gets to the cross. And then, of course, Luke proclaims the good news of resurrection on Easter!

As you teach, know that you have what it takes to guide the children as they learn about Jesus's expansive love and inclusive community in the Gospel of Luke. Approach each lesson with an open mind, open heart, and careful preparation. God will do the rest.

You are encouraged to pray this prayer by Adam Hamilton as you begin the study:

Lord, as I begin this study of Luke's Gospel, open my ears to hear, and my heart to receive, all that you want to say to me. Help me to see you, to hear you, and ultimately to follow you. Amen.

May your fellowship be blessed as you seek to follow Jesus with the children in your care.



SESSION 1

LIFTING UP THE LOWLY

Lesson Objectives

- Encounter people of all ages who participated in God’s ministry.
- Consider the gifts of different age groups in your church community.
- Experience the empowerment in Mary’s Magnificat.

Prepare

Gather Materials

- Posterboard or whiteboard
- Markers or whiteboard markers
- Bibles

Prepare

- Write “With all my heart I glorify the Lord! Luke 1:46” on a posterboard or whiteboard.

Opening Activity

As children enter the space, greet each one by name. **SAY:** “Welcome, NAME! You are welcome just as you are.”

Invite children to sit in a circle on the floor.

SAY: I have good news to share with you today! Well, I want to share the Gospel of Luke with you. *Gospel* means “good news.” And the Gospels in the Bible tell us of the good news of Jesus’s life!

ASK: What do you know about Jesus’s life? What are some things that he did during his life?

SAY: Jesus lived on earth a long time ago, two thousand years ago. But there was so much good news in his life that people kept talking about him and sharing stories about him—right up until now! The

Gospel of Luke has been one of the most important books for telling these stories about Jesus's life. We are going to explore the Gospel of Luke together.

Opening Prayer

Invite the children to pray with you.

PRAY: *Holy God, as we learn about the good news together, be with us. Help us love one another as Jesus showed us how. Amen.*

Choice of Activities

Gifted at Any Age

Gather the children by a posterboard or whiteboard.

ASK: What is special about being your age? What is good about it? What is hard about it?

Encourage the children to share responses (for example, grown-ups taking care of them, not able to drive yet, have to go to school, get to go to camps, and so on).

SAY: In the Bible, there are lots of stories about how people participate in God's ministry. People of all ages help spread God's love in the world. In the Gospel of Luke, the very first chapter includes people who are old and people who are young being part of God's plan for the world.

READ aloud Luke 1:5-38.

You may wish to invite children to find this passage in a Bible so they can follow along or read with you.

SAY: In our Bible story, God used people who were very old to spread the good news about a special baby coming soon. And then God uses a young woman to be pregnant with Jesus. Wow!

Turn to the posterboard. With markers, make a list along the left side of the board of different age groups: babies, children, teenagers, young adults, adults, elders. Then divide the board into two halves by drawing a vertical line down the center. On the left half make a + sign, and on the right half make a - sign.

Invite the children to help you think of positives (+) and negatives (-) about being in each age group. As you discuss, make sure to balance positives and negatives for each age group.

SAY: God invites all of us, no matter how old we are, to share God's love with the world. That is part of the "good news" in Luke's Gospel!

First and Last

Invite the children to stand in a line side by side.

SAY: Hmm . . . I need to make a team for our next activity. But how do I choose whom to pick? Let's try some different methods for creating a team.

- Invite all those kids wearing blue to come forward to be “on your team.” Say you picked them because they are wearing your favorite color.
- Next, invite all kids who have birthdays in January-May to come forward. Say you picked them because the first half of the year is the best.
- Then, invite all kids who like broccoli to come forward. Say you picked them because broccoli is the best.

Have the kids sit down in a circle.

ASK: How did it feel to get picked for my team? How did it feel to not get picked for my team? Was the way I picked the team fair? Why or why not?

Lead a discussion about fairness. Invite children to share about times when they were or were not picked for a team.

SAY: Sometimes when humans do things like pick teams, we aren't always fair. In Bible times, Jesus saw that some people were treated better than others. Jesus knew that it wasn't fair to treat some people better and some people worse. Jesus learned this from his mother Mary, who sang about “lifting up the lowly.”

READ Luke 1:46-55 aloud.

ASK: How does God help those who are “lowly”? What does Mary's song say God does to powerful people? What does God think about fairness?

Closing Prayer

Gather children into a closing circle.

Invite each child to say one thing she or he is grateful for about the session today.

SAY: The Gospel of Luke shares the good news about Jesus. Part of this good news is that everyone can share God's love, no matter how old or young they are.

ASK: How will you share the good news today?

Invite the children to pray with you.

PRAY: *Holy God, thank you for showing us that we can all share your love with the world. Thank you for teaching us that we all have something to give at every age. Amen.*

Dismiss each child by name.



SESSION 2

SIMON, DO YOU SEE THIS WOMAN?

- Lesson Objectives
- Explore the Gospel of Luke to find stories about women.
- Consider different ways to serve God and learn about God.
- Wonder about what it means to truly see and witness one another.

Prepare

Gather Materials

- Bibles
- Plain paper
- Posterboard or whiteboard
- Pencils
- Markers
- Cardstock

Prepare

- Write or print the text of Luke 10:38-42 on a posterboard or whiteboard.
- Do the “Women and Girls in the Bible” activity for yourself, or read the section in Adam Hamilton’s *Luke* that is about women in the Bible.

Opening Activity

As children enter the space, greet each one by name. **SAY:** “Welcome, NAME! You are welcome just as you are.”

Invite children to sit in a circle on the floor.

SAY: Last week we talked about the “good news” of Jesus as shared in Luke’s Gospel.

ASK: What good news do you have to share with one another today?

Invite children to share any good news they are celebrating.

SAY: Part of the good news of Jesus is that he listened to people share about their lives. Jesus saw people who were sad and hurt, he saw people who were left out and who felt forgotten. Jesus listened to these people and told them that they were loved.

ASK: How do you show someone he or she is loved?

Invite children to read aloud Luke 10:38-42 from the posterboard or whiteboard you have prepared.

ASK: How was Mary serving God in this story? How was Martha serving God?

SAY: Sometimes when people read this Bible story, they say that Mary was doing the right thing because she was listening to Jesus and Martha was doing the wrong thing by serving her guests. But it's more complicated, because Jesus taught us to care for one another and our neighbors too. Sometimes we leave out people who are caring for neighbors by serving them, especially if they are women. Today we are going to explore some of the stories about how Jesus loved people who felt left out.

Opening Prayer

Invite children to pray with you, directing them to speak a woman's name aloud when invited.

PRAY: *God, we thank you for the amazing women in our lives and we say their names now. [Leave time for children to speak aloud.] Show us how to serve you with joy and learn about Jesus every day. Amen.*

Choice of Activities

Women and Girls in the Bible

Gather the children in a circle.

Ask them to name as many people in the Bible as they can. Give them one minute. Write down the names as they say them.

Look at the list and count how many names are male and how many are female. Notice this aloud.

SAY: The Bible has lots of stories about God's people. Sometimes we know the names of people in the stories and sometimes we don't know the names. We named X many boys and X many girls in our experiment.

ASK: Why do you think we don't know as many girls' names in the Bible as boys' names?

Divide the children into groups of three or four. Give each child a Bible. Give each group a piece of paper and pencil.

Direct them to find the Gospel of Luke.

Give them five minutes as a group to go through the Gospel of Luke and write down as many women's names as they can find. They can include the stories where women are unnamed (for example, the woman who washes Jesus's feet in Luke 7).

At the end of the time, invite groups to share what they found.

SAY: Something that is unique about Luke's Gospel is that there are more stories about women than in the other Gospels. This makes people who study the Bible wonder if Luke knew a lot of women who traveled with Jesus and were his disciples. Even though women in Bible times weren't always seen as being as important as men, Jesus included women in his ministry. And women were the first to hear the good news that Jesus was raised on Easter! Women and men both have special parts in sharing the good news of Jesus.

Thank You Cards for Serving the Church

READ aloud Luke 10:38-42, the story of Mary and Martha.

ASK: How did Mary serve Jesus? How did Martha serve Jesus?

SAY: There are many ways to serve God and to serve our neighbors. There is no one right way. Everyone has something they can give and a way they can serve the church.

ASK: How do people serve the church?

As the children share, make a list on a paper or whiteboard. Make sure to include all kinds of ways to serve in the church, from preaching to making hospital visits to the person serving as church secretary and the people who wash dishes and clean bathrooms.

SAY: Everyone who serves the church plays an important role. Pastors serve the church by teaching and preaching and caring for people. Volunteers who serve coffee and clean and collect donations serve the church too. And you serve the church by listening and learning about the good news of Jesus!

Give each child a piece of cardstock and markers.

Invite the children to write "thank you" cards to everyone who serves the church. Make sure they write cards to people who do "invisible" jobs as well as those whose service is more obvious.

If possible, invite a pastor or deacon to the session to talk with children about how all kinds of service are important.

Portrait of a Friend

SAY: Part of the good news about Jesus is that he really saw people as they truly were. He didn't see people as the world did, on the surface. He took the time to get to know people and listen to them as well as observe them. Let's try to witness each other, in a small way, right here in our class.

Divide the children up into pairs.

Give each child a plain paper and some pencils or markers.

Have one person in the pair draw a picture of her or his partner. Then have the other person in the pair draw her or his partner.

When each person has been drawn, direct the children to ask each other the following questions, recording their answers in words or drawing on the portrait.

- What is your favorite color and why?
- Where are you the happiest?
- What do you like to do in your free time?
- What do you love about yourself?

If desired, the children can share with the group when done.

Closing Prayer

Gather the children into a circle.

Invite them to share one thing they are grateful for about the day.

Invite the children to pray with you.

PRAY: *Holy God, thank you for knowing us and loving us. Help us pay attention to one another. Help us learn about you and serve you by loving one another. Amen.*

Dismiss the children by name.



SESSION 3

PARABLES FROM THE UNDERSIDE

Lesson Objectives

- Explore reading parables by empathizing with each character.
- Learn about the definition of sin as “missing the mark.”
- Experience God as welcoming and inclusive.

Prepare

Gather Materials

- Bibles
- White paper
- Poster of a target
- Scissors
- Scotch tape
- Markers

Prepare

- Print a poster of a target or draw three concentric circles and color them each a different color.
- Cut out X shapes (about 3 inches square), enough for each child to have two.

Opening Activity

As children enter the space, greet each one by name. **SAY:** “Welcome, NAME! You are welcome just as you are.”

Invite children to sit in a circle on the floor.

Tell the children a story about how you learned a lesson (for example, not to touch the hot stove, how to be kind to a sibling, or that you had to be careful when crossing the street).

ASK: When did you have to learn a lesson about life? Who helped you learn? What did it feel like to learn a lesson?

SAY: During Jesus's life, he traveled all over the place with his disciples. He visited different towns and met lots of people. When he was teaching and preaching, he told the people all about God's love. Some people loved to hear about God, and they brought their friends and family to learn too. But others didn't really get it. Jesus used stories to help explain what God is like to the people.

Tell the story, in your own words, of the parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15:4-7).

ASK: What did Jesus want the people to know about God from that story?

SAY: Sometimes, we use stories to teach a lesson. Stories can live in our hearts in a special way, so we remember them. The stories Jesus told were special. They were kind of like riddles, because they could be tricky to figure out. These special stories are called parables. Jesus told parables so that people would think deeply about how to live and that they would know God loves them and gives them a second chance, even when they mess up.

Opening Prayer

Invite the children to pray with you.

PRAY: *Holy God, as we learn about your Son, Jesus, remind us of the good news that you welcome everyone and give everyone a second chance. Amen.*

Choice of Activities

Hitting and Missing the Mark

SAY: In church sometimes we hear about "sin." In the Gospels that tell us about Jesus's life, we read that Jesus tells people to "sin no more."

ASK: What is sin? What is an example of sin?

SAY: One way that we can understand sin is "missing the mark." Everyone sins. Everyone misses the mark sometimes. Missing the mark means that we don't behave how we want to behave or we don't live up to being our best selves. One part of the good news Jesus brings is that God gives us more chances. We can always learn and try to do the right thing the next time.

Invite the children to stand in a circle near the poster of the target.

Give each child a white X with a piece of a tape.

Have the children take turns closing their eyes and turning in a circle several times. Then have them try to put the *X* in the center of the poster of the target while their eyes are closed.

After each child has had a turn, **ASK:** What was it like to put the *X* on the poster? Was it hard or easy? Why?

SAY: Sometimes it can be challenging to be our best selves. We can miss the target and not live up to how we want to behave. But God always gives us a second chance so we can try again.

Welcome Home Signs

Gather the children in a circle.

READ the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-32 aloud with the children.

You may want to have the children take turns reading with you.

ASK: What does this story tell us about God? What does this story tell us about how we should treat one another?

SAY: Everyone gets lost sometimes, like the son who left home and then made some bad choices. God welcomes us back every time like the father who ran out to meet his son. Even when we feel like we're not good or important enough, God welcomes us with open arms.

Give each child a piece of plain paper and markers.

Invite each child to write and draw a welcoming sign for the classroom, church, or their home.

Closing Prayer

Gather children in a circle.

Invite the children to share something they are grateful for from the session today.

Invite the children to pray with you.

PRAY: *Holy God, thank you for welcoming us all the time. Thank you for the stories that remind us that you love us no matter what. Amen.*

Dismiss each child by name.



SESSION 4

ON THE JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

Lesson Objectives

- Learn about Jesus's journey to Jerusalem.
- Explore the role of disciples in Jesus's ministry.
- Consider the good Samaritan story and how it impacts Christians' daily lives.

Prepare

Gather Materials

- Bibles
- Plastic tablecloth
- Plain cardstock
- Watercolors and brushes
- Cups for water
- White crayons
- Pencils
- Scissors
- Disposable cameras or adults' phones with cameras
- Plain paper
- Markers
- Crayons

Prepare

- Cover a table with the plastic tablecloth in preparation for painting. Fill water cups and set out watercolors.
- Some disposable cameras.

Opening Activity

As children enter the space, greet each one by name. **SAY:** "Welcome, NAME! You are welcome just as you are."

Invite children to sit in a circle on the floor.

ASK: Have you ever been on a journey? What did you do? What was it like?

SAY: In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus traveled a lot. Jesus's friends, called disciples, went with him. Throughout their journey, Jesus and his friends taught about God, preached the good news of God's love, and healed people. Sometimes large crowds followed them. Sometimes everyone was not happy to see Jesus and his disciples.

ASK: Why do you think some people would be happy to see Jesus? Why do you think some people would not be happy to see Jesus?

SAY: As Jesus traveled, he met lots of people. Some who loved him and some who didn't like how he said they should behave. Jesus told stories to help people understand that they should love and care for themselves and their neighbors, no matter who the people were. One of these stories is called the parable of the good Samaritan.

READ Luke 10:25-37 aloud.

- You may wish to invite children to read along with you. You could choose a strong reader to read the dialogue.

ASK: Who was a good neighbor in this story? Have you ever been a good neighbor?

Opening Prayer

Invite children to pray with you.

PRAY: *Holy God, thank you for Jesus and his friends, who taught and preached and healed. Help each of us learn how to be good friends and neighbors. Amen.*

Choice of Activities

Kyrie Eleison Art

Invite children to gather at a table. Give each child a sheet of plain cardstock or art paper.

SAY: While Jesus and his friends were traveling for their ministry, people would cry out to them, "Lord, have mercy!" In the Greek language, which is the language the New Testament was written in, those words are *Kyrie Eleison!* (KEE-ree-yay ee-LAY-ee-sohn). Some churches sing lots of songs with "Kyrie Eleison!" in them because it's like saying "God, help me!" Today we will remember the way people called out to Jesus and his disciples, and the helping hands of Jesus, with our art.

Have children trace their hands in pencil and cut them out.

Direct the kids to write in white crayon on their hands the words “Kyrie Eleison.”

Have the children paint over the crayon with watercolor. The white crayon will show up through the watercolor.

Set the art aside to dry for the rest of the session.

The Kingdom of God Is Everywhere

SAY: As Jesus traveled, he met lots of people who came to him to listen, learn, and be healed. He and his disciples were so busy ministering to all the people on their journey to Jerusalem. Sometimes the people would want to know how to be close to God or how to get to the kingdom of God. Jesus said, “God’s kingdom is already among you” (Luke 17:20-21).

ASK: What do you think the kingdom of God is like? What does it mean for the kingdom of God to be among you?

SAY: Jesus wanted everyone to know that God is all around us. God is with us all the time. Whenever we live with peace and justice, we are experiencing the kingdom of God. Today we will explore the kingdom of God around us.

If possible, take the children on a walk around your church. Take photos of the different areas where “the kingdom of God is.”

If possible, get disposable cameras for each child to use. Or you could split up into groups with the teachers and volunteers and have the adults use their phones to take photographs as directed by the kids.

If it is not possible to go around your church with the group, have children think about places they go in their daily lives. Invite them to draw or write about those places, with the title “The Kingdom of God Is Here” on their paper.

Tell the children you will get the disposable cameras processed so they can get the photos back during the next session. Or, if you have photos on your phone or other adults’ phones, gather the photos and make a collage of them.

When you return to your group, invite the children to share together about what they observed when they were looking for the kingdom of God.

Creating a Group Prayer

Gather the children together around a posterboard or whiteboard.

Invite a strong reader to read Luke 18:15-17 aloud from a Bible.

ASK: What can kids do that adults cannot do? What can adults do that kids cannot do?

SAY: In Jesus's time, children were not always allowed to do what adults did. Once when some adults wanted to listen to Jesus, some of the people thought children shouldn't be allowed to participate. But Jesus wanted the children to be close to him. He wanted the community to know that children are important. So Jesus invited the children to come up front and he showed the adults that children had a lot to give to their community.

ASK: What do children in our church give? What can children teach adults?

Invite children to help write a prayer that can be used in church. If a pastor or deacon is available, you may wish to invite them to help with this project.

Use the following guide for writing a prayer on the posterboard or whiteboard.

- **Address God:** What name(s) do you use in your church?
- **Give thanks:** What do you want to thank God for?
- **Share concerns:** Tell God what is concerning you or what is making you sad right now.
- **Ask God for help:** What do you hope God will help you with as you face a challenge?
- **Express your faith:** God will come through for you, so acknowledge that God is with you.
- **Close:** You could say "Amen," or "in Jesus's name, Amen," or something that makes sense to you.

After the children have finished creating the group prayer, make sure to write it down and share it with a pastor or worship committee so it can be used in church services.

Closing Prayer

Gather the children in a circle.

Invite the children to name something they are grateful for from your session today.

Invite children to pray with you.

Or you may wish to pray the group prayer you created together.

PRAY: *Holy God, thank you for showing us how Jesus traveled and ministered with so many different people. Thank you for reminding us that Jesus welcomes children and knows children can be leaders. Amen.*

Dismiss children by name.



SESSION 5

THE FINAL WEEK

Lesson Objectives

- Learn the importance of names.
- Consider how to serve the poor in your community.
- Observe Communion as a remembrance of the Last Supper.

Prepare

Gather Materials

- Bibles
- Plain paper
- Markers
- Napkins
- Small plates
- Small cups
- Snacks (bread, goldfish crackers, or others)
- Be mindful of allergies when choosing a food.
- Grape juice
- Be mindful of allergies when choosing a juice. Use water if necessary.

Prepare

- Prepare the snack/Communion.
- Make examples of the artistic projects.

Opening Activity

As children enter the space, greet each one by name. **SAY:** “Welcome, NAME! You are welcome just as you are.”

Invite children to sit in a circle on the floor.

SAY: During Jesus’s life, he ministered to a lot of different kinds of people. Young and old, rich and poor, citizens and foreigners, women and men, and everyone in between. Jesus wanted everyone to experience

God's love through justice for all people. Jesus told people to "repent," which means to change their hearts and lives.

ASK: How do you change your heart and life? Is it easy or challenging to change?

SAY: Jesus invited people to listen to him and follow him. He never said it would be easy to follow him, but he said it would be worth it to spread God's love to the world.

ASK: What is something that is not easy but is good?

Opening Prayer

Invite the children to pray with you.

PRAY: *Holy God, show us how to keep your love at the center of our lives. Help us treat all people well, following the example of Jesus. Amen.*

Choice of Activities

Center of Your Life Chart

Gather children in a circle.

Give each child a plain piece of paper and a marker.

Have each child write his or her name at the top of the paper. Then have them draw a circle in the center of the paper, big enough to write a word in or draw a small picture.

SAY: Jesus wanted people to center their lives on God's love. That meant listening to God, trying to love people, and sharing the good news about Jesus with others. But sometimes, it can be hard to focus on God at the center of our lives. It is tempting for other things to take the place of God, like family, friends, popularity, school, sports, or something else.

ASK: What do you think it is like to center your life on God? What would your life be like if you focus on sharing God's love?

Have the children draw a heart or write "God's love" in the circle in the middle of the paper. Then, have them draw five lines coming out of the circle. At the end of each line, have them write or draw signs that their life is focused on God.

- If needed, help them by suggesting the following: how you treat your siblings, how you share your toys, how you talk to your parents or guardians, what you do to help others, and so on.

Invite children to share if they feel comfortable.

Sign Your Name

Gather the children around a table. Give each child a piece of paper and markers.

Invite each child to write his or her name in large letters in the center of the paper. Have them decorate the letters how they would like. As they work,

SAY: It is important to call everyone by her or his name. Using someone's correct name makes them feel good, feel seen, and feel loved. When Jesus was traveling, he met a lot of people. And he tried to use their names when he talked to them.

ASK: How do you feel when someone calls you by your name? How do you feel when someone does not call you by your name, or mistakes your name?

SAY: When we use someone's name, it shows we pay attention to that person and that we care about her or him.

Invite each child to pass her or his name sign around the group so each other child can sign it.

SAY: When you look at this name sign, remember that these people know your name. You are loved by God. Our group cares about you.

Remembering Jesus When We Eat

Gather the children in a circle at a table or on the floor.

You may wish to have them wash their hands before this activity.

READ Luke 22:7-38 aloud. You may choose to invite one or two strong readers to help read aloud.

Choose three children to help distribute Communion: one for napkins, one for bread, one for cups of juice. Instruct the children to wait until all have been served before taking Communion.

SAY: The night before Jesus died, he gathered to share a meal with his friends. This meal was important, because Jesus knew he was going to die. He also knew he was going to rise from the dead. But when he talked about this, his friends were confused. During the meal, Jesus shared the bread and the cup with his friends, telling them to remember him.

ASK: What do you want to remember about Jesus? What do you want others to know about Jesus?

SAY: Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of me." Many churches share Communion at least once a month. Some churches share Communion every week. For all churches, Communion is a special time when the church family gets together and remembers the stories of Jesus's life. And Jesus tells us that any time we gather and eat together, we remember Jesus.

NOTE: If your church requires a pastor or a deacon to preside over Communion, invite them to come to this session. Or you may wish to do this activity during or after Communion within the larger faith community. You may also choose to simply share a snack together and talk about the meaning of Communion without using the bread and the cup.

Closing Prayer

Gather the children in a circle.

Invite the children to share something they are grateful for from the session today.

Invite the children to pray with you.

PRAY: *Holy God, help us keep you at the center of our lives. Show us how to spread your love wherever we go. Help us remember you whenever we gather, call one another's names, and eat together. Amen.*

Dismiss each child by name.



SESSION 6

CRUCIFIED

WITH THE OUTLAWS

Lesson Objectives

- Learn how God was with Jesus through the events of Good Friday and Easter.
- Experience meditation and prayer as spiritual practices.
- Consider how God strengthens us when life is challenging, sad, or scary.

Prepare

Gather Materials

- Bibles
- Plain paper
- Construction paper
- Yarn
- Hole punch
- Cardboard
- Cardstock
- Rocks (enough for each child)
- Scissors
- Brass brads
- Markers
- Pencils

Prepare

- Cut out 9-inch diameter circles of cardboard. Print or draw two block arrows on a sheet of cardstock, one measuring about 4 inches and one measuring 6 inches. If the children in your care are too young to use scissors independently, cut the arrows out, one set for each child.

Opening Activity

As children enter the space, greet each one by name. **SAY:** “Welcome, NAME! You are welcome just as you are.”

Invite children to sit in a circle on the floor.

SAY: Over the past few weeks we have been learning about Jesus's life from the Gospel of Luke. Remember that *gospel* means "good news"!

ASK: What have you learned is the "good news" about Jesus? How can you share that good news with others?

SAY: Throughout Jesus's life, he traveled and journeyed with his disciples. He taught and preached. He ministered to people and healed them. Jesus welcomed the outcast, the stranger, and the people who felt forgotten. But some people in power didn't like what Jesus was doing. They wanted to stop him because they were jealous that the people liked Jesus so much. So the people in power had soldiers arrest Jesus. They were mean to Jesus and he died.

ASK: How does hearing these stories about Jesus's life and death make you feel?

Allow space for emotions of confusion, sadness, anger, grief, and more. There is no one right way to feel when encountering this tender part of Jesus's story. Make sure to communicate with parents and guardians if any concerns are raised as the children experience these stories.

SAY: But the Gospel of Luke doesn't end with Jesus's death. Nope—there was more "good news" to be shared! And if you're surprised that any good news can come after Jesus's death, you're not the only one. God surprised everyone by raising Jesus to life again! God showed us that God's love is bigger than any of the sad, scary, and violent things in the world.

Opening Prayer

Invite the children to pray with you.

PRAY: *Holy God, thank you for giving us the Bible that tells us the good news about Jesus. Thank you for sharing your great big love with us that is more powerful than death. As we learn these stories about Jesus, help us keep love at the center. Amen.*

Choice of Activities

Prayer Journal

SAY: Toward the end of Jesus's life, he knew that some people were feeling threatened by him. Jesus spent a lot of time in prayer, asking God to be with him and strengthen him.

ASK: When do you pray? How do you feel when you pray?

SAY: Sometimes we pray alone and sometimes we pray with others. We can pray at home and at school and at church. We can pray with our family and friends or our church family. Jesus prayed with lots

of people during his life, and sometimes people wrote those prayers down. That's how we know the Lord's Prayer and other prayers that the Gospel writers recorded. Today, some people use a prayer journal to remember their prayers. Or they use a journal to draw or write their prayers.

Give each child a sheet of construction paper, several sheets of plain white paper, and some yarn.

Direct them to fold each of the papers in half. Then stack the papers and use a hole punch to make three holes along the fold.

Tie yarn through the holes to make a simple book.

SAY: We just made a prayer journal that you can use to write or draw some prayers. Spend a few minutes writing a prayer in your journal or drawing a picture that represents your prayer to God.

- Allow the children time to use their prayer journal. You may wish to play some quiet music for a few minutes while they write or draw their prayers in their journal.

Rock, Cross, Heart

Gather the children around a table.

Have each child choose a rock.

SAY: After the soldiers arrested Jesus, his friends and disciples were confused. They weren't sure what to do. They probably felt scared. They waited for something to happen. Then, when Jesus was put on the cross, they waited some more. When Jesus died on the cross, it was sad and scary. But God stayed with Jesus as he died, even though it was sad and scary. And God was with Jesus's friends. Sometimes people say God is like a rock, because God is strong and God stays with us.

ASK: Have you ever felt God's presence with you when something was sad or scary?

SAY: God never left Jesus. Even when he was dying, and even after he died, God was with Jesus. And when Jesus's friends and disciples were scared and confused and sad, God was with them.

Direct the children to paint a cross on one side of the rock. While the paint dries,

SAY: On Easter morning, the world got a big surprise. God raised Jesus from the dead. Jesus's friends and disciples were so happy! They waited with Jesus and God waited with them. God showed the world that God's love is stronger than death.

Direct the children to paint a heart on the other side of the rock.

SAY: Whenever we are experiencing something sad and scary, we can remember that God is our rock. You can use this rock when you pray, or just have it with you as a reminder that God loves you and is with you.

Invite the children to pray with you.

PRAY: *Holy God, thank you for being a rock in times of trouble. Thank you for being with us all the time. Amen.*

God's Presence Is Around the Clock

Give each child a cardboard circle, a marker, two cardstock arrow shapes, and a brass brad.

SAY: God was with Jesus throughout all of Jesus's life. When Jesus was traveling and preaching, God was with him. When Jesus was healing people, God was with him. When Jesus was dying, God was with him. And when Jesus rose from the dead, God was with him.

Direct the children to write numbers 1 through 12 around the cardboard circle like a clock.

On the face of the cardboard circle clock, have the children write "God is with me."

Use a pencil or scissors to punch a hole in the center of the cardboard. Then, have children fasten the two cardstock arrow shapes onto the cardboard with the brass brad.

Practice telling time with the children, always pointing out that God is with them at all times.

Using the Gospel of Luke 22–24, direct the children to find particular times mentioned in these chapters on the clock using the two hands (for example, "supper time," "prayer in the garden at night," "in the morning," and so on.)

SAY: God was with Jesus at all of these times, just as God is with you at all times.

Closing Prayer

Gather the children into a circle.

Invite the children to share something they are grateful for from the session today.

Invite the children to pray with you.

PRAY: *Holy God, thank you for giving us good news in Jesus. Show us how to spread Your love all the time, in every place we go, with all the people we meet. Amen.*

Dismiss each child by name.