

The Sacraments

Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13

Learning Objectives

1. The children will be able to identify the Holy Sacraments and explain their differences.
2. The children will explore why we need the Holy Sacraments in our lives.

Memory Verse: ***“No one can enter God’s kingdom without being born through water and the Holy Spirit.” --John 3:5***

Getting Started

All Messed Up

See: www.teensundayschool.com → Object Talks → “All Messed Up”

You will need an old (simple) puzzle and scissors for this activity. Please see the above website for detailed instructions. You will need to put the puzzle together before class and have it on your table ready to go.

The point of this activity is to remind the children that God made us in his image. We were perfect and without sin, until we decided to act against His Will. After Adam and Eve sinned, we became disconnected from God. We have tried unsuccessfully to put things back together. In today’s lesson, we will explore how the Holy Sacraments have helped restore us and our relationship with God. *Continue with the lesson.*

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions

Message: ***The Kingdom of God is waiting for you.***

Holy Baptism:

John 3:5

⁵ Jesus answered, "What I'm about to tell you is true. No one can enter God's kingdom without being born through water and the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 28:19-20

¹⁹ So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And you can be sure that I am always with you, to the very end."

Acts 8:36, 38

³⁶⁻³⁷As they traveled along the road, they came to some water. The official said, "Look! Here is water! Why shouldn't I be baptized?"

³⁸ He gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the official went down into the water. Philip baptized him.

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – *continued*

Holy Sealing:

John 3:5

⁵ Jesus answered, "What I'm about to tell you is true. No one can enter God's kingdom without being born through water and the Holy Spirit.

Acts 8:14-17

¹⁴ The apostles in Jerusalem heard that people in Samaria had accepted God's word. So they sent Peter and John to them. ¹⁵ When they arrived there, they prayed that the believers would receive the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶ The Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷ Then Peter and John placed their hands on them. And they received the Holy Spirit.

Acts 19:1-6

Paul Goes to Ephesus

¹ While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road to Ephesus. When he arrived, he found some believers there. ² He asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?"

"No," they answered. "We haven't even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

³ So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?"

"John's baptism," they replied.

⁴ Paul said, "John baptized people, calling them to turn away from their sins. He told them to believe in the one who was coming after him. Jesus is that one." ⁵ After hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ Paul placed his hands on them. Then the Holy Spirit came on them. They spoke in languages they had not known before. They also prophesied.

Holy Communion:

Luke 22:19-20

¹⁹ Then Jesus took bread. He gave thanks and broke it. He handed it to them and said, "This is my body. It is given for you. Every time you eat it, do it in memory of me."

²⁰ In the same way, after the supper he took the cup. He said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. It is poured out for you.

John 6:53-57

⁵³ Jesus said to them, "What I'm about to tell you is true. You must eat the Son of Man's body and drink his blood. If you don't, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴ Anyone who eats my body and drinks my blood has eternal life. I will raise him up on the last day.

⁵⁵ "My body is real food. My blood is real drink. ⁵⁶ Anyone who eats my body and drinks my blood remains in me. And I remain in him.

⁵⁷ "The living Father sent me, and I live because of him. In the same way, those who feed on me will live because of me.

1 Corinthians 10:16-17

¹⁶ When we give thanks for the cup at the Lord's Supper, aren't we sharing in the blood of Christ? When we break the bread, aren't we sharing in the body of Christ? ¹⁷ Just as there is one loaf, so we who are many are one body. We all eat from the one loaf.

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – *continued*

1 Corinthians 10:21; 11:23-28

²¹ You can't drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too. You can't have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons.

²³ I passed on to you what I received from the Lord. On the night the Lord Jesus was handed over to his enemies, he took bread. ²⁴ When he had given thanks, he broke it. He said, "This is my body. It is given for you. Every time you eat it, do it in memory of me." ²⁵ In the same way, after supper he took the cup. He said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Every time you drink it, do it in memory of me."

²⁶ When you eat the bread and drink the cup, you are announcing the Lord's death until he comes again.

²⁷ So do not eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in a way that isn't worthy of him. If you do, you will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.

²⁸ A person should take a careful look at himself before he eats the bread and drinks from the cup.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is so important about Jesus' message in John 3:5? (*It tells us that both Holy Baptism and Holy Sealing are essential to be a part of God's Kingdom.*)
2. What is someone baptized with? (*Water.*)
3. What are some things a person must believe and be willing to do in order to become baptized? (*Jesus in our Redeemer and we are committed to following Him; one must be willing and strive to overcome sin.*)
4. When a person is to be baptized and approaches the altar, what are some events that happen? (*The water is consecrated with a prayer; the minister moistens a finger and makes a cross three times on the forehead of the person being baptized; at the same time the following is spoken: I baptize you in the name of the God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.* – Children may not know this – demonstrate for them on a person or a doll.)
5. Should children be baptized? (*Look up Mark 10:14: "Let the little children come to me. Don't keep them away. God's kingdom belongs to people like them."*)
6. What is needed for the act of Holy Sealing? (*1. An Apostle. 2. 'laying on of hands'*)
7. Which sacrament is performed first? (Holy Baptism) Why does this make sense? (*First, we commit our lives to God, then we receive the gift from God, the Holy Spirit.*)
8. What are some things a person must believe in order to partake of Holy Sealing? (*The person must believe in and prepare for the return of Jesus. He must also believe in living Apostles and that they were and are still sent by Jesus Christ in order to prepare us for the Lord's return.*)
9. Is Holy Communion the same thing as getting your sins forgiven? (*No, they are two separate acts; however, they are tied into the same portion of the divine service.*)
10. If they are not the same thing which comes first? (*Forgiveness of sins.*)
11. When are your sins forgiven in a service and how do you know when they are forgiven? (*Almost right after the Lord's Prayer. The minister will pronounce the words "Your sins are forgiven..."*)
12. What do we get out of Holy Communion? Why do we take it? (*It is close fellowship with Jesus. We take it to always remember Jesus' suffering and death and what He did for us. We continue to take it until He comes again. Ultimately, communion can provide us with strength – strength from close fellowship with Jesus – strength like the strength Jesus needed to get through His ordeal.*)

Application to Real Life

How to Clean a Dirty Life

See: www.teensundayschool.com → Object Talks → “How to Clean a Dirty Life”

Please see the above website for detailed instructions. You will need 2 buckets (one filled with mud and the other with clean soapy water), rags for cleaning, napkins, a small tarp or old plastic table cloth, and a chair for this activity.

As you complete the activity, pay close attention to the “What you will say” section. Help the children to understand that we are all born with sins that we inherit, and the role Baptism plays to remove that sin. We continue to sin each day anyway, and God still forgives our sins over and over again. The Holy Spirit can help us to change and work to make better choices in life, so we don’t repeat the same sins over and over. When we celebrate Holy Communion, we remember the sacrifice that the Lord Jesus made to die so that our sins could be forgiven, and allowing our souls to be cleaned over and over again because of the grace of our God. All of God’s Holy Sacraments play an important role in our lives. Discuss these concepts together. Remind the children of God’s love for them. Then review the message statement.

Memory Work Suggestions

5 minutes

1. Recite the memory verse.
2. Practice finding the memory verse and/or Bible text in their Bible!
3. Pick one of the Holy Sacraments – ask the children to explain what it is and what it does for us.
4. Play a game to review an article of faith (toss the bean bag/stuffed animal, the person who catches it says the next word...try to go faster and faster).
5. Allow a volunteer (child) to lead the class in an opening/closing prayer.

Activity Ideas

Holy Sacrament Matching

The children will match the (sacrament) characteristics with the correct sacrament.

Pre-class Procedure:

1. Make three cards, labeled: Holy Baptism, Holy Communion, Holy Sealing.
2. Each of the following characteristic phrases is written on a separate index card:

Holy Baptism

First fundamental act of grace.

Washes away original sin.

After this sacrament, the person has a right to the earnings of Jesus Christ.

We promise to try to avoid sin; this sacrament can be dispensed by a priestly office.

The 6th article of faith

Holy Sealing

This sacrament, plus Holy Baptism defines the rebirth.

The gift of the Holy Spirit is given with this sacrament.

The 8th article of faith

This sacrament must be dispensed or given by an Apostle.

Holy Baptism must be performed first before this sacrament can be dispensed.

Activity Ideas – Continued

Holy Communion

The “body and blood of Jesus”.

This sacrament can be taken after a person is baptized.

The strength of the Lord Jesus is contained in this sacrament.

The first time this sacrament was celebrated was during Passover.

This sacrament represents fellowship with the Lord Jesus.

This sacrament is a remembrance of the bitter suffering and death of Jesus.

Class procedure

1. Place the 3 “title” cards out on the table. For a future reference piece for your class area, the results of the game can be glued onto a poster board.
2. Shuffle all the cards and put them face-down on the table.
3. Each student selects one card and places them with the associated sacrament. For additional review and challenge, the students could explain why they are placing the card in the category.
4. If incorrect, the card, is placed at the bottom of the stack.
5. Optional: points can be awarded, and a prize given for the most correct answers.

Journal

Choose One

A “sacrament” is a holy moment in which something happens to us spiritually and naturally. You may not remember when you were baptized or sealed, but certainly we all receive and experience Holy Communion on a regular basis. Write about how any one of the sacraments and learning about it more has brought you closer to God.

Describe in your own words what the sacraments do for us.

Homework Ideas

- Read the lesson titled: **The Ministries of the Church of Christ** (Ephesians 4:11-12; Acts 9:17; Matthew 28:19-20).
- Learn the Memory Verse: *“I will place shepherds over them who will take good care of them.*
--Jeremiah 23:4
- Learn the _____ Article of Faith
- Who is your favorite minister? Why is he so special to you? Write about him and bring it to class to share.

Take Home Page: The Sacraments

Today I learned...

Today your child was reminded that **the kingdom of God is waiting for us**. The children explored the Holy Sacraments and their differences, as well as why we need them in our lives.

Help me learn my memory verse...

"No one can enter God's kingdom without being born through water and the Holy Spirit." --John 3:5

Ask me...

1. What are the Holy Sacraments?
2. Which of the Holy Sacraments do you find to be the most interesting? Why?

Live Your Faith...

Talk together as a family about forgiveness. Take turns sharing the things you each did that need forgiveness from your family members for this week, and genuinely ask for forgiveness. Pray together and thank God for His Sacraments, and for dying so that your sins could be forgiven.



Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – Continued

Matthew 28:19-20

¹⁹ So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And you can be sure that I am always with you, to the very end."

Reference Material: (taken from the Confirmation Instruction Student Workbook *I Also Want To...*)

Ministries	Functions/Responsibilities
<u>Apostle Ministry:</u> Chief Apostle, District Apostle, Apostle	<p>As commissioned by Jesus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To proclaim the pure teachings of Jesus Christ - As the light of the world to spread the bright radiance of godly truth. - To establish and preserve order in the congregations - To baptize with water. - To forgive sins - To dispense Holy Communion - To seal souls with the Holy Spirit - To govern the Church - To ordain the required ministers - To proclaim Christ's return - To gather and lead the elect to the Lord Jesus and His bride.
<u>Priestly Ministries:</u> Bishop, District Elder, District Evangelist, Elder, Shepherd, Evangelist, Priest	<p>As commissioned by the apostle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To carry the souls entrusted to them on hands of prayer - To care for the souls and provide comfort - To conduct divine services - To baptize with water, - To pronounce the forgiveness of sins - To dispense Holy Communion - To make family visits and visit those who are ill
<u>Deacons</u>	<p>As commissioned by the apostle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support the priest • To be a witness to the truth • To be an example • To maintain a dignified atmosphere in the divine services.

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – Continued

Discussion Questions:

1. What ministries are mentioned in the Bible verses? (*Apostles, Prophets, Pastors, and Teachers*)
2. Compare this translation with that found in the New King James Version. What other ministry is mentioned? (*Evangelists.*)
3. What responsibility do all these ministries have? (*To “prepare God's people to serve.”*)
4. What responsibilities does an apostle have? Read Acts 9:17 and Matthew 28:19-20. (*Through the laying on of hands of an apostle the gift of the Holy Spirit is given; make disciples of all nations, teach; baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*)
5. What current ministries that you know of match what was mentioned in Ephesians? (*Apostles; Evangelists (NKJV)*)
6. Are any other ministries ever mentioned in the Bible? (*Deacons [1 Timothy 3:8], Priests[Hebrews 7:20-25]*)

Application to Real Life

The Human Knot

See: www.teensundayschool.com → Lessons → Life Applications → Christian Principles → “Observing Communion”

You will need to gather your students together in a tight circle (it doesn't matter how many students are present, just huddle up). Recruit extra volunteer participants as needed.

Have each person grab the hand of another person in the circle. Then have them join their other hand with a different person in the circle. Once done, you've created a human knot. The objective in this game is to untangle the knot without anyone releasing another's hand. (Hands can be repositioned, but always touching.) You might have to twist, turn, walk over/under arms, etc., but most knots, given enough time, can be untangled. In some cases, more than one knot may be the result.

Discussion Questions:

1. How did it feel when you were all tangled up?
2. How hard was it to figure out how to get untangled?
3. Did you ever want to quit? What kept you going?
4. What did you feel when we finally got untangled?

In today's lesson we learned about communion. In real life we can often get caught up in a lot of things. Communion (spending time and having fellowship) with our Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus helps us to get ourselves untangled, to make things right again and be able to start over, no matter what we have done. Knowing this, how does that make you feel? Talk about it together.

Memory Work Suggestions

5 minutes

1. Recite the memory verse. Practice finding the memory verse and/or Bible text in the Bible.
2. What Holy Sacrament is most related to today's lesson? Why?
3. What is forgiveness? How does it relate to celebrating Holy Communion? Discuss.
4. Play a game to review an article of faith (toss the bean bag/stuffed animal, the person who catches it says the next word...try to go faster and faster).
5. Allow a volunteer (child) to lead the class in an opening/closing prayer.

Activity Ideas

Ministry Responsibilities Activity

Prior to class:

- Write or print the eleven ministries in the reference table above onto separate index cards or small pieces of paper so the children can manipulate them on a table top (you may choose to omit ministries that are not used in your district).
- Write or print out each responsibility that is listed (22 total). Again, these should be on separate cards or small pieces of paper, so the students can manipulate them on a table top.

During Class:

- Hold the ministry “cards” in your hand.
- Ask the children to rename all the ministries they can think of in their district. As they name them, place them on the table top **in no particular order**. Use prompts (give them clues) so all ministries are named.
- Then ask them to place them in order from top to bottom.
- Once the correct order is established, ask them to establish three distinct groups of ministries: Apostle ministries, Priestly ministries, and the Deacon ministry. Use prompts if needed.
- Lastly, spread out all (or some) of the responsibilities on the table. As a class, have them work together to try and reason out which responsibility goes with each ministerial group.

When you are finished, and have organized all the information, you may want to use glue sticks to make a poster for your class area for future reference. Review again what they have learned.

Journal

Choose One

What do you think are the three most important traits a minister should have? Use Galatians 5:22-23 to help you.

Is there a minister that you know of that you feel that you can talk to? What is it about them that makes you confident enough to talk to them? Write about it.

Homework Ideas

- Read your Lesson from the nac-usa.org website on the **Development & Spread of Christianity**. If you need help, ask your teacher.
- Learn the Memory Verse:
*“The believers studied what the apostles taught. They shared life together.
They broke bread and ate together. And they prayed.”* --Acts 2:42
- Learn the _____ Article of Faith
- What makes a person healthy? Draw a picture of what such a person would look like or write about it. Bring it to class to share.

Take Home Page: The Ministries of the Church of Christ

Today I learned...

Today your child was reminded that **our ministers are here to help us**. The children explored the various ministries in the church of Christ and some of the responsibilities assigned to each ministry. They also talked about the benefits that we experience when we take the time to “commune” with God.

Help me learn my memory verse...

"I will place shepherds over them who will take good care of them." --Jeremiah 23:4

Ask me...

1. Who is your favorite minister? Why?
2. What makes the apostle ministry different from other ministers?
3. What kinds of characteristics do you think ministers should have? Why?

Live Your Faith...

Together as a family, decide on which minister in your local congregation your family will bless this week. You could invite him and his family over for dinner, or simply deliver a hot meal one night to their home. Write a note letting them know how much your family appreciates all the sacrifices he and his family make for all of God's children.

The Development and Spread of Christianity

See "Lesson" Content

Learning Objectives

1. The children will explore how the congregation in Jerusalem developed through the courageous testifying of the first Apostles and Christians.
2. The children will examine how too much "noise" in our lives can affect our relationship with God and other fellow believers.

Memory Verse: *"The believers studied what the apostles taught. They shared life together. They broke bread and ate together. And they prayed." --Acts 2:42*

Getting Started

Choose One Activity

Guest Speaker

Ask a minister or someone in a ministry (Youth/Children/Music) to attend class with you – at least in the beginning. For maximum effectiveness a district or regional leader would be best (of course, this depends on their schedule). You will need to talk with the minister ahead of time to discuss how technology has helped him in God's work, to be a better minister, to communicate better, to stay organized, etc. If you have someone in mind that heavily relies on technology to function (iPhone, Google, internet, texting) then, if possible, have them join your class. Also, if he/she could bring in their technological devices or samples of work, this would carry a lot of impact. The objective is to make the point that technology has opened more opportunities for us to serve in a greater capacity today.

"The Perfect Church" Activity

See: www.teensundayschool.com → Activities → "The Perfect Church"

Give each student an index card or piece of paper. The assignment is to write down one thing that would make a perfect church. It can be anything about the church that they want. The only requirement is that it is something that they think would make the greatest, best, most perfect church ever.

After each student has written one thing, collect all the cards. Read what each person has written. Give each student an opportunity to explain why they wrote what they did. Then have the students attempt to prioritize these things to make their own "perfect church."

This should help the children to start thinking about what "their Church" ought to be.

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions

Message: *Each congregation must work toward Health, Growth, and Completion.*

The Development of the Congregation in Jerusalem (Taken from *God's Ways* Vol 2)

Apostle Peter's Pentecost sermon was so powerful that 3000 people decided to have themselves baptized (cf Acts 2:41). These were added to the approximately 120 faithful upon whom the Holy Spirit had previously been poured out (cf. Acts 1:15; 2:1-4) In connection with this a few exceptional features of congregational life at that time are emphasized. This account ends with the phrase, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). A little later, already about 5000 believing men belong to the congregation (cf. Act 4:4).

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – *continued*

In Acts 6:7, it says further, “And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly...”

The congregation in Jerusalem consisted of Semitic-speaking Jews from Palestine, and Hellenists (i.e. one who used the Greek language but was not Greek and who had lived in Diaspora¹.)

The differences between the two groups were not only confined to language. Due to varied cultural backgrounds, their religious thinking and practice had also been formed differently. At times, this resulted in tension among the faithful. That is why the Hellenistic Jews, for example, complained that their widows had not been adequately considered at the distribution of food, clothing, and money.

Tackling these kinds of problems would have taken time away from the Apostles’ main task of proclaiming the gospel. That is why they appointed seven Deacons to assist them. They were to lend a helping hand with commonplace matters in the congregation.

Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. ³ Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; ⁴ but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” Acts 6:2-4.

One of these seven men was Stephen, a man “full of faith and power,” who performed great wonders and miracles (cf Acts 6:8).

Stephen’s critical words about the temple and the law evidently aroused the hatred of the Hellenistic Jews in Jerusalem. At first, they tried to refute him. Then they falsely accused him. Stephen was arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin (cf Acts 6:9-15).

There he made a speech in his own defense, which turned more and more into a harsh reprimand. This enraged his listeners. And when he still had the cheek to exclaim, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God,” they were so incensed that they drove him out of the city and stoned him. His last words were, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin.” (Acts 7: 56, 60)

Stephen’s murder was the signal to persecute the faithful in Jerusalem, and many fled the city. Since the refugees talked about their faith when they resettled, their flight led to the spreading of the gospel, also outside of Jerusalem. With it, what Jesus Christ had said to the Apostles began to fulfill itself, “...you shall be witnesses to Me^[a] in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (cf Acts 1:8)

A Brief History of Rome and the Roman Empire

According to legend, Rome was founded in the year 753 BC, and ruled by kings. In 510 BC – a date, which also has not been verified historically – the kingdom was transformed into a republic which now was governed by two annually elected consuls, a Senate and popular assemblies.

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – continued

The Romans waged numerous wars on their neighbors, until all of central and southern Italy was under their control in 270 BC. During the centuries that followed, the Romans took possession of the entire Mediterranean coast, and all European countries west of the Rhine River and south of the Danube River. At the beginning of the second century BC, the Roman Empire reached its greatest expansion.

The continuing expansion of the empire made it necessary to construct a road system branching out in all directions. Already in 312 BC, construction of the first of the great Roman roads, the Via Appia (Appian Way), commenced. It ran southeast from Rome in a perfectly straight line.

In the year 44 BC, General Gaius Julius Caesar had himself proclaimed dictator. Following his assassination one month later and battles that lasted for years, Octavian, who had been honored with the title Augustus (i.e. the exalted, the venerable) since 27 BC, established the Roman Empire. During his reign from 30 BC to 14 AD the Roman Empire experienced a period of peace and prosperity called Pax Augusta and the Golden Age of Rome. At the borders of this great empire, though, there were constant clashes with neighboring peoples, also during this time.

Caesar Augustus had many public buildings, magnificent temples and numerous statues of gods erected (“I found a city made of brick and turned it into a city made of marble”). The Romans expected the population of the conquered areas to worship their emperor as a deity, but otherwise brought no influence to bear on the various religions in the Provinces.

The Romans settled retired soldiers (i.e. veterans) in the conquered areas. These settlements were called colonies, and later received the right to self-government, whose seat became the quasi district capital of the area.

A Roman citizen enjoyed special privileges throughout the empire – above all, civil rights in the city of Rome. Without having been sentenced he could be neither bound nor scourged, could not be crucified, and, during legal proceedings, could appeal to the emperor, who then made the final decision. Apostle Paul, for example, had special legal protection because he had inherited the right to Roman citizenship from his father.

After Caesar Augustus, many other emperors followed. Under Diocletian (284-304 AD), stabilization of the political and military structures was achieved. The decline of the Roman Empire began during the 4th century, in the course of peoples’ migrations. In the year 395, the Roman Empire split into the Western and Eastern Roman Empires.

Discussion Questions:

1. How many were sealed on Pentecost? (3000)
2. Did the congregation grow after that day? Cite two references in your reading. (Yes, “And the Lord added to the church daily...” (Acts 2:47) and “And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly...” Acts 6:7. NOTE: If the children don’t know – tell them the verses and have them look them up and read them aloud in class.)
3. The congregation grew fast and large so that ethnic differences soon became obvious. What two groups are mentioned in the reading? (Hellenistic Jews and Palestinian Jews.)
4. What do you think were some of the characteristics of the people in the congregation? (Ready to have fellowship, prayed continually, praised God, firm in the Apostles’ doctrine, celebrated Holy Communion together, testified of the Lord’s resurrection and Christ’s gospel.)

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – continued

5. Explain the history behind why Deacons like Stephen were ordained? (*Hellenists complained that their widows were not considered properly when food and money were distributed. The Apostles couldn't serve the people spiritually and see to daily tasks. To this end, the Apostles made Deacons to take care of daily tasks in the congregation*)
6. Explain how the false accusation of Stephen and his eventual murder lead to the spread of Christianity. (See Acts 8:2-4.)
7. What did the Romans build that helped the spread of Christianity? (*Roads.*)
8. How do you think the roads helped the spread of Christianity? (*They made it easier to travel, communication in the form of messages could be sent more efficiently.*)
9. Could the Jewish people and eventually the new Christian congregation worship freely? (*Yes, they had to recognize that the emperor was a deity but otherwise did not influence any particular religion on anyone.*)
10. What special rights did Romans have? (*They could travel anywhere they wanted in the empire and could not be bound, whipped, or killed without being sentenced first – and he/she could appeal to the emperor personally.*)
11. What advantage did these rights give to Apostle Paul? (*He was a Roman citizen because his father was Roman.*)
12. Read Isaiah 55: 8-9. Reflect on how God allowed several things to happen to make sure that His word began to travel around Mediterranean and Middle Eastern areas. Discuss Together.

Application to Real Life

The students will need to pair up. They can remain together for both parts of the activity.

Part 1:

Explain to the children that they should talk to one another, at the same time, for one minute. They can talk about anything they like, but both partners must be talking simultaneously and continuously for the full minute. Use a stopwatch if needed. After one minute ask the following questions:

Discussion Questions:

1. What was your partner talking about?
2. Was it hard to hear?
3. Was it hard to concentrate on what you were saying?

Part 2:

With the same pairs of students, have one person talk for 30 seconds while the other waits in silence and listens. After 30 seconds, switch roles and do it again. Then ask the following questions:

Discussion Questions:

1. Now, what did your partner say that time?
2. Was it hard or easy to hear?
3. Was it easier to communicate what you were saying? Why?

This activity shows us how noise can affect our ability to understand fully what others are saying, which can in turn affect our relationships. The same is true for our relationship with God. Sometimes, we need to go off to a quiet place, away from distractions, so we can forget about us and focus completely on Him and talk to Him. This is where your strength will come from and it will help you stay focused and stand firm in your faith.

Application to Real Life – continued

Gifts of Ministry - Faith

The gift of faith is the divine enablement to live with untiring certainty in God’s desire and ability to fulfill His promises. Individuals with the gift of faith contribute confidence.

In Acts 6 and 7, we read about Deacon Stephen. He was a disciple who was chosen to care for widows because he was full of faith and the Holy Spirit. Eventually, he began preaching to the people in Jerusalem. One group of people had a problem with Stephen, and they accused him of speaking against God, bringing him to the council to hold a trial. Stephen then tells those gathered about Abraham and Moses, and how God’s plan of salvation for Israel was carried out through these men. He then accuses the group of resisting the Holy Spirit, having a part in the betrayal and murder of Jesus Christ, and not keeping the laws of God. Because of Stephen’s speech, the group stoned him to death.

Stephen demonstrates the gift of faith by boldly telling the people about God and their errors against Him. Even though the people accused him, and were angry with him, and eventually stoned him, Stephen was committed to God and continued to trust Him.

Memory Work Suggestions

5 minutes

1. Recite the memory verse.
2. Practice finding the memory verse and/or Bible text in their Bible!
3. Play a game to review an article of faith (toss the bean bag/stuffed animal, the person who catches it says the next word...try to go faster and faster).
4. Allow a volunteer (child) to lead the class in an opening/closing prayer.

Activity Ideas

Choose One Activity

“The Perfect Congregation”

Objective: describe/develop the characteristics of the “perfect” congregation. **NOTE:** Please be sure that parents and children understand that this exercise is for “hypothetical” purposes only in order to help the children realize that in order to make a congregation great WE all need to take responsibility in order to make it that way.

Materials: Whiteboard or poster board or some other creative means to organize thoughts, markers.

Use the following question prompts to help the students develop some thoughts:

- Who will lead the congregation?
- What will the leader be like?
- What will the people be like?
- How often will services be?
- What kind of music would there be?
- How many people will be there?
- What will the services be like?
- How long will the services be?
- Will there be any spiritual education? (Sunday School, Bible Study)
- Will the people have fun? How?
- What kind of support groups will the church provide?

Gather as many thoughts as you can. Then, type up the results (or the furthest progress) and send it to the students via email or Google documents. Type in some thoughts or further question prompts to finalize the outline. Have the students develop these thoughts over the week. This will be their homework. Note: Teachers please present this activity carefully – the intent is not to dwell on the negative but the possibilities of unlimited grace in resources, people, willingness, and love. Focus on the student’s thought processes and how a “perfect congregation” is the responsibility of everyone, including the students.

Discussion/Food for thought

The quote below from District Apostle Kolb could be used in a few different ways, for example:

- Use it as inspiration to develop a description of your congregation.
- Develop a symbolic icon of the perfect blend of people in a congregation.

“The artist’s palette is the tool whereby very different colors are combined with the intent to create a work of great beauty. Each work of art is a unique combination of these colors and the artist’s interpretation, style and inspiration. Likewise, every congregation is unique. Each has its own colors, personalities, characteristics, talents and gifts. A healthy congregation will have enlightened leadership that can embrace the diversity and uniqueness of each member and weave them into a masterpiece of Christian love and fellowship. Therefore, let us not be distressed when congregations look different from the outside, but rather seek an inner oneness with Christ that will be clearly evident on His day.” From “Perspectives: Writings from Our District Apostle”

Journal

What kind of “things” has God provided for us to allow us to spread the gospel? Have you ever looked at it this way? Write about it.

What would you do to start making a change in your congregation? Would you start with yourself or start a program/activity or give advice? Why? Write about it.

Homework Ideas

- Read the lesson: **“The Apostles of Jesus Christ”** (Luke 6:12-16; Acts 1:25-26; 13:1-4 & 14:14; Romans 16:7; Galatians 1:19) at [www. www.nac-usa.org](http://www.nac-usa.org).
- Learn the Memory Verse: *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”*
--Matthew 28:19
- Learn the _____ Article of Faith
- Finalize **“The Perfect Congregation”** outline from this week’s lesson.

Take Home Page: The Development and Spread of Christianity

Today I learned...

Today your child was reminded that **each congregation must work toward health, growth and completion.** The children explored how the congregation in Jerusalem developed through the courageous testifying of the first Apostles and Christians. They also examined how too much “noise” in our lives can affect our relationship with God and other fellow believers.

Help me learn my memory verse...

*“The believers studied what the apostles taught. They shared life together.
They broke bread and ate together. And they prayed.” --Acts 2:42*

Ask me...

1. What was so special about the first Pentecost? What happened?
2. Do you think it is important for the work of God to continue to grow? Why or why not?
3. What could YOU do to help God’s work to grow in your community?

Live Your Faith...

Set aside some time this week to gather as a family. Talk about the ways in which you were able to see or feel God’s presence throughout your week. Then if possible, play some soft reflective music and spend time quietly focusing on God, talking to Him, reading the Bible, and “listening” to Him. Set a timer for 10 minutes and challenge everyone to just spend that time focusing completely on God in some way. Try to do this once a week for at least a month.

The Apostles of Jesus Christ

Luke 6:12-16; Acts 1:25-26; 13:1-4 & 14:14; Romans 16:7; Galatians 1:19

Learning Objectives

1. The children will explore the responsibilities of the apostle ministry.
2. The children will recognize the importance of the quality of perseverance as followers of Jesus.

Memory Verse: *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” --Matthew 28:19*

Getting Started

“Behind a Twenty Dollar Bill”

For this quick activity you will need a twenty-dollar bill or some other large currency. The object is to describe that the power behind the money is the full faith and credit of the United States of America (that and some gold in Fort Knox). This is relevant that it is not the man that makes the apostle ministry it is the power and authority that Jesus gave them – they were sent by Jesus.

Your presentation could be something like this...

“I have something pretty significant in my wallet (or billfold). Let me show you. (Pull out the twenty-dollar bill). Here it is. A twenty-dollar bill. What could I buy with it?”

“Well, I could buy almost seven gallons of gas, or perhaps that many gallons of milk. I could buy two tickets to the movies with a little left over, or I could buy a whole lot of hamburgers. I could even purchase a real nice set of new strings for my guitar.”

“However, what makes it possible to buy all those things with this little piece of green paper? The truth is, there is a whole economy behind this slip of paper – not to mention the United States is behind every dollar. Because of that, and only because of that, this green piece of paper is worth something, we treat it with a certain amount of respect.” *(Carefully place the bill back in your wallet or billfold)*

“Now, I want you to think a moment about our apostle. We see him a few times a year. He speaks well, always presents himself well. But what gives him the authority to carry the apostle ministry?”

“It is because of Jesus and His connection with our Heavenly Father that He did the wonders and miracles that He did. Jesus spoke God’s word. Well, Jesus gave this power and responsibility to apostles. These men represent the Lord Jesus and His work and ministry. They were sent by Him and have many responsibilities that the Lord Jesus gave them.”

adapted from: www.teensundayschool.com → Object talks → “Behind a twenty-dollar bill”

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions

Message: *The apostle ministry came from the Lord Jesus and is still active today.*

Introductory Remarks:

Note: The information contained in this section is background material that will serve as a basis for information when the teacher presents the lesson. Teachers should familiarize themselves with this information before the lesson is presented. (Adapted from *God’s Ways* Volume 2.)

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – *continued*

The Commission and Authority of the Apostles

Apostle means ambassador or envoy. Jesus Christ, who was sent by His Heavenly Father for the salvation of man, is referred to as an Apostle in Hebrews 3:1. He commissioned his Apostles: *“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore^[e] and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”* (Matthew 28: 18-20)

According to the commission, *“Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you...”* the Apostles’ teaching firstly comprises what Jesus himself taught. In addition, the Lord announced to his Apostles that the Holy Ghost would provide further revelations, saying, *“I have much more to say to you. It is more than you can handle right now. ¹³ But when the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own. He will speak only what he hears. And he will tell you what is still going to happen. ¹⁴ He will bring me glory by receiving something from me and showing it to you.”* (John 16: 12-14)

To enable the Apostles to fulfill their commission, Jesus Christ gave them the authority to baptize (cf. Matthew 28:19) and forgive sins. *“If you forgive anyone’s sins, they are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”* (John 20:23). With this authority, the Apostles are able to reconcile man with God (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:20).

Someone who has authority, Acts in the name of the one who gave him the authority. Everything done by the authorized representative, is as valid as if the one granting the authority were doing it himself.

God and his son Jesus Christ are almighty (i.e. they have power and omnipotence in heaven and on earth). Jesus, for example, acted with divine authority when he healed the sick, raised the dead, or drove out unclean spirits. The authority Jesus also conferred on his Apostles, which showed itself, for example, when Apostles Peter and John healed the lame beggar at the entrance to the temple. The rulers, elders and scribes of the people of Israel asked them, *“By what power did you do this?” they asked. “And through whose name?”* (Acts 4:7). Apostle Peter then explained that he had acted in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

Biblical Designations for the Apostle’s Ministry and the Apostles

In the Bible, the Apostle’s ministry is also referred to as the ministry of:

- Reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18)
- Grace (Ephesians 3:2 – Use the following translation as it comes closest to the original Greek text “...to the extent that you have heard about the authoritative commission of God’s grace, which has been conferred upon me [Apostle Paul] for your benefit)
- The spirit (2 Corinthians 3:6-8)
- The new testament (2 Corinthians 3:6)
- The word (Acts 6:4)
- Righteousness (2 Corinthians 3:9)

In the New Testament, there are formulations, making the Apostles’ responsibilities clear:

- Ambassadors for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20)
- Those who seek the bride (2 Corinthians 11:2)
- Light of the Gentiles (i.e., nations) (Acts 13:47)
- Ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Corinthians 4:1)
- God’s laborers and master builders of God’s spiritual temple (1 Corinthians 3:9-10)

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – continued

The Apostles of Christ's First Church

The Apostles of Christ's first church include the twelve disciples appointed by Jesus, upon whom he conferred the Apostle's ministry (cf. Luke 6:13-16), namely, Simon called Peter, his brother Andrew, James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James, the son of Alphaeus, Simon, called the Zealot, Judas, the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, the traitor.

Furthermore, the Bible refers to the following who carried the Apostle's ministry: Matthias, who replaced Judas Iscariot, Barnabas, Paul, Andronicus, Junias, Timothy, Silvanus, referred to as Silas in Acts, and James, the Lord's brother.

It may be assumed, that there were additional Apostles in the first church. According to non-biblical accounts, John was the last living Apostle of Jesus at that time.

In accordance with Jesus' commission to teach and baptize all nations, the Apostles worked in different areas.

Whereas Apostles Peter and James proclaimed the gospel mainly among the Jews, Apostles Paul, Barnabas, Timothy, and Silvanus went to the heathen countries in the area of the Mediterranean. Based particularly on Eusebius of Caesarea's (AD 260-340) history of the church, other Apostles spread the gospel in additional Asian and African countries.

In accordance with their commission, the Apostles converted Jews and Gentiles to Christ's teachings, and thus began to gather the new people of God (cf. 1 Peter 2:10).

Following the death of the first Apostles, the Bishops and other ministers took over the responsibility of caring for the congregations spiritually as well as spreading the Christian teaching further. However, for the salvation of the faithful, the Apostle's ministry was needed.

The Apostles of the End Time

In the year 1832, in England, John Bate Cardale was called as the first Apostle of the end time through prophecy. Currently, there are 346 Apostles, including the Chief Apostle.

The Apostles of the end time are equipped with the same commission, power and authority as the first Apostles. The Apostles' responsibility is to gather a congregation for the Lord, to lead it, and prepare it for the union with Jesus Christ.

Lesson/Discussion:

Note: This lesson is a discussion on the Apostle ministry which will incorporate the following biblical references. The presentation of the material as a story is not applicable. The lesson should build and outline the commission of the Apostle ministry.

Luke 6:12-16 ~ The twelve Apostles appointed by Jesus:

¹² On one of those days, Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray. He spent the night praying to God. ¹³ When morning came, he called for his disciples to come to him. He chose 12 of them and made them apostles. ¹⁴ Simon was one of them. Jesus gave him the name Peter. There were also Simon's brother Andrew, James, John, Philip and Bartholomew. ¹⁵ And there were Matthew, Thomas, and James, son of Alphaeus. There were also Simon who was called the Zealot ¹⁶ and Judas, son of James. Judas Iscariot was one of them too. He was the one who would later hand Jesus over to his enemies.

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – *continued*

Acts 1:25-26 ~ Additional Apostles of the first church:

²⁵ Show us who should take the place of Judas as an apostle. He gave up being an apostle to go where he belongs." ²⁶ Then they cast lots. Matthias was chosen. So he was added to the 11 apostles.

Acts 13:1-4

¹ In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers. Among them were Barnabas, Simeon, and Lucius from Cyrene. Simeon was also called Niger. Another was Manaen. He had been brought up with Herod, the ruler of Galilee. Saul was among them too. ² While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit spoke. "Set apart Barnabas and Saul for me," he said. "I have appointed them to do special work." ³ The prophets and teachers fasted and prayed. They placed their hands on Barnabas and Saul. Then they sent them off. ⁴ Barnabas and Saul were sent on their way by the Holy Spirit. They went down to Seleucia. From there they sailed to Cyprus.

Acts 14:14

But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out

Romans 16:7

⁷ Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

Galatians 1:19

But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are apostles supposed to do? Explain. Hint: the "Great Commission:" See Matthew 28: 18-20. (*They are ambassadors, they are to teach and baptize all nations...*)
2. Who commissioned the apostles? (*Jesus*)
3. How many apostles did Jesus commission? (*Jesus commissioned 13 apostles. Somewhat of a trick question. Jesus commissioned the original 12 apostles during His living ministry. Judas killed himself so 11 were left. The number was restored to 12 (Matthias, Acts 1:26) by the 11 remaining apostles. However, Jesus (already ascended) himself appeared to Saul/Paul on Saul's way to Damascus and eventually was commissioned as an Apostle*)
4. Who were the original 12 apostles? See: Luke 6:12-16. (*Simon (this is Peter), Andrew (Peter's brother), James and John (brothers), Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James (the son of Alphaeus), Simon (called "the Zealot"), Judas (the brother of James), Judas Iscariot (the traitor)*)
5. By the time the feast of Pentecost came, how many apostles had been commissioned? (*There were 13 that had been commissioned. Only 12 were alive – Judas Iscariot killed himself leaving only 11. The number of 12 was re-established with Matthias.*)
6. Were there any other apostles? (*Yes, Barnabas, Paul, Andronicus, Junias, Timothy, Silvanus (referred to as Silas) James (Jesus' brother). It is assumed that there may have been even more.*)
7. Why do you think there were more than just 12 apostles? (*Apostles were selected as they were needed to fulfill God's work.*)

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – continued

8. The apostles were to accomplish an amazing task as outlined in Matthew 28:18-20. On whose authority did they act on? (*Jesus gave them all power and authority to act on his behalf cf. John 20:23; Acts 4:7*)
9. What “nations” did the apostles go to? (*Apostles Peter and James proclaimed the gospel mainly among the Jews. Apostles Paul, Barnabus, Timothy, and Silvanus went to the heathen countries in 7 the area of the Mediterranean. Other Apostles spread the gospel in additional Asian and African countries.*)
 - a. First Missionary Journey: <http://www.thejournal.org/studylibrary/maps/bible-map-apostle-paul-first-missionary-journey.gif>
 - b. Second Missionary Journey: <http://www.thejournal.org/studylibrary/maps/bible-map-apostle-paul-second-missionary-journey.gif>
 - c. Third Missionary Journey: <http://www.thejournal.org/studylibrary/maps/bible-map-apostle-paul-third-missionary-journey.gif>
10. According to historical records, who was the last Apostle alive after Jesus? (*John*)
11. When was the Apostle ministry re-established and where? (*1832 in England.*)
12. Who was the first apostle of the “end-time”? (*John Bate Cardale*)

Application to Real Life

Choose one of the activities, then continue with “gifts of ministry – leadership”.

How Long Can You Squat?

Perseverance is hard. This activity will determine which one will be the last one standing.

Challenge each student to assume the squatting position, like they are sitting in a chair but without a chair. The goal is to see who can stay in that position the longest. They can't straighten up too much, and they're eliminated when they give up or fall.

1. At first, was the activity easy or hard? Did the task get harder as time went on?
2. What helped those of you that lasted the longest make it to the end?
3. What other things in life, both physically and spiritually, require perseverance?
4. How does having an attitude of perseverance help you mature?

Back to Back

Arrange the room so you have a large empty space. Start by asking for two volunteers. Have them sit on the floor, back to back and lock arms together. Then, at your command, tell them to stand up while keeping their arms in a tightly locked position. It will not be too easy, but they will succeed by each pressing against the other's back. When accomplished, ask for two additional volunteers to join. Have the four of them sit on the floor in a small circle, and lock arms with the one next to them. Again, at your command, have them stand up keeping their arms in the locked position. Continue to add additional volunteers by twos until the whole class is participating. For smaller classes, you can add only one additional volunteer at a time.

Additional Discussion Questions:

1. What's the hardest thing you've ever done? (a job, a practice, a dare, etc.)
2. Why was it the hardest?
3. While you were doing it, did you ever want to quit? Why?
4. Did you quit? Why?
5. If you didn't quit, what helped you to finish?
6. Why do you think perseverance is an important quality to acquire? How did it help the Lord Jesus?

Application to Real Life - continued

Gifts of Ministry - Leadership

The gift of leadership is the divine enablement to clearly cast a vision, direct, and motivate people to work together toward a common goal. Those with this gift lead to Christ, not themselves. Individuals with the gift of leadership contribute direction.

In Matthew 10, Jesus called the twelve apostles to follow Him. Over the next three years, Jesus worked with and taught them about God and His Kingdom. Jesus exemplified to the disciples that a true leader is a follower first and serves the one he leads. In everything He did, Jesus always sought His Father's will so that His will that all souls could be saved would be accomplished.

While we will never be able to live up to Jesus' example, we still look to Him and strive to live and lead like Him. He is our model of how to be a leader because He is the greatest Leader, the Servant of all.

Memory Work Suggestions

5 minutes

1. Recite the memory verse. Practice finding the memory verse and/or Bible text in the Bible.
2. Play a game to review an article of faith (toss the bean bag/stuffed animal, the person who catches it says the next word...try to go faster and faster).
3. Allow a volunteer (child) to lead the class in an opening/closing prayer.
4. What fruit of the spirit could be found in today's lesson? (Patience, Self-Control). Explain what they mean in your own words.

Activity Ideas

Bible Scavenger Hunt

In the Bible the Apostle's ministry is described as many things. Look up the Bible verses listed below and use a word or phrase to summarize what the verse(s) are describing.

The Apostle's ministry is a ministry of...

- reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18)
- _____ (Ephesians 3:2¹)
- _____ (2 Corinthians 3: 6-8)
- _____ (2 Corinthians 3:6)
- _____ (Acts 6:4)
- _____ (2 Corinthians 3:9)

Next, using the Bible write a word or phrase that best describes the Apostles' ministry:

- Ambassadors for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20)
- _____ (2 Corinthians 11:2)
- _____ (Acts 13:47)
- _____ (1 Corinthians 4:1)
- _____ (1 Corinthians 3:9-10)

Activity Ideas - continued

¹ (Ephesians 3:2 – Use the following translation as it comes closest to the original Greek text “...to the extent that you have heard about the authoritative commission of God’s grace, which has been conferred upon me [Apostle Paul] for your benefit)

Answers:

- Reconciliation
- Grace
- The Spirit
- The New Testament
- The word
- Righteousness
- Ambassadors for Christ
- Those who seek the bride
- Light of the Gentiles
- Ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God
- God’s laborers, and master builders of God’s spiritual temple

Journal

Choose One

In your own words, describe the Apostle ministry as demonstrated by what you have noticed and observed from your Apostle.

You found out what the responsibilities of an Apostle is from the lesson. Being as realistic as possible, what could the apostle ministry do for you? Write about it.

You know all the things and people an Apostle must serve. What could you do help him accomplish all his tasks? Write about it.

Homework Ideas

- Read the lesson on **Apostle Peter** (Matthew 16:18-19; John 21:15-17; Luke 22:32; Acts 10; Acts 11: 16-18; Acts 15: 10-11, 22-29).
- Learn the Memory Verse:
“But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.” --Acts 15:11
- Learn the _____ Article of Faith
- Do you know who all the Chief Apostles are? Ask a grown up if you need help. Write down as many of the nine names as you can. Bring them to class.

Take Home Page: The Apostles of Jesus Christ

Today I learned...

Today your child was reminded that **the apostle ministry came from the Lord Jesus and is still active today.** The children explored the responsibilities of the apostle ministry. They also talked about the importance of the quality of “perseverance” in followers of Jesus.

Help me learn my memory verse...

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” --Matthew 28:19

Ask me...

1. What is the “Great Commission” that Jesus charged His apostles with?
2. What do you think it was like for the apostles who walked with Jesus long ago?
3. How do we benefit from having apostles today?

Live Your Faith...

Take the “how long can you squat” challenge. Have everyone in your family take the squatting position like they are sitting in a chair but without a chair. The goal is to see you can stay in that position the longest, without straightening up or falling. When you recover, talk about how easy or hard the squatting challenge was. When life gets hard, will you each still choose to follow God and trust Him? Talk about what that would look like in your lives and how you can encourage and pray for each other every day.

Apostle Peter

Matthew 16:18-19; John 21:15-17; Luke 22:32; Acts 10; Acts 11:16-18; Acts 15: 10-11, 22-29

Learning Objectives

1. The children will explore Apostle Peter's (leading) role in the formation and spreading of the first church.
2. The children will examine how our pre-conceived judgements of outsiders might affect our ability to share the love and grace of Jesus with others.

Memory Verse:

"But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they." --Acts 15:11

Getting Started

Choose One Activity

Eliminator Game

See: www.teensundayschool.com → Games → "Eliminator"

Sit your group in a circle. (Recruit other "players" i.e. youth or adults as needed.) Assign someone as the leader. The job of everyone else in the group is to follow the leader. However, the last person to do what the leader does is eliminated. Please see the above website for detailed instructions.

"Pick the Leader" Game

See: www.teensundayschool.com → games → "Pick the Leader"

Ask one of the children to volunteer to leave the room until called. Then, the rest of the class selects one person to be a leader. The class follows and does whatever the leader does. For example, the leader may pat the top of his or her head. All the other children will do the same. After about 10 seconds, the leader should do something else, such as clap his or her hands together. The rest of the class will do the same. Please see the above website for more detailed instructions.

After the game, explain to the class how many people in this world are in a leadership role. Sometimes leaders do wrong things. Just because they are leaders, does not mean they are perfect. We would not want to do everything they do, like in the game just played. But we do have a perfect leader, Jesus. The right choice is to do what Jesus would do. He will guide us down the right path every step of the way. Then, when others see us doing something, they may also see Jesus.

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions

Message:

God's word and grace are for everyone.

Peter, the Rock

¹⁸"Here is what I tell you. You are Peter. On this rock I will build my church. The gates of hell will not be strong enough to destroy it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. What you lock on earth will be locked in heaven. What you unlock on earth will be unlocked in heaven." (Matthew 16: 18-19)

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – *continued*

Peter's Commission

¹⁵ When Jesus and the disciples had finished eating, Jesus spoke to Simon Peter. He asked, "Simon, son of John, do you really love me more than these others do?"

"Yes, Lord," he answered. "You know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

¹⁶ Again Jesus asked, "Simon, son of John, do you really love me?"

He answered, "Yes, Lord. You know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

¹⁷ Jesus spoke to him a third time. He asked, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?"

Peter felt bad because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He answered, "Lord, you know all things. You know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my sheep. (John 21: 15-17)

³² But I have prayed for you, Simon. I have prayed that your faith will not fail. When you have turned back, help your brothers to be strong." (Luke 22:32)

Peter's Missionary Work Among the Gentiles

The missionary work among the Gentiles

³⁹ The promise is for you and your children. It is also for all who are far away. It is for all whom the Lord our God will choose."

Visiting Cornelius (Acts 10)

Cornelius Calls for Peter

¹ A man named Cornelius lived in Caesarea. He was a Roman commander in the Italian Regiment. ² Cornelius and all his family were faithful and worshiped God. He gave freely to people who were in need. He prayed to God regularly.

³ One day about three o'clock in the afternoon he had a vision. He saw an angel of God clearly. The angel came to him and said, "Cornelius!"

⁴ Cornelius was afraid. He stared at the angel. "What is it, Lord?" he asked.

The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to poor people have come up like an offering to God. So he has remembered you. ⁵ Now send men to Joppa. Have them bring back a man named Simon. He is also called Peter. ⁶ He is staying with another Simon, a man who works with leather. His house is by the sea."

⁷ The angel who spoke to him left. Then Cornelius called two of his servants. He also called a godly soldier who was one of his attendants. ⁸ He told them everything that had happened. Then he sent them to Joppa.

Peter Has a Vision

⁹ It was about noon the next day. The men were on their journey and were approaching the city. Peter went up on the roof to pray. ¹⁰ He became hungry. He wanted something to eat. While the meal was being prepared, Peter had a vision. ¹¹ He saw heaven open up. There he saw something that looked like a large sheet. It was being let down to earth by its four corners. ¹² It had all kinds of four-footed animals in it. It also had reptiles of the earth and birds of the air. ¹³ Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."

¹⁴ "No, Lord! I will not!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything that is not pure and 'clean.' "

¹⁵ The voice spoke to him a second time. "Do not say anything is not pure that God has made 'clean,' " it said.

¹⁶ This happened three times. Right away the sheet was taken back up to heaven.

¹⁷ Peter was wondering what the vision meant. At that very moment the men sent by Cornelius found Simon's house. They stopped at the gate ¹⁸ and called out. They asked if Simon Peter was staying there.

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – *continued*

¹⁹ Peter was still thinking about the vision. The Holy Spirit spoke to him. "Simon," he said, "three men are looking for you. ²⁰ Get up and go downstairs. Don't let anything keep you from going with them. I have sent them."

²¹ Peter went down and spoke to the men. "I'm the one you're looking for," he said. "Why have you come?"

²² The men replied, "We have come from Cornelius, the Roman commander. He is a good man who worships God. All the Jewish people respect him. A holy angel told him to invite you to his house. Cornelius wants to hear what you have to say." ²³ Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests.

Peter Goes to the House of Cornelius

The next day Peter went with the three men. Some of the believers from Joppa went along. ²⁴ The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them. He had called together his relatives and close friends.

²⁵ When Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him. As a sign of respect, he fell at Peter's feet. ²⁶ But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said. "I am only a man myself."

²⁷ Talking with Cornelius, Peter went inside. There he found a large group of people. ²⁸ He said to them, "You know that it is against our law for a Jew to have anything to do with those who aren't Jews. But God has shown me that I should not say anyone is not pure and 'clean.' ²⁹ So when you sent for me, I came without asking any questions. May I ask why you sent for me?"

³⁰ Cornelius answered, "Four days ago at this very hour I was in my house praying. It was three o'clock in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood in front of me. ³¹ He said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer. He has remembered your gifts to poor people. ³² Send someone to Joppa to get Simon Peter. He is a guest in the home of another Simon, who works with leather. He lives by the sea.' ³³ So I sent for you right away. It was good of you to come. Now we are all here. And God is here with us. We are ready to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us."

³⁴ Then Peter began to speak. "I now realize how true it is that God treats everyone the same," he said. ³⁵ "He accepts people from every nation. He accepts all who have respect for him and do what is right.

³⁶ "You know the message God sent to the people of Israel. It is the good news of peace through Jesus Christ. He is Lord of all. ³⁷ You know what has happened all through Judea. It started in Galilee after John preached about baptism. ³⁸ You know how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Jesus went around doing good. He healed all who were under the devil's power. God was with him.

³⁹ "We are witnesses of everything he did in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by nailing him to a cross. ⁴⁰ But on the third day God raised him from the dead. God allowed Jesus to be seen. ⁴¹ But he wasn't seen by all the people. He was seen only by us. We are witnesses whom God had already chosen. We ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

⁴² "He commanded us to preach to the people. He told us to give witness that he is the one appointed by God to judge the living and the dead. ⁴³ All the prophets give witness about him. They say that all who believe in him have their sins forgiven through his name."

⁴⁴ While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. ⁴⁵ Some Jewish believers had come with Peter. They were amazed because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on those who weren't Jews. ⁴⁶ They heard them speaking in languages they had not known before. They also heard them praising God.

Then Peter said, ⁴⁷ "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." ⁴⁸ So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – *continued*

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some of the responsibilities of the apostle ministry that we learned from the last lesson? (*Ambassadors for Christ, those who seek the bride, Light of the Gentiles, Ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God, God's laborers, and master builders of God's spiritual temple.*)
2. Peter is the first leader of the Apostles. What did Jesus say to Peter that would indicate this? Hint: look in Matthew 16:18 (*Jesus calls Peter the rock on which He will build His church.*)
3. How many names did Peter have? Look in John 1:42 to find out. (*Simon Bar-Jonah, Peter, and Cephas.*)
4. Peter is translated as "rock." All of the following words mean "rock" in different languages: *kepa* - Aramaic (close to Cephas), *Petros* – Greek and *Petrus* – Latin (both close to Peter).
5. What kind of person was Peter? (*Impulsive – cut off soldier's ear (John 18:1-11); insisted on not having Jesus wash his feet; scolds Jesus for telling the other disciples that He will be killed and rise again. Strong faith – declared that Jesus was the Son of God in Matthew 16:16 and John 6:69). Aware of his weaknesses – penitent when he denied Jesus three times.*)
6. Read John 21: 15-17.
 - a. What did Jesus ask Peter? (*Do you love me?*)
 - b. What was Peter's final response? (*Lord, you know all things. You know that I love you.*)
 - c. Why do you think that Jesus kept asking Peter these questions (*listen to answers – probe for answers and clarity*)
 - d. What was the job that Jesus just gave Apostle Peter? (*He wanted Peter to take care of all that He would establish; lead His flock*)
7. Today, our Chief Apostle is the visible head of the apostles. What do you think are some of the unique responsibilities that he has to care for? (*explain Jesus' teachings, promoting the revelations that was granted out of the power of the Holy Spirit, keeping the doctrine pure and intact, guiding Christ's church and keeping it in unity*)
8. Now, let's jump ahead to the feast of Pentecost when we know that the gift of the Holy Spirit was given to the Apostles. Who first stood up and acted as the "spokesperson" of the apostles? (*Peter*)
9. As review, how many souls were sealed that day? (*about 3000*)
10. Near the end of Peter's Pentecost sermon, he said "The promise is for you and your children. It is also for all who are far away. It is for all whom the Lord our God will choose." What did Peter mean by this? (*God's word is not just for the people of that time and place. It is for all who will and ever will believe. Also, the word was not just for Jews but also for Gentiles (non-Jews).*)
11. Discuss the events from Acts 10.
 - a. Who was Cornelius? Describe him and his family? (*He was a Roman commander in the Italian Regiment. ² Cornelius and all his family were faithful and worshiped God. He gave to charity. He prayed to God regularly.*)
 - b. One afternoon, Cornelius had a dream, describe the details of the dream he had. (*see Acts 10:3-8*)
 - c. The very next day, Peter had a vision. What was his vision? (*See Acts 10: 10-16*)
 - d. What happened the moment Peter's vision was over? (*See Acts 10: 17-23*)
 - e. As a Jew, was Peter allowed to eat anything "unclean?" (*No. The Jewish people strictly obeyed the Mosaic Law which forbade them to eat anything they considered "unclean."*)
 - f. Was Peter allowed to go into a Gentiles (again, non-Jew) house? (*No, the Mosaic Law forbade it.*)

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – continued

Note: The Mosaic Law or “Law of Moses” started when God gave Moses the Ten Commandments. It extends to roughly 613 laws or commandments that the Israelites would follow to live an ethical, moral life. The Mosaic Law is or simple The Law is given the first five books of the Bible, otherwise known as the Pentateuch (to Christians) and the Torah (to Jews). Jesus put down the old law and replaced it with one of love cf Acts 10: 28.

- g. What does Peter realize about the differences in people? (*“I now realize how true it is that God treats everyone the same,” he said. “He accepts people from every nation. He accepts all who have respect for him and do what is right.”*)
- h. Peter talked with Cornelius’ family and friends and in the end, all received the Holy Spirit. How is this like the events at Pentecost after the gift of the Holy Spirit was given to the apostles? (*Listen to answers. Probe for clarity.*)
- i. Peter learned a valuable lesson: Everyone is entitled to God’s Word and grace through the sacraments. Read Acts 11: 16-18. What did Peter do with his new-found knowledge? (*He immediately passed it on to the other apostles.*)

Application to Real Life

Discriminatory Behavior

See: www.teensundayschool.com → Activities → “Discriminatory Behavior”

We should always act in a way that is witness to what we learn/hear from God’s Word. Give each student a discrimination handout (see attached at the end of this lesson plan). Have them read the scenarios (or read them together) and then select the answer that best matches what THEY would do.

Discuss together as a group the following questions:

- As you answered the questions did you find that you had any discriminatory thoughts about these types of people?
- Out of the 3 groups were there certain types of people that you would be more willing to talk with and those that you would quickly dismiss? Why?
- How would your behavior toward these groups of people measure up to how Jesus would treat them?

Gifts of Ministry - Evangelism

The gift of evangelism is the divine enablement to effectively communicate the gospel to unbelievers, so they respond in faith and move toward discipleship in Christ. Individuals with the gift of evangelism contribute testimony.

In Acts 10, we can read about the story of Cornelius, a Gentile, and Peter. Cornelius received a vision from God telling him to send for Peter, even though Gentiles were not supposed to associate with Jews. At this time, Peter also received a vision from God, showing him that God accepts all people who love Him, even Gentiles. When Peter comes to Caesarea to visit Cornelius and the family and friends he had gathered, he tells them about Jesus Christ. Peter speaks of Jesus’ miracles, of His death, of His resurrection, and of His command to the disciples to testify of Him and share the good news that all who believe in Christ will have their sins forgiven. The Holy Spirit then fell on Cornelius and the others who gathered, and Peter commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.

Application to Real Life - continued

In this chapter, we see that Peter displays evangelism through his sharing of the gospel. Through his words, Cornelius and his family and friends recognized Christ as their Savior. Though Peter was hesitant at first to testify to the Gentiles, he used this opportunity to share the love of Christ with others.

Memory Work Suggestions

5 minutes

1. Recite the memory verse.
2. Practice finding the memory verse and/or Bible text in their Bible!
3. Play a game to review an article of faith.
4. Allow a volunteer (child) to lead the class in an opening/closing prayer.
5. Retell the story of Good Friday in your own words.

Activity Ideas

Bums or Angels

See: www.teensundayschool.com → Activities → “Bums or Angels”

Invite someone to attend your class that the students wouldn't know. If possible, make it someone their age. Have them come early, in plenty of time to meet the children. Instruct the “stand-in” to use a fake name and have a story ready to answer their questions. Don't do any introducing for them, though. Make your students deal with him/her on their own initiative. At this point in the lesson, reveal the stand-in and deal with the accompanying issues.

Reveal Your Special Guest

I want to introduce you guys to someone this morning. If you did more than say hi to (name) this morning, I want you to raise your hand. That means you introduced yourself, asked him how he was doing, where she was from, etc. A hi as you passed doesn't count. But if you did more than that, raise your hand. Okay, you can sit down now. I invited (name) here today to see how our group would do concerning favoritism. (name), let me ask you some questions.

Special Guest Questions

1. First, what is your real name? Where are you from?
2. What did it feel like when you walked in this morning? How did you feel?
3. How many people said anything to you?
4. Did you feel at any point like you weren't wanted, didn't belong, etc.?
5. If you were a high school student, would you ever return to our class based on the way you were treated today?

Discussion Questions:

1. How do you think our group handles outsiders?
2. What could our class do differently that would keep us from showing favoritism to people coming in for the first time?
3. What could our class do differently that would keep us from showing favoritism to people who have been around for a while?
4. In your own life, do you play favorites? Why do you think you do it?

Look up in your Bibles: Hebrews 13:2 (The following is from the NIV translation.) *“Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.”*

Journal

Choose One

Have you ever been made fun of for any reason? Or have you been picked last for a team? Describe how you felt when someone treated you this way. If Jesus is our example, does it ever give us the right to treat others this way? Write about it.

Apostle Peter was chosen to be the foundation of His church. We all need a foundation to build on too. What can we do to build a strong spiritual foundation? What do you think you should start with? Prayer? Going to church? Why did you pick this? Write about it.

Homework Ideas

- Look up the lesson: "**Apostle Paul**" at [www. www.nac-usa.org](http://www.nac-usa.org). Look over the notes with your parent(s). Ask them if they know any facts about Apostle Paul. Quiz them.
- Learn the Memory Verse:
*"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."
--Romans 12:2 (NKJV)*
- Learn the _____ Article of Faith

Discrimination Handout

Read the scenarios below and then select the answer that best matches what you would do.

While sitting in the lunch room at school, the “new kid” walks in looking for a place to sit and eat. He wears bright red glasses and his clothes are not exactly stylish. What do you do?

- A) Quickly look the other way and pretend you didn't see him.
- B) Roll your eyes as you laugh with your friends and wonder why anyone in their right mind would wear such clothes.
- C) Wave to him and offer him a seat at your table. Then, start a conversation to make him feel welcome and at ease.
- D) Offer him a seat at your table but then quickly eat and leave without saying too much.

A friend at church introduces you to a guest that he has been testifying to for a number of months. The guest is still pretty rough around the edges. Your friend asks if you would like to join the both of them for pizza after the church service. What do you do?

- A) Politely excuse yourself and move to a different seat.
- B) Inform the guest that his behavior is offending and you won't be seen hanging out with people like that.
- C) Do your duty and sit with them during the service, but then avoid future contact.
- D) Gladly accept the offer to meet them for lunch and try to make the visitor feel welcome.

Someone of another faith moves into your neighborhood and is very vocal about their religious beliefs. What do you do?

- A) Shout them down in a militant manner when you enter into spiritual discussions.
- B) Ignore the new neighbor or make small talk about the weather, as you don't want to get into a spiritual debate.
- C) Do your homework on how best to testify to people who practice other religions and then make an attempt to share the gospel with your neighbor.
- D) Freak out and worry yourself silly about what to say if the new neighbor invites you to his church.

Take Home Page: Apostle Peter

Today I learned...

Today your child was reminded that **God's word and His grace are for everyone**. The children explored Apostle Peter's role in the formation and spreading of the first church. They also examined how our pre-conceived judgements of outsiders might affect our ability to share the love and grace of Jesus with others.

Help me learn my memory verse...

"But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they."
--Acts 15:11

Ask me...

1. What kind of person was Peter?
2. Why do you think Jesus chose him to lead His church?
3. Do you believe that every person is entitled to God's word and grace? Why or why not?

Live Your Faith...

How can your family help spread the word of God and share the love of Jesus this week? Brainstorm and come up with a plan together, as well as how you will execute your plan as a family. Try to find ways to involve everyone and talk about how important it is as a Christian to share your faith and love for the Lord with others.



Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – continued

Saul was a tent maker by profession. At the age of about 18 to 20, he went from Tarsus to Jerusalem. There he became a student of the famous teacher of Gamaliel, and already very early was recognized as a Scribe.

In Acts, Luke describes Saul's blind zeal in persecuting the Christian congregation in Jerusalem, his presence at the stoning of Deacon Stephen, his conversation to Christ, as well as his acceptance into the congregation at Jerusalem (Acts 8:1; 9:1-31; 22:3-21; 26:9-20).

Saul's conversion occurred in the year 34 or 35 AD. Thereafter, Saul was active for some years in Syria and Cilicia and stayed with the Syrian congregation at Antioch until about 45 AD where he and Barnabas were called as Apostles.

Between 45 and 49 AD, Saul, together with Barnabas, undertook a missionary journey to Cypress and Asia Minor. It took about two years. From then on, the Apostle only used his second name, Paul (Acts 13 and 14)

In the year 49 or 50 AD, he set out on this second missionary journey, which took three years and went through Asia Minor and Greece. On this journey he was accompanied at times by Silas, at times also by Luke. Paul visited the congregations, which had been established during his first journey. From Lystra onward, Timothy also accompanied him (Acts 15:36 to 18:22)

The third missionary journey took place between the years 51 and 58 AD to 52 and 59 AD. Again, he went to Asia Minor and Greece, accompanied at times by Timothy, and brother from Macedonia and Achaia. Also on this journey he met Luke (Acts 18:23 to 21:15).

In Acts 21 to 28, Luke reports about Apostle Paul's arrest and journey to Rome. Little is known about the last years of Paul's life. In the last sentence of Acts, Luke reports that, for two years, Paul was able to go about his missionary work freely in Rome. No more details are known about the Apostle after this. His letter to Timothy and Titus suggests that he wanted to journey to additional Mediterranean countries. It is assumed that he was later executed in Rome.

Student Notes

RI Students: Below is a set of notes for you to be familiar with before class starts. Please read through them and if any Bible verses are listed, be sure to read that as well.

Paul's Life

- Born in Cilicia around 10 AD.
- Parents belonged to the tribe of Benjamin
- Was a Roman citizen because his parents were Roman citizens.
- Paul had two names, Paul was his Latin name and Saul was his Hebrew name. Paul exclusively used the name "Paul" after his Christian conversion.
- Was a tent-maker until 18 to 20 years old.
- When he was about 18, he went to Jerusalem to be a student of Gamaliel a famous teacher of Jewish religious law (Mosaic Law)
- Eventually, Paul became a Pharisee. Pharisaism is a sect of the Jewish religion. These devout men were known for their strict adherence to Jewish law.
- Paul was zealous at persecuting the first Christians – he was present at the stoning of Deacon Stephen. (Acts 8:1-3)
- Paul was converted to Christianity after a remarkable encounter with Jesus (Acts 9:1-19).
 - Saul was on his way to Damascus to persecute more Christians when Jesus intervened.

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – *continued*

Paul's Ministry

- A few days after Paul was converted and baptized, he started to preach that Jesus is the Son of God. (Acts 9:20-22)
- Paul stayed around Jerusalem for 10-15 years. Then started travelling abroad on missionary journeys.
- Paul wrote many letters to the Christian congregations and his friends and fellow disciples. These works of inspiration and guidance are called epistles.

Paul's Missionary Journeys

- Paul took a total of three missionary journeys. Look at the map at the following link: <http://www.christianityoasis.com/DailyBread/Acts/paulsjourneys.jpg>
- In total it took about ten years for Paul to take three missionary journeys. He was about 60 years old when he was done with the third journey.
- Many congregations were established through Paul and many believing souls experienced the teachings of the Lord Jesus.
- Paul's final journey took him to Rome where it is not known what happened to him. It is assumed that he was executed in Rome.

Discussion Questions:

1. From the students notes, discuss the details of Saul/Paul's life. (*see notes*)
2. It seems that one of Paul's characteristics was that he was very zealous or passionate about what he believed. How did Paul use this both against and for Christianity? (*Discuss together....seeking clarity in their answers.*)
3. Read Acts 9: 13-15. What do you think the Lord saw in Saul/Paul? (*He was a Roman citizen which gave him extra rights in the Roman Empire and his zealotness would prove very valuable in the spreading of Christianity.*)
4. In previous lessons we discussed that the lack of technology did not allow the apostles to communicate very efficiently. What did Apostle Paul do to stay in contact with the congregations from his missionary journeys and his fellow disciples? (*Paul wrote epistles – letters of inspiration and instruction.*)
5. Open your bibles to the book after Acts. What is this book? (*Romans*) Every book of the Bible, except Revelations, from here to the end is called an epistle. (*The Pauline Epistles = 13 total: Romans, 1,2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1, 2 Thessalonians, 1,2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*)
6. What do you think are some reasons that Paul would write all these letters? (*To express his love, to teach, to encourage, to rebuke (See: Galatians 1:1-9)*)
7. Have you ever heard or read a letter or message written by an Apostle today? (*Letters can be read by Apostles in every "Our Family" magazine, letters are sent to our houses at Thanksgiving or the New Year, the Chief Apostle writes a letter every month that is posted on the New Apostolic Church website.*)
8. Why do you think Apostles today still write us messages? (*The letters have longevity and can be read over and over for strength. The same message can be communicated to everyone who reads it.*)
9. Paul was so zealous or passionate that he was imprisoned several times. How many times was Paul in prison? (*Four times. He was imprisoned in the following cities: Phillippi, Caesarea, and Rome twice – 63 and 68 AD.*)

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – *continued*

10. Do you know why Apostle Paul was imprisoned? *(Mainly for preaching the gospel. He was so zealous that he often incited others who did not want to hear what he had to say, nor did they want to hear that repentance can come through Jesus Christ. Romans and Greeks were polytheistic and did not believe in one God much less only Jesus Christ.)*
11. Why do you think that Apostle Paul would endure ordeals like prison and being shipwrecked? *(His love for Jesus and His people. He was whole-heartedly dedicated to this cause that he even put himself in danger.)*
12. Apostle Paul was completely committed to the Lord. How can we show our commitment to the Lord today? *(Remain faithful through all temptations, don't get caught up in things that are unimportant – stay focused, put Jesus at the center of our lives, use our talents to help along in God's work.)*

Note: The following site proved helpful and contains a timeline of Apostle Paul's life:
<http://www.biblestudy.org/apostlepaul/main.html>

Application to Real Life

"Lots of Stuff"

See: www.teensundayschool.com → Activities → "Lots of Stuff"

Prioritize your life and evaluate what is important with this questionnaire. Give each student a copy of the Activity handout to complete on their own. Then allow time for everyone to share their answers and thoughts with others in your class.

Discussion Questions:

1. Does spending time alone with God take a priority over everything else?
2. Are there any activities in your life that you are spending too much time on?
3. Isn't it ok to spend lots of time on things you really enjoy, if it isn't something bad?

Gifts of Ministry - Apostleship

The gift of apostleship is the divine enablement to oversee the development of new serving opportunities and initiatives with spiritual clarity. In its simplest form, individuals with the gift of apostleship have a missionary or pioneering spirit and contribute development.

Throughout his ministry, Apostle Paul displayed the gift of apostleship. He was called to travel to many unknown places, to preach to the Gentiles, and to offer spiritual guidance to many new believers. Although he encountered many obstacles along the way, he exhibited what it meant to be a pioneer of faith in reaching many lands and peoples with the news of the Gospel.

Paul's missionary spirit helped to develop many of the early churches throughout Israel, Syria, Turkey, and Greece. He offered clarity on many spiritual subjects to the believers, such as being justified by faith, being a cheerful giver, and finding comfort in suffering.

Memory Work Suggestions

5 minutes

1. Recite the memory verse.
2. Practice finding the memory verse and/or Bible text in their Bible!
3. Play a game to review an article of faith.
4. Allow a volunteer (child) to lead the class in an opening/closing prayer.

Activity Ideas

Choose One Activity

Lesson in Latin

Put the following on your white board or easel and ask the students if they know what it means: "Carpe diem". (It means seize the day).

Discussion Questions:

1. What does the phrase mean to you?
2. Do you think Paul lived this way?
3. How can you seize the day for Christ, even when life is difficult?

Activity Ideas – *continued*

Remind the students that life is indeed hard and far from perfect, but God still cares, and He can ALWAYS be glorified despite the circumstances you find yourself in. No matter what our circumstances, we can commit as Paul did. God was glorified in Paul's life despite being in prison, because he was never alone. Again and again, people were encouraged by Paul and his passion and commitment to Christ, and they in turn encouraged Paul. We exist to help one another and to make the most of whatever life brings us.

"Housecleaning"

See: www.teensundayschool.com → Activities → "Housecleaning"

In order to be completely committed to the Lord we need to look at what is going on in our hearts and get rid of the stuff that does not belong.

Give each student a copy of the "Housecleaning" handout. Students will choose from one of the examples below to describe what their "house" is like now and where they would like to be a year from now. After making their selections, each member of the class will share with the others why they picked what they did, then answer a few general discussion questions.

Discussion Questions:

1. How would others who know you very well describe you?
2. If you are not yet where you want to be, how do you plan to get there?

We are asked to be “personal missionaries” which means that no matter where we go or what we do, we act, say, think, and do the things that Jesus would want us to do. How could you be more of a personal missionary? Write about it.

Take a moment and think about some of the distractions in your life – things that take away from your commitment to the Lord. Write down one or two and describe how you could overcome these.

Homework Ideas

- Read **Christ and His Congregation** (1 Corinthians 12:4-13; Colossians 1:18).
- Learn the Memory Verse:
“There are different kinds of gifts. But they are all given by the same Spirit.”
--1 Corinthians 12:4
- Learn the _____ Article of Faith
- What do you think your talents are? Make a list and bring it to class.

“Housecleaning”

For there to be room for Jesus in our life, we may need to do some housecleaning. Jesus wants to be the most important one to us, the Lord of our life. From the examples below, which one best describes your “house” as it is right now, and where would you like to be a year from now?

Dump

Full of tons of discarded waste, unsightly and smelly, of use to nobody and just waiting to be hauled away.

Junkyard

Used and damaged goods, all over the place, but for the right price may be of some use to somebody, somewhere, someday.

Bedroom

Everything is there, but where? Someday, when absolutely necessary everything will be clean and in its place with room to move.

Department Store

Many nice looking things and plenty of specials but overstocked and usually overcrowded. A good sale will help a lot.

Museum

Everything inside is neat and in order. There is no clutter and plenty of room, but a little cold and pretentious for some visitors.

Grocery Store

Clean and bright with the fresh smell of tasty delights, filled with people of all kinds with a common purpose.

Kitchen

Warm, comfortable, clean and filled with joy, small enough for intimacy but with just enough room for whoever desires to enter.

“Lots of Stuff”

ACTIVITY	LOW	HIGH
Going on-line to chat with friends or check e-mails	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Spending time to get a guy or girl notice you	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Working to get a car, or for money to buy gas and insurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Playing sports, practicing, or traveling around to compete	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Attending church youth functions, camps or outreach events	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Doing homework or studying for that exam	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sitting in front of the television or surfing the Internet	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Listening to music or going to concerts	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Spending quality time alone with God	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



Take Home Page: Apostle Paul

Today I learned...

Today your child was reminded that God wants us to **commit ourselves to Him**. The children examined how a persecutor of Christ's congregation becomes an ardent defender and Apostle of Christ. They also talked about how Apostle Paul helped to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ with complete commitment, and how he comforted and taught the faithful through his written letters.

Help me learn my memory verse...

*"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind,
that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."*

--Romans 12:2 (NKJV)

Ask me...

1. How would you describe Paul before He followed Jesus? After?
2. Would you still tell others about Jesus if you were persecuted and put in prison as Paul was? Why or why not?
3. Are you completely committed to the Lord? How do you know?

Live Your Faith...

If you could go anywhere in the world on a mission trip, where would you go? Talk together as a family and share your ideas and why you would choose that place. Then turn your attention to local places in your community where you could also serve together. Work together this week to investigate where you could invest your time as a family and make plans to spend time together serving in some way at that place in the next month.

Christ and His Congregation

1 Corinthians 12:4-13; Colossians 1:18

Learning Objectives

1. The children will examine how each person has his or her place and responsibilities in the congregation.
2. The children will explore the importance of working together in the congregation.

Memory Verse: *“There are different kinds of gifts. But they are all given by the same Spirit.”*
--1 Corinthians 12:4

Getting Started

Hand out the following questionnaire:

Answer each question as simply as possible. You may want to use answers like: a sister, a brother, a priest, a deacon, my family, or come up with an answer that you think is best.

1. Who is supposed to decorate the altar? _____
2. Who is supposed to shovel snow or mow the lawn? _____
3. Who takes care of improvements around the church? _____
4. Who is supposed to sing in the choir? _____
5. Who is supposed to watch the door or be a greeter? _____
6. Who is supposed to hold a Bible study? _____
7. Who is supposed to teach Sunday school classes? _____
8. Who is supposed to visit families in our congregation? _____
9. Who is supposed to play in the orchestra? _____
10. Who is supposed to head up committees and meetings? _____

Talk about their answers and possibly tally them on a whiteboard. Then, ask if anyone read the Bible verses for the lesson today. See if your students can draw out the fact that anyone can do any of these things if they have the talent and the will to do them. For example, Sis. So-and-so (who is 90 yrs. old) COULD shovel snow but is that the best thing for her to do? Etc.

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions

Message: *Use your gifts for the Lord!*

1 Corinthians 12:4-13

⁴ There are different kinds of gifts. But they are all given by the same Spirit. ⁵ There are different ways to serve. But they all come from the same Lord. ⁶ There are different ways to work. But the same God makes it possible for all of us to have all those different things.

⁷ The Holy Spirit is given to each of us in a special way. That is for the good of all. ⁸ To some people the Spirit gives the message of wisdom. To others the same Spirit gives the message of knowledge. ⁹ To others the same Spirit gives faith. To others that one Spirit gives gifts of healing. ¹⁰ To others he gives the power to do miracles. To others he gives the ability to prophesy. To others he gives the ability to tell the spirits apart. To others he gives the ability to speak in different kinds of languages they had not known before.

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – *continued*

And to still others he gives the ability to explain what was said in those languages.

¹¹ All of the gifts are produced by one and the same Spirit. He gives them to each person, just as he decides.

¹² There is one body. But it has many parts. Even though it has many parts, they make up one body. It is the same with Christ. ¹³ We were all baptized by one Holy Spirit into one body. It didn't matter whether we were Jews or Greeks, slaves or free people. We were all given the same Spirit to drink.

Colossians 1:18

¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, which is the church. He is the beginning. He is the first to be raised from the dead. That happened so that he would be far above everything.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some things that you can do well? (*Listen to answers*)
2. What would it be like if (name of an artist, musician, athlete – use something that would connect with your students.) never did what they were supposed to do? How would that sport, or music, or TV show/movie etc., be affected?
3. Read Matthew 25:14-30. The parable of the talents.
 - a. How many servants were there and how much money did he give each one? (*Three servants: 5 talents, 2 talents, 1 talent*)
 - b. What did the servants with 5 talents and 2 talents do? (*They doubled their money, in other words, they did something with what they had to help their master*).
 - c. What did the servant with one talent do? (*He hid his money so that he wouldn't lose it, in other words, he squandered what he had and made no attempt to help his master*).
 - d. What lesson could we learn from this parable? (*Make use of your talents to help everyone*).
4. According to the Bible passages, what is the ultimate source for all talents and gifts? (*the Holy Spirit = God*)
5. What are some of the Spirit given gifts listed in 1 Corinthians? (*Wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, perform miracles, prophecy, discerning spirits, speaking languages, interpreting languages.*)
6. Does the Holy Spirit give everybody every gift? (*No each person is imbued their own gifts.*)
7. If everyone is doing their part and giving freely and extensively of their gifts, is it possible for anyone to not benefit and grow spiritually? (*No, if all is doing their part the congregation can be labeled as "complete," "healthy."*)
8. Who is at the head of each congregation? (*Jesus Christ.*)

Application to Real Life

Church Building Project

See www.teensundayschool.com → Activities → "Church Building Project"

You will need Lego blocks, a table or hard surface, and a stopwatch for this activity. Please see the above website for detailed instructions. Modify the activity as needed according to the number of students you have.

Discussion Questions:

1. What was the hardest, or easiest, part about this task for the team?
2. How difficult was it to complete this mission alone? Why?
3. What were the advantages for a team vs. doing it alone?
4. How does this relate to building God's Church using different Spiritual gifts or talents?

Remind the children how important it is not only to use our individual gifts for the Lord, but also to work together as a congregation and a team for the same purpose. Review the message statement and memory verse.

Application to Real Life - continued

Building up the Body of Christ

While we are not all the same, we are all called to serve God in the unique way He designed us. Paul teaches that the “people” are the temple, or the church, of God (1 Corinthians 3:16). Later, he instructs them: ...since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel (1 Corinthians 14:12). Finally, Paul exhorts the congregation that spiritual gifts are given to edify the Body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-12). God has given us many spiritual gifts for many purposes. However, the most important thing we can do with our gifts and talents is to bring glory to God. We bring to glory to God when we use our gifts to edify, or build-up others.

Every Christian, every child of God, is invited to serve the Lord, to help Him, to commit himself, to become a disciple of the Lord Jesus in daily life. – CA Schneider

Memory Work Suggestions

5 minutes

1. Recite the memory verse.
2. Practice finding the memory verse and/or Bible text in their Bible!
3. Play a game to review an article of faith.
4. Allow a volunteer (child) to lead the class in an opening/closing prayer.

Activity Ideas

Choose One Activity

Strength in Numbers

See: www.teensundayschool.com → Activities → “Strength in Numbers”

Many hands make light work. Try this activity to demonstrate the importance of everyone helping along. This is suitable for a larger class. Modify it as needed to make the same point, according to the number of students you have.

Ask for about 8 to 10 volunteers to help with this challenge. You will lie flat on the floor, and then ask the volunteers one by one to try to pick you up off the floor. It is okay if it causes a laugh or two, but none of them should be able to lift you up. You also may want to stop after three or four attempts. Please see the above website for detailed instructions.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does this teach us about teamwork? About partnerships? (*We need to come together as a unit both literally and figuratively to lift each other up, in the same way Paul had a partnership with the Philippians.*)
2. What situations are you commonly faced with that require teamwork?
3. What happens when teamwork or a partnership breaks down?
4. How might the breaking down of teamwork affect our congregation?

Remind the children how important it is not only to use our individual gifts for the Lord, but also to work together as a congregation and a team for the same purpose.

The Right Stuff

You need the right stuff even to make a batch of Kool-Aide. For this activity, you will need water, a pitcher, a large spoon, unsweetened Kool-Aide envelope, and sugar. The main idea here is that a great pitcher of Kool-Aide requires all the ingredients and tools. The ingredients must be added in the required amounts and the tools must be used properly. Propose different amounts of something like 10 cups of sugar – how will it taste? Not good because there is too much of one ingredient. Or what if the Kool-Aide packet was left out? Or what if the spoon wasn't used? Etc. This activity should show the students that everything is needed in the right amounts to make the congregation run smoothly. Too much of one thing, not enough of another, or missing something can be detrimental.

Journal

Choose One

At a young age you might not completely realize your talents, but there are things that you like to do. Look around the congregation and see what people do or what might need to be done. What might you like to do to help your congregation? Write about it.

What do you like better, the explanation that Jesus is at the head of the congregation or at the center of the congregation? Explain.

Homework Ideas

- Review at home with a grownup the lesson titled: **Bible Skill Review**.
- Learn the memory verse: "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true." --2 Timothy 3:16 (NLT)
- Work on memorizing Article of Faith # ____.
- Practice saying the books of the Bible in order. See how many you can memorize before class.



Take Home Page: Christ and His Congregation

Today I learned...

Today your child was reminded that we should **use our gifts for the Lord** and His work. The children examined how each person has their own “place” and “responsibilities” in the congregation. They also explored the importance of working together in the congregation as the body of Christ.

Help me learn my memory verse...

“There are different kinds of gifts. But they are all given by the same Spirit.”

--1 Corinthians 12:4

Ask me...

1. What are some things that you can do well?
2. How might you use your talents to benefit your congregation? Your community?

Live Your Faith...

Gather together and spend some time quietly thinking about (or writing down) things you love and/or appreciate about each member of your family. Then go around the room, focusing on one person at a time. Let everyone else take a turn telling that family member what they love and/or appreciate about them. Practice building each other up, just as we are to build each other up in the body of Christ.



Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – Continued

The Old Testament is divided into 5 parts:

1. **5 books of law** – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Number, and Deuteronomy. They are called the books of law because they contain the laws of God to His people, the Ten Commandments, etc. They talk about the creation, Noah and the flood, Abraham, Moses and more.
2. **12 books of history** - Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. They tell the History of Israel from the Promised Land to the return to Jerusalem. They cover Joshua, Caleb, the judges like Sampson, Saul, David, etc.
3. **5 books of poetry** - Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. They are written largely in a poetry form.
4. **5 books of Major Prophets** - Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel.
5. **12 books of Minor Prophets** - Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

The difference between major and minor prophets is mostly the length of the books, with the Major Prophets books being longer than most of the Minor Prophet books of the Bible. Remind them that when they think Old Testament – think “5 – 12 – 5 – 5 – 12”.

The Apocrypha

There was a period of time that passed between the Old and New Testaments. There were about 400 years that went by for which the Bible is silent. There are writings from that period, but they have never been included in many Bibles. If they are included, they are called “the Apocrypha”. They are factual with history, but they are not considered either Old Testament or New Testament books.

Then, after about 400 years, the events of the New Testament started to unfold, beginning of course with the birth of Jesus.

The New Testament

The New Testament is divided into 5 parts:

1. **4 gospels** – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. “Gospel” means good news, or truth, and the gospels are four versions of the same things including Jesus’ life, teaching, death and resurrection. Each version is written from a different perspective.
2. **1 book of history** – Acts. It traces the history of the church from the ascension of Christ to the arrival of the apostle Paul in Rome. It is written by Luke, and combined with the book of Luke, he wrote more than half of the New Testament. Events such as the Pentecost, the call of Saul, etc. are in this book.
3. **13 letters from Paul** – Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. These books are letters that were all written by Paul. He wrote to churches and individuals, instructing them on how they might live out their faith more completely.
4. **8 letters from others** – Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2, and 3 John, and Jude. They are letters written by people other than Paul. The authors are James, John, Jude, Peter, and one unknown. We do not know who wrote the book of Hebrews.
5. **1 book of prophecy** – Revelation. This is the last book of the Bible and it is the only book of prophecy in the New Testament. It tells us about the events leading up to the end of time. It was written by John.

Remind the children again: there are 4 gospels, 1 history, 21 letters, and 1 prophecy.

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – Continued

Discussion Questions:

Before beginning this section, tell the children that you will be asking lots of questions. Every person has acquired a different level of “Bible skills”, and that is okay. By the end of this lesson, everyone will have stronger Bible skills, and that is the point. Point out where the Table of Contents is in their Bibles and help them to find the answer to their questions.

1. How many books are in the Bible? (66)
2. Can you recite them in order? (If they can, let them try – or see how far they can get. Encourage them to learn the Books of the Bible in order, one chunk at a time, to help them know how to find verses more easily.)
3. How many testaments are there in the Bible, or main parts? (2)
4. What are those testaments called? (Old and New)
5. How many books are in the Old Testament? (39 – Use the table of contents to count.)
6. How many books then are in the New Testament? (27 – Hint – 66 total books take away 39 in the Old Testament, write the math on the easel.)

Application to Real Life

For this lesson, the children receive real life application through the hands-on games and activities.

Memory Work Suggestions

5 minutes

1. Recite the memory verse.
2. Practice finding the memory verse and/or Bible text in their Bible!
3. Allow a volunteer (child) to lead the class in an opening/closing prayer.
4. How far can you get naming the books of the Bible in order? Give it a try!

Activity Ideas

Choose One Activity

“I’m Going on a Trip” Game

Have the children to form a circle (either by standing or with their chairs). The first child begins by holding a ball or another object and says, “I’m going on a trip and I’m going to take Genesis. “The child then passes the ball to the next child. The second child continues, “I’m going on a trip and I’m going to take Genesis and Exodus.” Continue the game through all the books of the Bible of the desired Testament or set a goal and try to meet it. Have fun!

“Bible Book Pin Up Game”

Print the names of Old and New Testament books on individual clothespins, making two complete sets. Hang a clothesline from chairs at two designated locations. Divide each clothesline into two sections (Old and New Testament). Place one set of the clothespins at each location. Explain that the object of the game is to group the books into the Old and New Testament divisions. At the signal, the first child will run to the clothesline, select a clothespin, decide if it is in the Old or New Testament and place it on the clothesline on the proper side. The first team to correctly separate all their clothespins wins. As an additional challenge, instruct the children to place the clothespins in the correct order.

Build it and they will Learn

Print each of the following Scripture references on a separate index card:

Exodus 14:6	1 Samuel 17:5
Exodus 31:18	2 Kings 4:10
Numbers 11:7-8	2 Kings 4:38
Deuteronomy 17:18	Esther 1:11
Judges 16:25-26	Jeremiah 24:2

Provide modeling clay and a Bible for each child. Guide the children to select a card, look up the Scripture references, and use the clay to make a model of the object(s) mentioned in the Bible verse.

Look it Up!

Write the following statements on individual cards. Mix the cards and place them in a small bag. Allow each child to select a card and use his Bible to complete the assignment. Add additional statements as needed:

- How many chapters are in Luke?
- Locate John 13:35.
- Which book is located in the middle of the Bible?
- Find a book of Law.
- Find the first book in the Bible and read the first verse.
- Look up Psalm 23.
- Find and read the last verse of the last book in the Bible.
- Locate each of the four Gospels.
- How many chapters are in the book of 2 Samuel?

Memory Verse Game

Write each word of a memory verse or Bible verse on a separate index card. Make 2 sets (or you can play “beat the clock”). When you say “go” – students turn the cards over and must put them in order. For an added challenge, they could then go to their Bible and find the verse. First one done wins the round. Try to use memory verses from this year’s lessons.

Other Resources

For additional resources on teaching Bible skills through activities and games, see www.christianbook.com for either of the following books:

1. The Big Book of Bible Skills
ISBN: 0-8307-2346-3
Publisher: Gospel Light
2. The Big Book of Bible Games
ISBN: 0-8307-1821-4
Publisher: Gospel Light

Take Home Page: Bible Skills Review

Today I learned...

Today your child was reminded that **the Bible is there to help us, so we should use it!** The children reviewed the basic structure of the Bible, how to use it, and then practiced some of their Bible skills.

Help me learn my memory verse...

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true."

--2 Timothy 3:16 (NLT)

Ask me...

1. How many books are in the Bible?
2. What's the difference between the Old and New Testament?
3. Why do think God gave us the Bible?

Live Your Faith...

Get out your Bibles and share a favorite Bible verse and/or Bible story that you have read recently. What was it about that verse or story that stood out to you? Spend some time together reading the story or verse you selected directly from the Bible. What was it about that verse or story that stood out to you? Make it a goal to spend 5-10 minutes reading together in your Bibles each day this week.