

SUNDAY + SCHOOL

Grow in Christ

**Sunday School 9:30am-10:30am
and Reveal Kids 11:00am**

**January – May, 2024
Newsletter and Schedule**





Mission Statement

Our mission is to connect with children by enjoying a real relationship with God, believing in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior ruling every part of our lives, and walking in the Holy Spirit through the learning of God's Holy Word, The Bible.

Vision Statement

Our vision is to love, encourage and build up children with an increased and lasting knowledge of God's Word.

Roadmap

- Good Communication
- Visibility
- Engage Children
- Make Sunday School Fun
- Feedback from teachers and parents





Dear Trinity Parent:

I hope each one of you had a very joyous and wonderful Christmas with your family. It is hard to believe that we are in the second half of Sunday school and Reveal Kids. I have certainly enjoyed teaching and getting to know many of the children.

I would certainly like to thank you parents for bringing your children to Sunday school/Reveal Kids as it is an honor to have the opportunity to teach them about Jesus. I would also like to thank the dedicated teachers and teacher assistants that we have every week along with the youth group students who are also faithful in assisting with Sunday school.

After much consideration and feedback from teachers and parents we are changing the Sunday school curriculum back to the curriculum we have used over the past couple of years called Holy Moly for Kindergarten through 5th grade and Frolic for the PK3 and PK4 year olds. Also, the PK kids will no longer meet in the classroom, but will instead meet in the gym every Sunday.

For children in Kindergarten through 5th grade and Reveal Kids we will have two special events:

***On 3/10/24 when the topic is "Maundy Thursday" we will have a mini menu of what the Last Supper/Seder Meal would have been like. We will have crackers, grapes, eggs, raisins, dates, olives and grape juice. We will also have donuts and apple juice boxes along with some gluten free cookies to pass out to complete the event. This will take place the last 20 minutes of class.**

****On 4/14/24 when our topic is "Breakfast with Jesus" we will be having breakfast at the same time. I also encourage all children to wear summer/beach attire as they will be sitting on beach towels to hear the lesson. They can wear shorts, Hawaiian shirts, sunglasses, ball caps, flip flops if they would like. This will take place the last 20 minutes of class.**

Please feel free to reach out to me at kids@tlcs.org or my cell # is 708-243-8362 if you should have any questions.

Blessings,

Dan Plattner

Director of Youth and Children's Ministries



Preschool Sunday School is moving from the Old Testament to the New Testament in 2024. We will begin with our play-based curriculum meeting in the school gymnasium. The play-based curriculum helps children experience Bible stories in a meaningful way. The gymnasium will be less distracting than the classroom for the 3- and 4-year-olds.

Preschool children gather together and are welcomed to play and to put their creative talents to use with musical instruments, Play-Doh, animal figurines, kick balls, or crayons and stickers to make a mural.

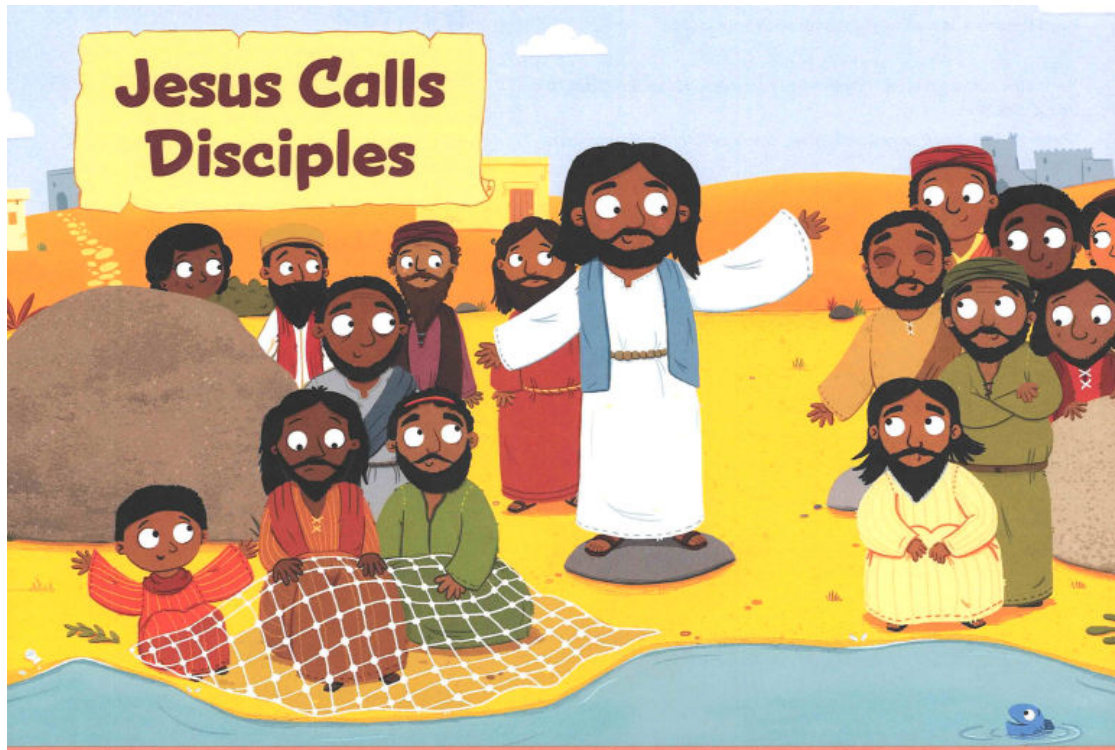
Children are then invited to sit down on their individual carpet squares and listen to the story of the week. Every story is told two weeks in a row, in a slightly different way, so that they get a chance to really absorb the story. Repetition is an important part of learning during early childhood.

There is more play time and music and dancing or acting out the day's story. The story is told again with everyone looking at the poster sized picture of the story of the day.

Finally, class ends with more play time with age-appropriate creative play spaces and games that are designed to connect to the day's story.

The next few pages will outline the January through May stories.

1/7 & 1/14	Jesus Call Disciples
1/21 & 1/28	Jesus Blesses Children
2/4 & 2/11	The Prodigal Son
2/18 & 2/25	Jesus Teaches and Heals
3/3 & 3/10	Jesus Feeds a Crowd
3/17 & 3/24	Jesus, the Good Shepherd / The Easter Story
3/31	Easter Sunday- No Sunday School
4/7 & 4/14	Go and Tell
4/21 & 4/28	Review of favorite stories
5/5 & 5/12	Review of favorite stories
5/19	Last Day Pajama Party



Story Time

Read the story Jesus Calls Disciples with your child.

Jesus saw some fishermen by the Sea of Galilee. He called them to be his disciples.

"Peter and Andrew! James and John!" Jesus called. "Drop your nets and follow me!"

Women and men! Girls and boys!

Jesus called all kinds of people to share his good news.

Many said, "Yes!"

They followed Jesus. They learned from Jesus. They loved Jesus.

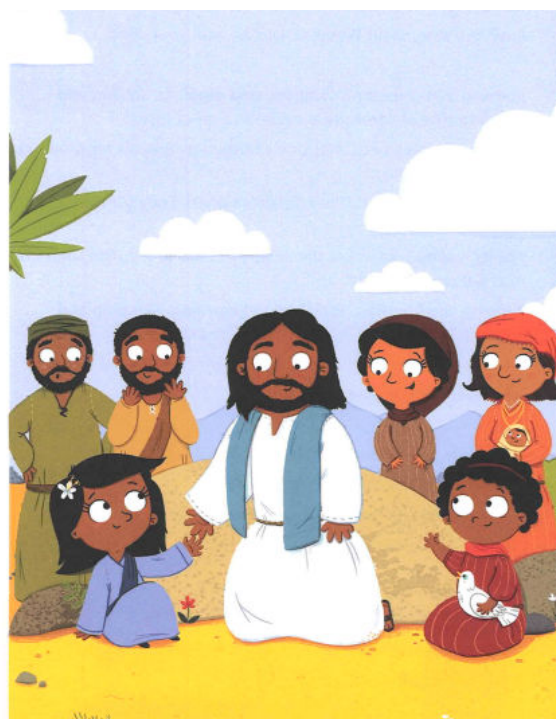
We are disciples of Jesus too.

Then ask a few questions about the story.

- Where did Jesus go to call people?
- What do we call people who follow Jesus?
- How does our family follow Jesus?



Jesus Blesses Children



Story Time

Read the story Jesus Blesses Children with your child.

Jumping and clapping. Wiggling and giggling. Smiling and laughing. The children were excited to meet Jesus!

But the disciples said, "No! Don't bother us. Jesus is for grown-ups, not for children."

The children frowned. Their parents sighed. They turned to go home.

"Wait!" called Jesus. "Let the children come to me. The kingdom of God belongs to them."

Running and hopping. Toddling and crawling. Skipping and walking. The children hurried to meet Jesus!

Jesus reached out to them. He held them and blessed each one.

Jesus loves and blesses each child.

Then ask a few questions about the story.

- What did the children want to do?
- What did the disciples say to the children?
- What did Jesus say to the disciples?



The Prodigal Son



Story Time

Read the story The Prodigal Son with your child.

Jesus told a story about a man with two sons.

"Father!" said the younger son. "I want my share of your money. Now!" His father gave it to him. The younger son left.

Far from home, he spent all the money. New clothes! Tasty food! Fun parties! Soon he had nothing left. He was hungry and had to stay with the pigs.

He decided to return home. His father rushed to meet him. "You're back!" he rejoiced.

The father celebrated his son's return. New clothes! Tasty food! A fun party! "Why are you happy?" the older son asked. "He left. I stayed and helped!"

"I thought your brother was gone forever!" the father said. "I'm glad he's home!"

God always welcomes us home.

Then ask a few questions about the story.

- What are some things that happened to the younger son?
- In the story, who was impatient? Grumpy? Happy?
- How do I welcome you home after day care/preschool/a playdate? How do you welcome me home from work/the grocery store/a trip?





Jesus Teaches and Heals



Story Time

Read the story Jesus Teaches and Heals with your child.

Jesus was a teacher.

He taught people about God's love.

He told stories about the kingdom of God.

He talked about caring for each other and caring for God's world.

Jesus wanted people to learn as much as they could about God.

Jesus was a healer.

He cared for people who were sick.

He helped people walk again.

He helped blind people see.

He touched people with sores. The sores went away!

Jesus loved people. He healed them and sent them home.

The people believed. They told everyone what Jesus did!

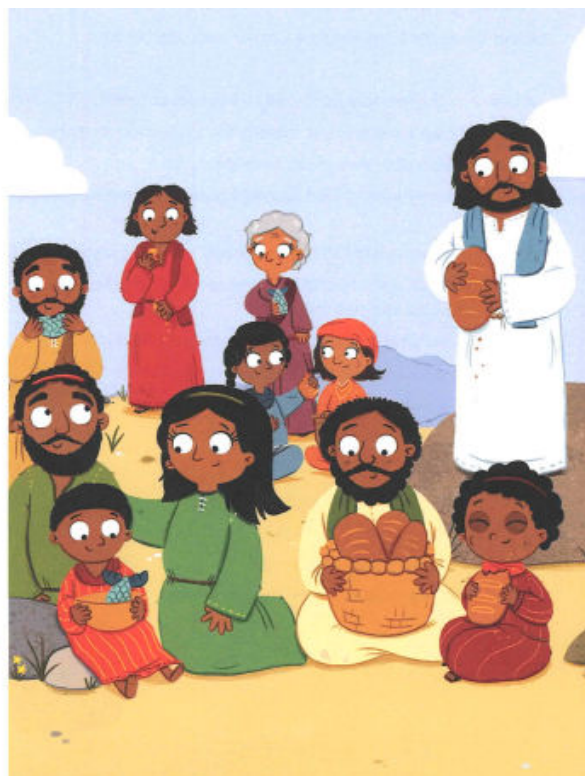
Jesus still teaches and heals us.



Then ask a few questions about the story.

- **What did Jesus do to help people?** Talk about the ways Jesus taught and healed.
- **Why do you think Jesus taught and healed people?** Share that Jesus' actions come from Jesus' love for people.
- **What are some ways that we see healing in our family?**

Jesus Feeds a Crowd



Story Time

Read the story Jesus Feeds a Crowd with your child.

A big crowd of people gathered to hear Jesus teach.

They were very hungry, but there wasn't any food for them!

"What will we do?" one disciple asked Jesus.

"I can share my lunch," said a boy. "I have five loaves of bread and two fish!"

"That's not enough for all these people!" another disciple said.

Jesus smiled at the boy and held the food. He blessed the five loaves of bread and two fish.

Then the disciples began to pass out the boy's lunch.

There was enough for everyone—even leftovers!

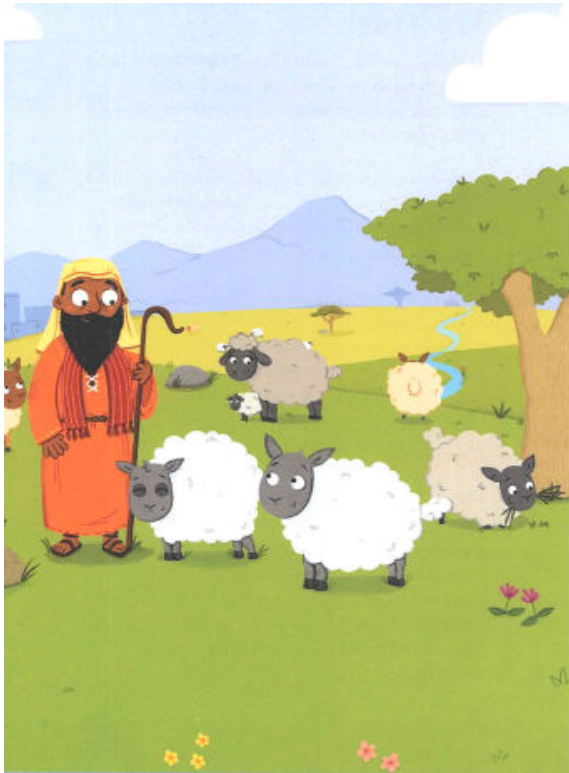
Everyone in the crowd saw Jesus' miracle.

Jesus' miracles teach us about sharing.

Then ask a few questions about the story.

- Why were the people hungry?
- Who shared lunch with Jesus?
- What happened to every person in the crowd?





Jesus, the Good Shepherd



Story Time

Read the story Jesus, the Good Shepherd with your child.

Jesus told his followers about a good shepherd and his sheep.

A good shepherd calls his sheep by name.

A good shepherd leads his sheep to safety.

A good shepherd knows his sheep, and they know him.

He loves his sheep, and his sheep love him.

Jesus says to us, "I know you by name."

Jesus says to us, "I will lead you so you are safe."

Jesus says to us, "I know my sheep, and my sheep know me."

"I am the Good Shepherd," Jesus tells us. "You are my sheep."

Jesus is our Good Shepherd.

Then ask a few questions about the story.

- What does Jesus call himself? What does Jesus call us?
- Where do shepherds lead their sheep?
- Where do you feel safe?





PK3 and PK4 Sunday School Lesson

3/31/23	Easter Sunday- No School
4/7 & 4/14	Go and Tell
4/21 & 4/28	Review of favorite stories from the year
5/5 & 5/12	Continue review of favorite stories from the year
5/19	Last Day Pajama Party



We will have snacks (including gluten free cookies) and fruit for the kids to eat. We will either watch a movie or, if the weather permits, go outside and play a few games. Kids are welcome to have some fun and wear their pajamas to Sunday school!





BIBLE BROUGHT TO LIFE

**The following pages outline Sunday school (Kindergraten-5th Grade)
and Reveal Kids (4Year Olds to 3rd Grade) Lessons
for January thru May 2024**

1/7/24	The Boy Teacher
1/14/24	The House on the Rock
1/21/24	The Sower
1/28/24	The Mustard Seed
2/04/24	Jesus and the Children
2/11/24	The Widow's Mite
2/18/24	Man through a Roof
2/25/24	The Good Samaritan
3/03/24	Palm Sunday
3/10/24	Maundy Thursday*
3/17/24	Good Friday
3/24/24	Easter Sunday
3/31/24	NO School
4/07/24	Thomas Believes
4/14/24	Jesus' Breakfast with his Disciples*
4/21/24	The Great Commission
4/28/24	Jesus' Ascension
5/15/24	The Prodigal Son
5/12/24	Ten Outcasts
5/19/24	Last Day Pajama Party



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We will begin to once again use the Holy Moly curriculum which will start the new year in the New Testament. The format the teachers are following will be to spend the first 15 minutes of class introducing the story and describing the characters. The next 30 minutes are spent watching a video on the story and discussing the video and some questions that connect the video to the lives of the children. The last 15 minutes of class is spent in the Bible and with a craft, music, or lesson trivia questions if time permits.

On the following pages are a glance at the stories that will be taught each week along with the main Bible verse for that week.

THE BOY TEACHER

Mary and Joseph lost Jesus, but Jesus was right where he belonged.

KEY VERSE

[Jesus] said to [Mary and Joseph], "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

Luke 2:49

STORY AT A GLANCE

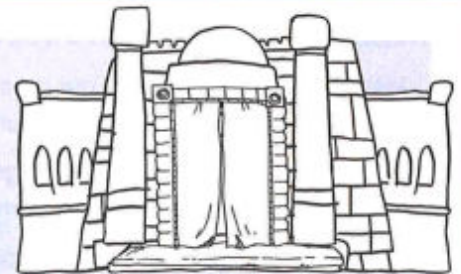
Jesus

- Twelve years old. This is the only story we have about Jesus as a child.
- Surprises the teachers in the temple with how well he can talk about God.
- Foreshadows his crucifixion and resurrection when he disappears during Passover but is found safe with God "after three days" (Lk 2:46).
- Names himself God's Son.



Temple in Jerusalem

- Huge "Second Temple" that Herod the Great expanded in 20 B.C.E.
- Treated like God's home on earth. Jesus calls it "my Father's house" (Lk 2:49).
- Religious, cultural, and political center of Judaism—different from most modern worship spaces.
- Adult men were expected to come to the temple for Passover, Pentecost, and Feast of Tabernacles. Passover was the most important.
- Destroyed in 70 C.E. during the Jews' Great Revolt against Rome.



Mary and Joseph

- Very worried when they cannot find Jesus.
- Don't seem to understand who Jesus really is. Mary tells Jesus that Joseph is "your father" (Lk 2:48).
- Joseph is never mentioned again after this story. He may have died before Jesus began his adult ministry.



Friends and Relatives

- Going to Jerusalem as a group because solo travel is dangerous.
- Need to walk about 65 miles (105 km) from Jerusalem to Nazareth.



Religious Teachers

- Teach about God using a question/answer format.
- Teach people to memorize long passages of sacred writings since most people were illiterate.



THE HOUSE ON THE ROCK

**It's not always easy to make
God the rock of our lives.**

KEY VERSE

"The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock."

Matthew 7:25

STORY AT A GLANCE

Jesus

- Concludes the Sermon on the Mount with this parable.
- Tells listeners they should build their lives on God.
- Offers some teachings that can be difficult to follow: turn the other cheek, love your enemies, serve God and not wealth, and don't judge others (Mt 5:39, 6:24; 7:1).



The Rock

- A symbol for God in Hebrew scripture (2 Sam 22:47).
- The Apostle Paul uses building imagery for Jesus (1 Cor. 3:11).
- Much of the rock in Judea is limestone.



The Wise Man

- Represents people who hear and try to follow Jesus' words (Mt 7:24).
- Hard for him to build house on the rock, but it keeps him safe through the storm.



The Foolish Man

- Represents people who hear but don't act on Jesus' teachings (Mt 7:26).
- Picks short-term comfort instead of long-term reward.



THE SOWER

God's good things grow best when we take good care of them.

KEY VERSE

"But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields."

Matthew 13:23

STORY AT A GLANCE

Jesus

- Preached to huge crowds near the Sea of Galilee. Sometimes, there would be so many people that he had to speak to them from a boat while they listened on the shore!
- Telling a "parable," a short story that uses an analogy or comparison to teach a lesson. The word comes from the Greek *parabole*.
- Explains the symbolism of the seeds and soil to his disciples, but doesn't tell everything to the crowd.



Seeds

- Represent the ministry that Jesus is planting in the world.
- Probably either wheat or barley.
- Yield a crop of "a hundredfold" in the good soil (Mt 13:23). This would be a huge but not impossible harvest.



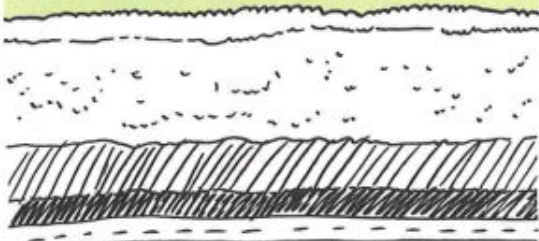
Sower

- Most of Jesus' listeners were farmers.
- Plants by scattering seeds in a field. Someone would follow with a plow to cover the seeds.
- Jesus acts as a sower by scattering his teachings in the world.



Soil

- Represents the human heart as it receives Jesus' teachings.
- Needs to be deep and rich for Jesus' word to put down roots that can survive "trouble or persecution" (Mt 13:21).



Thorns

- Represent the desire for wealth and the cares of the world, which strangle the growth of Jesus' word in the soul (Mt 13:22).
- Large, aggressive, thorny plants are common in the Holy Land.



Birds

- Represent "the evil one [who] comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart," when people hear Jesus' word but don't understand it (Mt 13:19).



THE MUSTARD SEED

The kingdom of heaven is right in front of us—bigger, better, wilder, and more surprising than we could ever imagine.

KEY VERSE

"[W]hen [the mustard seed] is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

Mark 4:32

STORY AT A GLANCE

Jesus

- Finishing a series of well-known parables with this story.
- Often used stories about plants, animals, and farming to explain ideas to his rural audience.



Mustard Plant

- Not a real tree, but a shrub that can grow up to 9 feet (3 meters) tall.
- Grows wild and wouldn't normally be planted in a plot or garden.
- Like buckthorn or blackberry bushes, spreads easily and is hard to remove from an area.
- Surprising plant to describe the kingdom! A more obvious choice would be the huge cedar of Lebanon from Ezekiel 17.



Mustard Seed

- Proverbially small seed that grows into a large plant.
- Only one of the many seeds Jesus used to describe the kingdom of God (Mt 13:24, Mk 4:26).



Birds

- Could nest only in a very, very big mustard plant.
- The region where Jesus preached has one of the largest and most diverse bird populations in the world.



Crowd

- Many are there because Jesus is becoming famous for his healings.
- Probably would've expected the "kingdom" to mean Israel's liberation from the Roman Empire—but they didn't get the king they expected!



JESUS AND THE CHILDREN

No one is closer to God than a child.

KEY VERSE

"Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs."

Mark 10:14

STORY AT A GLANCE

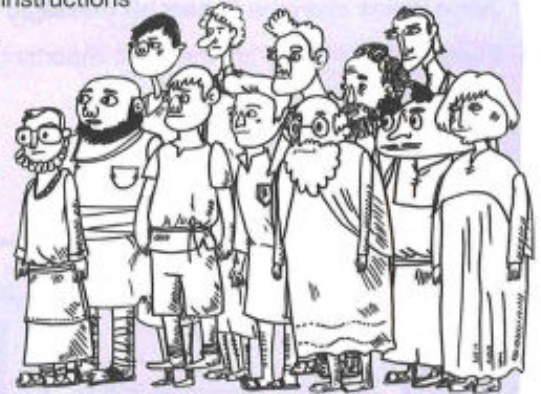
Jesus

- Preaching in the "region of Judea and beyond the Jordan" (Mk 10:1).
- Upset when his disciples are unwelcoming to the people who bring him their children.
- Says people have to be childlike if they want to understand the kingdom (Mk 10:15).
- Doesn't exclude anyone from hearing the word.



Disciples

- May want to protect Jesus from the constant pressure and distraction of the crowds.
- Jesus recently told them to welcome "a little child," but they have already forgotten his instructions (Mk 9:36-37).



Children

- The lowest members of society. Greco-Roman slaves were called "children" for their entire lives.
- Jesus points to them to show that God's kingdom doesn't honor people who hold earthly power.



Blessing

- People bring Jesus their children, so he can touch them.
- Touch was thought to have the power of blessing or healing—as in the story of the bleeding woman (Mk 5:24-34).



THE WIDOW'S MITE

**The rich men gave to get, but
the widow gave to give.**

KEY VERSE

"Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury."

Mark 12:43

STORY AT A GLANCE

Jesus

- Probably dangerous for him to be back in the temple after chasing away the money changers (Mk 11:15-18).
- Condemns people who give showy offerings, saying those who are now praised for their good deeds won't be rewarded by God (Mt. 6:2).



The Poor Widow

- It is redundant for Mark to call her *poor*, since most widows had no legal or economic status.
- Jesus criticizes the temple leaders for mistreating vulnerable widows right before pointing her out to the disciples (Mk 12:40).
- Would've gone unnoticed among all the other Passover pilgrims.



Temple Treasury

- 13 boxes for offerings arranged around the Court of the Women in the temple.
- The Court of the Women had that name because women were not allowed to go beyond it into the Court of the Israelites.
- Good Jews were expected to come to the temple to make offerings for the Passover festival.



The Rich Men

- Aren't really giving anything up when they put a lot of money into the treasury.
- Some of them only pray and give to the temple "for the sake of appearance" (Mk 12:40).



The Widow's Coins

- The widow puts in 2 *lepta*, the smallest kind of coin. Their name means "small" or "thin" in Greek.
- Lepta could be made of copper or bronze.
- A single lepton would be worth about 10 minutes of a normal laborer's wages.



MAN THROUGH A ROOF

The friends' persistent helping revealed Jesus' way of healing.

KEY VERSE

"But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the one who was paralyzed—"I say to you, stand up and take your bed and go to your home."

Luke 5:24

STORY AT A GLANCE

Jesus

- Just began his ministry, but is already famous enough to draw a very full house.
- "Son of Man" is a name that Jesus often uses to describe himself in several of the gospels. He uses it 25 times in the Gospel of Luke alone!
- Proves that he can heal the body *and* the soul.



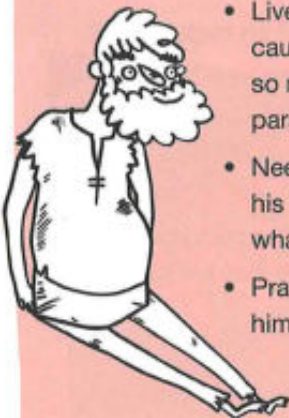
Pharisees

- Members of a certain Jewish sect who want to correctly follow the law of Moses in all parts of life.
- Think that sins can only be forgiven by God through the right temple procedures.
- Think that Jesus is guilty of blasphemy—a crime that can merit death by stoning! (Lev 24:16)—since he claims God's power for himself.
- Along with scribes, question Jesus' authority and teachings that appear to contradict Jewish law.



The Paralyzed Man

- Lives in a culture that thinks sin causes illness and disability, so may blame himself for his paralysis.
- Needs to trust that Jesus and his friends will help him get what he needs.
- Praises God after Jesus heals him.



The Friends

- People who have heard about Jesus' reputation as a healer and teacher.
- We don't know how they know the paralyzed man, but they creatively fight the crowds to get him to Jesus.



THE GOOD SAMARITAN

**What if the person you liked
the least helped you the most?**

KEY VERSE

"Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

Luke 10:36-37

STORY AT A GLANCE

The Samaritan

- In Jesus' day, Jews did not trust Samaritans. They thought the Samaritan faith was a heretical branch of Judaism.
- Follows a religion very similar to Judaism but with its own version of the Torah and own Commandments.
- Overcomes religious and ethnic prejudice to help someone in need.
- Pays two denarii to the innkeeper. Each denarius is worth a day's wages.
- There are about 700 Samaritans left in the world today.



The Neighbor

- Jesus didn't say anything about the man's religion, but Jesus' audience would've assumed he was talking about a fellow Jew.
- Travelling a dangerous road known as the Bloody Pass from Jerusalem to Jericho.
- We expect the priest or the Levite, leaders in his own religion, to stop and help him. Their religious laws forbid touching dead bodies or blood, so they don't.



The Passers-By

- May be scared of being attacked along the Bloody Pass if they stop to help the hurt man.
- Might also be avoiding the ritual uncleanness that could come from touching the injured neighbor.



Jesus

- Used this parable to answer an educated man's question about how to be righteous.
- Told this story even though a Samaritan village just turned him away for being Jewish (Lk 9:51-55).
- Refuses to limit his message of love to just his own people.



PALM SUNDAY

**Jesus needs us—ready or not.
Hosanna!**

KEY VERSE

"Go into the village . . . and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here . . . The Lord needs it."

Luke 19:30-31

STORY AT A GLANCE

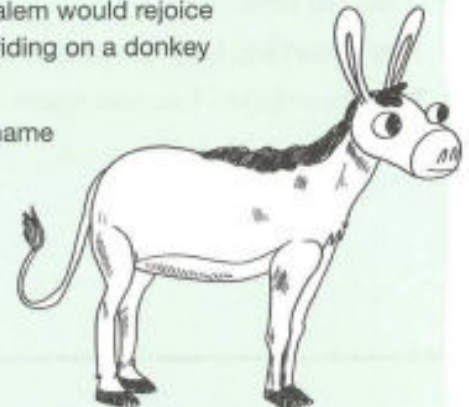
Jesus

- Enters holy city of Jerusalem in triumph for the Passover festival.
- Roman and Jewish leaders can't ignore him after this show of popularity.
- Says that "the stones would shout out" if the Pharisees silenced the crowds (Lk 19:40).



The Donkey

- Symbol that Jesus comes in peace. A conqueror would ride a horse.
- Fulfills prophecy that Jerusalem would rejoice when a humble king came riding on a donkey (Zech 9:9).
- Also called a *colt*, another name for a young, male donkey.
- Never been ridden before.
- Jesus knows exactly where the disciples can find it for him.



The Crowds

- Greet Jesus like a king, praising him for his miracles.
- Quote the words of a Psalm to welcome Jesus (Ps 118:26).
- Echo words the angels said to the shepherds on the night Jesus was born (Lk 2:14; 19:38).



Coats and Palm Branches

- Crowds cut leafy branches from their fields and put them in front of Jesus' donkey.
- Cloaks on a path were a sign of honor for a new king (2 Kings 9:13).



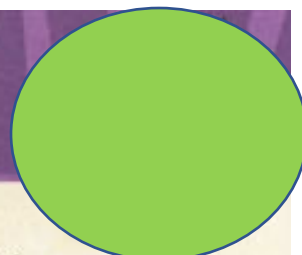
MAUNDY THURSDAY

Jesus wants us by his side—
even when we don't understand
why.

KEY VERSE

[Jesus] said to them, "I am deeply grieved,
even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me."

Matthew 26:38



STORY AT A GLANCE

Jesus

- Says that his blood will soon spill, but will create a covenant for forgiving sins.
- Says the words of institution for communion that Christians still repeat 2,000 years later.
- Dreads his coming death. Promises to obey God, but begs God to find another way.
- Doesn't fight back when the crowd comes to arrest him.



Peter, John, and James

- 3 favored disciples that Jesus often chose for key moments (Mt 17:1; 26:37; Mk 1:29; 5:37; 13:3).
- Ask to stay with Jesus as he prays, but still let him down by falling asleep.
- Don't know this is their last night with Jesus before his execution.
- Rabbinic law stated that the Passover was over when someone fell into a deep sleep.



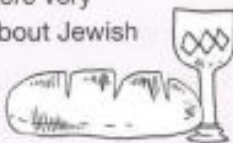
The Disciples

- Meeting in secret to eat together on the first night of Passover (Mk 14:12-15).
- All run away when Jesus is arrested. Jesus knew from prophecy that this would happen (Zech 13:7, Mk 14:27).



Passover

- An annual celebration when Jews would sacrifice a lamb at the temple, then eat it for dinner to remember their escape from slavery in Egypt.
- A time of year when the Roman authorities were very concerned about Jewish revolts.



Chief Priests

- Want to arrest Jesus, but fear a riot if they do it in public during Passover (Mk 14:1-2).
- Pay Judas to betray Jesus.
- Capture Jesus with a large, armed crowd as if he were a dangerous bandit.



Garden of Gethsemane

- The place where Jesus goes to pray and await his arrest.
- An olive orchard. Name means "garden of oil."
- Prophesied in Zechariah 14:4.



GOOD FRIDAY

Jesus died to show God's love
for all the world.

KEY VERSE

Over his head they put the charge against him,
which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

Matthew 27:37

STORY AT A GLANCE

Jesus

- Repeatedly predicted own death and resurrection, but followers never understood (Mk 8:31-32; 9:30; 10:32-34).
- Betrayed by Judas and abandoned by many of his followers.
- Doesn't defend himself at trial.
- Dies for others' sins (Isa 53).
- Quotes Psalm 22:1 in his suffering.



Pilate and His Soldiers

- Condemn Jesus to the painful, public death of a common criminal.
- Also crucify two "bandits" — probably rebels against the Empire.
- Worship Roman Emperor as a god.
- Mock Jesus with symbols of royalty (purple cloak, crown of thorns, reed scepter). Call Jesus "King of the Jews," indicating that he is being executed as a political threat.
- Soldiers cast lots for Jesus' clothing (Ps 22:18).



The Scribes and Elders

- The Jewish authorities didn't have the power to execute criminals.
- Mock Jesus as he dies, saying that God would save the real Messiah.
- Unfriendly watchers shake their heads at Jesus' weakness (Ps 22:7-8).
- Ask Pilate to seal and guard Jesus' tomb so the disciples can't steal his body and claim Jesus came back to life (Mt 27:62-66).



Simon of Cyrene

- Helps Jesus carry the cross.
- Takes the place of Simon Peter, who should have been there to help Jesus.
- From a town in Northern Africa (modern Libya).



Jesus' Friends

- Most of the disciples abandon Jesus because they are afraid for their own lives.
- Many women watch Jesus' death.



Joseph of Arimathea

- A wealthy man who asks Pilate for Jesus' body.
- Buries Jesus in his own tomb, fulfilling prophecy that God's "suffering servant" would be buried in a rich man's tomb (Isa 53:9).
- Has to prepare Jesus' body very quickly, without proper burial rites, before the Sabbath begins.



EASTER DAY

God sends messengers to share the Easter news: Jesus is alive!

KEY VERSE

"Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen."

Luke 24:5

STORY AT A GLANCE

Mary Magdalene and the Other Women

- Watched Jesus die on the cross.
- Return to the tomb to give Jesus the proper burial rites now that the Sabbath is over—but the body is gone.
- See an angel who tells them that Jesus is risen!
- Mary Magdalene meets Jesus, who tells her to spread the good news.



The Disciples

- In hiding after Jesus, their leader and teacher, was executed.
- Don't immediately believe Mary's report.
- Go to look for Jesus—but they'll need to wait for Jesus to come to them!



Jesus

- Rises from the dead as he promised (Mt 12:40).
- Appears to people after his resurrection—but they don't always recognize him at first sight!
- Appears to Mary Magdalene as a gardener, recalling his many parables about planting and growing.



Peter

- Runs off to see the tomb for himself when he hears Mary's report (Lk 24:12).



The Angel

- The gospels don't agree about how many angels there were or what they looked like (Mt 28:2-3; Mk 16:5; Lk 24:4; Jn 20:12)!
- Starts spreading the news that Jesus is alive.
- Scares the women when he unexpectedly appears.



THOMAS BELIEVES

Questioning leads to believing.

KEY VERSE

Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

John 20:29

STORY AT A GLANCE

Jesus

- Shows himself to the disciples 3 times in the Gospel of John after rising from the dead. This story recounts the first 2 times.
- Has a physical, resurrected body, but miraculously appears in a locked room.
- Invites disciples to inspect his wounds and touch him when he appears to them in Lk 24:36-43.
- Later gives Thomas this same opportunity (Jn 21:24-29).



Thomas

- Not in the room when Jesus first appears to rest of disciples.
- Says he can't believe friends' stories that Jesus has come back until he sees and touches Jesus' wounds for himself.
- Questions his friends' testimony for a week.
- Ultimately recognizes Jesus as "My Lord and my God!" (Jn 20:28).
- 1 of the 7 disciples who see Jesus' third, and final, post-resurrection appearance in the Gospel of John (Jn 21:1-14).



Disciples

- Hide from authorities in Jerusalem after Jesus' execution.
- Heard about Jesus' resurrection from Mary Magdalene earlier that day, but haven't seen him for themselves yet.
- Receive the Holy Spirit from Jesus when Thomas isn't with them.



Questions

- Jesus used people's questions to teach them in unexpected ways, such as answering "Who is my neighbor?" with the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:29-37).
- Potential believers have many questions, which disciples have to answer without Jesus there to "prove" their message.



BREAKFAST WITH JESUS

Stop, look, and listen! God shows up in everyday places.

KEY VERSE

Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord.

John 21:12

STORY AT A GLANCE

Jesus

- Makes his third and final post-resurrection appearance in the Gospel of John to just 7 disciples.
- Approaches disciples at dawn; miraculously helps them catch fish before they even recognize who he is.
- First identified by the unnamed Beloved Disciple (Jn 21:7).
- Prepares and eats breakfast on the beach with his friends.
- Eating proves Jesus has a real body and isn't a ghost, spirit, or vision.



Disciples

- Have seen Jesus briefly since his resurrection.
- Returned home to Galilee, where they are fishing.
- Frustrated after fishing all night without any luck, but with Jesus' help, catch so many fish that their net might break.



Peter

- 1 of the 2 disciples who examined Jesus' empty tomb (Jn 20:3-9).
- Returned to fishing, a familiar task (Mt 4:18).
- So excited when he sees Jesus that he swims back to shore instead of waiting for the boat to land.



Fish

- The Sea of Galilee (also called the Sea of Tiberias and Lake Gennesaret), contains 3 kinds of fish: sardines, carp, and tilapia (locally called "St. Peter's Fish").
- Symbol of early Christianity.
- Jesus performed miracles with fish, such as multiplying them for crowds to eat and helping disciples fill their nets.



THE GREAT COMMISSION

Jesus trusts his friends to spread his world-changing story.

KEY VERSE

[Jesus] said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation."

Mark 16:15

STORY AT A GLANCE

Jesus

- Risen from the dead, gives disciples his final instructions before ascending to heaven.
- Grants disciples authority to baptize people around the world while preaching the *gospel*, which means "good news" in Greek. The Gospels in the Bible began as oral traditions that wouldn't be written down for decades.
- Departs for heaven after giving the disciples their mission, but promises he will be with them always (Mt 28:20).



Disciples

- See the risen Jesus for the first time in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark. Luke and John tell more stories about the time between Jesus' resurrection and ascension.
- Receive instructions from Mary Magdalene and another Mary to go from Jerusalem to Galilee to meet Jesus (Mt 28:9-10).
- Empowered to carry on Jesus' work of making disciples after he leaves.



Signs

- Jesus tells disciples that "signs" like the power to heal and immunity to poison will accompany them and all who believe (Mk 16:17-18).
- The book of Acts tells about many miracles the apostles performed as they spread the gospel.

Mountain

- In Matthew, Jesus says his last words to the disciples on a mountain in Galilee, but in Luke-Acts, he ascends from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:12).
- Many important scenes in the Bible, such as receiving the 10 Commandments, happen on mountaintops. People in the ancient world thought high places were particularly close to God.



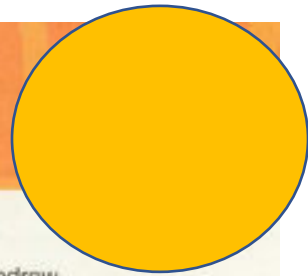
JESUS ASCENDS

It's not the end when Jesus ascends.

KEY VERSE

While [Jesus] was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven,

Luke 24:51



STORY AT A GLANCE

Jesus

- Appears to the disciples for the last time in the Gospel of Luke. This ascension story is repeated at the beginning of Acts.
- Eats fish in front of the disciples, showing he isn't a ghost or vision, but has a physical body.
- Leads disciples to the town of Bethany, outside Jerusalem, where he ascends to heaven.
- Opens disciples' minds to understand that he has fulfilled the law, prophets, and psalms (Lk 24:44-47).



Disciples

- In Jerusalem after Jesus' resurrection.
- Heard about the resurrection from Mary Magdalene, the other women at the tomb, and Cleopas.
- Afraid when the risen Jesus first appears because they think he is a ghost (Lk 24:37).
- Say good-bye to Jesus in Bethany, then go joyfully to Jerusalem to wait for the promised Holy Spirit (Lk 24:49-52).



Bethany

- Village outside of Jerusalem on the east side of the Mount of Olives.
- Home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus (Jn 11:1).
- Location of Jesus' ascension in Luke.



THE PRODIGAL SON

God loves us, even when we don't deserve it.

KEY VERSE

"For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!" And they began to celebrate.

Luke 15:24

STORY AT A GLANCE

Father

- His sons will inherit his wealth and property when he dies.
- Runs to greet his son's return, even though running was considered undignified for a patriarch.
- In ancient Jewish culture, a boy who dishonored his family would be shamed in a public ceremony, but this father gives his son a celebration when he comes home!
- Shows his lost son radical forgiveness.



Prodigal Son

- Acts like he wants his father dead when he asks for his inheritance early.
- Unwisely spends all his money without planning for the future.
- Shames himself and his family with his actions.
- Offers to work as a common laborer when he comes home, but his father gives him gifts (a robe, a ring, and sandals) that show he has been welcomed home.



Brother

- Has special privileges and will receive a larger share of the inheritance because he is the oldest son.
- Dutifully stays at home to help run his father's farm.
- Resents his brother for running away, and resents his father for not punishing him. Ancient Jewish law says that men of the town could kill rebellious children (Deut 21:18-21).
- Rivalry between brothers is a common theme in the Bible.



Pigs

- Unclean animals according to Jewish law. Only someone at rock bottom would choose to be a swineherd.
- Owned by Gentiles only. It was taboo for a Jew to work for a Gentile like the prodigal son does.



Jesus

- Told this parable to illustrate God's forgiveness toward those who rebel and return.
- Speaking to a group of outcasts and sinners. The Pharisees and scribes did not approve of this (Lk 15:1-2).



TEN OUTCASTS

Gratitude is a gift we can give back to God.

KEY VERSE

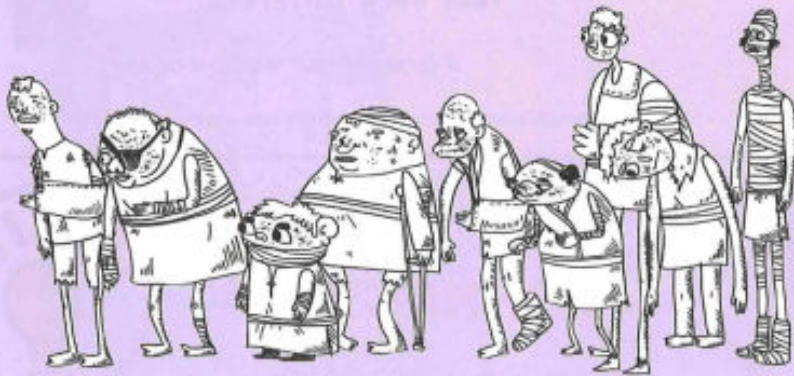
Then [Jesus] said to him, "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well."

Luke 17:19

STORY AT A GLANCE

Lepers

- A group of people with undefined skin ailments. Modern leprosy (or Hansen's disease) isn't defined in biblical times.
- Were exiled, or cast out of their community, because they were considered "unclean."
- Recognize Jesus and ask him for help. He heals them, but only one remembers to go back and thank him.



The Thankful Leper

- A Samaritan man, meaning that he is even more of an outcast than the rest.
- Goes back to thank Jesus while the others go straight to the priests to be named clean.
- Jesus says that the other nine are made clean, but this thankful man is made well.
- Shows more faith than the others, despite his different religious background.



Jesus

- On his way to Jerusalem with his followers.
- Seems to send the outcasts away without healing them. They are healed as they leave.
- Says that the Samaritan praises God when he thanks Jesus.
- Blesses the Samaritan for recognizing what God had done for him.



Priests

- Has the power to say if a person with a skin condition is "unclean" (Lev 13).

