



STAND *in Mercy*

2014-15 CHAPEL TALKS FOR LUTHERAN SCHOOLS
Based on Luther's Small Catechism





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by Rev. Bob Riggert

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On the cover: Children pray during worship at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mobile, Ala.
Photo: LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford

AN INTRODUCTION TO “**STAND** in Mercy” Chapel Talks

WEEKLY CHAPEL WORSHIP is a highlight in the life of Lutheran school students and staff. Typically the chapel service brings the school family together to hear God’s Word, praise Him for His mercy and pray His blessing on church, school, and the lives of children and families.

“STAND in Mercy” invites school worshipers to gather in confession, “Lord, have mercy!” and in the confidence of God’s grace, “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ — by grace you have been saved” (Eph. 2:4-5 ESV). “STAND in Mercy” has a strong baptismal connection as God has showered His mercy on us in Baptism. The baptismal font might be prominent each chapel service and the service invocation shared from the baptismal font.

The messages are based on the weekly appointed readings for LCMS congregations: Series A through the conclusion of the 2014 Pentecost season and Series B beginning with the Advent season and continuing into the weeks of 2015. Old Testament readings invite us to stand with the inspired prophets. Gospel and Epistle readings invite us to stand with the inspired apostles. All texts invite us to stand to see Jesus whose sacrifice makes it possible for us to “STAND in Mercy.” Following

the weekly readings may make the chapel talks applicable to Sunday morning children’s lessons or other worship contexts.

The seasons of the church year invite children to be part of the worship rhythm of the local congregation. A worship routine is important for children. The chapel talks can be incorporated into the seasonal emphases of *All God’s People Sing* (AGPS) or the liturgical format of the Divine Service in *Lutheran Service Book* (LSB). A weekly hymn suggestion from one of these worship guides is included. Additional songs can be selected by the worship leader.

The weekly “chapel talk” is designed to be an outline for the chapel presenter. The presenter is encouraged to add additional background to the biblical text and additional applications appropriate for the age and setting of the school worshipers. Depending on the setting and available technology, the presenter is invited to be creative in pictures, PowerPoint, etc., which may enhance the message for the children as worshipers.

May God bless the worship life of the Lutheran school students in the home, in the classroom and together in the school chapel service. Rejoice and “STAND in Mercy.”

– LCMS School Ministry



“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ — by grace you have been saved” (Eph. 2:4-5 ESV).

STAND *in Mercy*

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Scripture:

Joshua 5:13-15; 2 Peter 1:16-21; John 1:19-28

Text:

Joshua 5:13-15

Song:

"Holy, Holy, Holy" (LSB 507); (AGPS 119)

Visual:

Chapel leader addresses children with shoes removed.

OPENING CHAPEL SERVICE

Standing on *Holy* Ground

Introduction:

Did any of you notice that I'm dressed a little differently today? What difference do you notice? (A: "You don't have your shoes on.") Good observation. I've taken my shoes off to help us understand God's encounter with His servant Joshua.

Outline

Joshua and the children of Israel had finally crossed over the Jordan River and were in the Promised Land. God had chosen Joshua to be His leader for His people in conquering the land. This was to going to be a very difficult task. The first task was to conquer the powerful city of Jericho. We can understand Joshua's fear.

The "commander of the Lord's army" (God Himself) comes to Joshua and assures him of His presence and blessing. The Commander has an unusual command for Joshua, "Take off your sandals ... for the place where you are standing is holy." Joshua was on ordinary ground. What made it holy? God's presence made it holy. God had called Joshua. God was with Joshua. God would bless Joshua and His people as they went forward. (Leader may want to share that God also appeared to Moses and asked him to take off his shoes — Ex. 3:5.)

Today our school is kind of like Joshua and the people of Israel. We are about to go forward into another school year. We won't have any human armies to fight. We won't need swords or weapons. However there will be challenges and temptations.

As Joshua led the children of Israel into Canaan, Jesus leads us forward into the school year. We can confidently follow Him because Jesus has already journeyed to earth. He went to the cross of Calvary to die for us. As we gather every day in our classroom and every week in our chapel worship time we gather on God's holy ground. Because God has made us His children in our Baptism and because He greets us with His Word, wherever God joins us through His Means of Grace is holy.

Conclusion

As we enter the school year we don't have to take off our shoes to stand on the holy ground of _____ Lutheran Church and School. Whatever shoes we wear and wherever we wear them, we stand with Jesus and with Him we stand on holy ground.

Prayer

"In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for His sake God forgives us all our sins" (Words of Absolution, Divine Service 1, Page 151). Lord we rejoice that we have received Your mercy. May we stand confidently in Your mercy this school year and forever. Amen.

Standing on Water

Introduction

How many of you believe that I can walk across this pool of water without getting my socks or pants wet? (Obviously the children will doubt the possibility.)

Outline

Today's text tells about Someone who could walk on water. The disciples were caught in a storm in the middle of the sea. They were frightened. It was dark. The wind was blowing and the waves were very high. They thought they were going to drown.

In the middle of the storm Jesus comes to the disciples walking on the water. Why could Jesus walk on water? (He is the Son of God. He is all powerful. He created the seas so certainly He could walk on the seas.) We have an almighty God who can do anything. The disciples worshiped Jesus, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Disciple Peter thinks he can walk on water also. Jesus invites Peter to step out of the boat and walk toward Him. Peter takes a few steps, sees the waves, feels the wind and begins to sink. Peter cries out, "Lord, save me." Jesus reaches out and saves him.

Sometimes we think we can do things that we really can't (like try to walk on water). Sometimes we find ourselves in the middle of a big problem and we feel like we are sinking. We can cry out to Jesus, "Lord, save me."

Jesus not only saved Peter from sinking in the sea but Jesus saves all of us from our sin. When we sink in sin, Jesus reaches out to all who cry to Him and believe in Him and He saves them. We rejoice that Jesus has reached out to each of us.

Conclusion

We can't stand on water but we do "stand" in the waters of our Baptism. We are assured that we are saved from sin and stand in God's grace because of the blessings we have received in Baptism.

Review "What is Baptism?" from *Luther's Small Catechism*.

Prayer

Jesus, like Peter we have cried out, "Lord, save me!" In Your mercy You have saved us by Your death on the cross. We rejoice in the salvation that is ours. Lord in Your name and in Your mercy help us to reach out to others who need Your help. Amen.

Scripture:

Job 38:4-18; Rom. 10:5-17; Matt. 14:22-33

Text:

Matt. 14:22-33

Song:

"Father Welcomes" (LSB 605); (AGPS 95)

Visual:

Small toddler pool with water in the pool.



WEEK 2

Standing in *Mercy*

Scripture:

Is. 56:1, 6-8; Rom. 11:1-2a, 13-15, 28-32; Matt. 15:21-28

Text:

Matt. 15:21-28

Song:

"Today Your Mercy Calls Us"
(LSB 915); (AGPS 249)

Visual:

Sign(s) with the word "Help!"

Introduction

What are some situations where we might call out "help!"? (Explore a variety of situations from a casual, "Could you help me with my homework?" to desperate needs: drowning in a pool, hurt in an accident, etc.)

Outline

In today's text we hear a cry for help. A woman comes to Jesus concerned for her little girl who is battling the power of a demon (may want to explain based on age level of audience). The woman's "help" is shared with Jesus in the word, "Have mercy on me, O Lord."

There are several times in the Bible where we hear those cries. Ten lepers come to Jesus wanting to be cured of their illness and they cry, "Have mercy." Two blind men come to Jesus wanting Jesus to help them see again and they say, "Have mercy." Jesus hears their call for help and He heals them.

Jesus teaches all those who come to Him that He has the power to help them with their needs. He is the all-powerful Son of God. However, Jesus has come to do more than help them with their problems. He comes to help them with the problem of sin. The cry of all of us is, "Help me, have mercy on me because I don't deserve to ask for your help." In His love, Jesus blesses us with His forgiveness.

Where else have you heard the words, "Lord have mercy"? We say and sing them often in our worship service (LSB, Divine Service Three, Page 186). We come to our God in worship thanking Him that He has had mercy on us. (Worshippers may want to sing the Kyrie.)

Conclusion

Think of all the places we are going to stand this school year — at the bus stop, in the lunch line, etc. We are going to hear the word "stand" often in our school chapel services this year. We will thank God that Jesus stands next to us through His Word and that we can stand in His presence because He has had mercy on us.

Prayer

"Lord have mercy!" We give thanks for Your mercy to a desperate woman, to blind men, lepers and all who came crying to You for help. We give thanks that You continue to hear our cry for mercy and continue to answer us. Amen.

Standing *on the Rock*

Introduction

Who can tell me what all the items on the list have in common? (They are places where we shouldn't stand.) Why shouldn't you stand in the middle of a street? Why shouldn't you stand at the edge of a cliff, etc.?

Outline

As many people were standing around Jesus, He asked them, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" We might paraphrase the question: "Where do you stand on who Jesus is?" Even though Jesus had shown who He was through His miracles and teachings many people were still confused.

Some who were standing in a group believed that Jesus was just another Old Testament prophet. Some were standing in a group that said Jesus was another appearance of John the Baptist. Peter's confession stood out from the other opinions: "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." The Holy Spirit had given Peter the true message of Jesus. He was the Messiah God had promised. He was the true and living Son of God.

Jesus calls Peter's word a "rock." The "rock" was truth that Jesus was the Son of God and the promised Messiah. The disciples and the church would stand on Jesus, the "rock." We began today sharing some places not to stand. We want to emphasize today places where we should stand. We want to stand on solid places.
_____ Lutheran School stands on the rock that is Jesus.

Ps. 18 celebrates our God. "My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold" (verse 2). We can stand on Jesus because He never crumbles. We can stand on Jesus because He is a Rock so big that nothing can move Him. When we face uncertain times, when things change around us, it is good to have a solid place to stand.

Conclusion

There are places not to stand. However, there is one place to always stand. May we stand together this school year on the Rock, Jesus.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, when I am tempted to stand on places that aren't true and solid, remind me of the truth of Your Word. Keep my faith solid as a rock, standing on the Rock. Amen.

Scripture:

Is. 51:1-5; Rom. 11:33-12:8; Matt. 16:13-20
(11th Sunday after Pentecost)

Text:

Matt. 16:13-20

Song:

"The Church's One Foundation" (LSB 644); (AGPS 224)

Visual:

Listing of places not to stand: edge of a cliff, middle of the street, in deep water ...

Scripture:

Jer. 15:15-21; Rom. 12:9-21; Matt. 16:22-28

Text:

Jer. 15:15-21

Song:

"I Am Trusting You Lord Jesus" (LSB 729); (AGPS 126)

Visual:

List of school complaints: too much homework; recess isn't long enough; it's too hot, etc.

WEEK 4

God Hears our Complaints

Introduction

We've only been in school a couple of weeks (days) and already I hear some complaints. Many times our complaints show our selfishness and sinfulness. We complain because we don't get what we want.

Outline

Jeremiah was a complaining prophet. Jeremiah looks at God's people and sees them in captivity. They had been unfaithful to God and He had taken them from their land and had them live as prisoners in another land. Jeremiah had the burden of sharing God's message with a people that did not want to listen to what God had to say. Sometimes Jeremiah felt overwhelmed and he complained, "Woe is me, my mother that you bore me, a man of strife and contention to a whole land" (Jer. 15:10 ESV).

God heard Jeremiah's complaint and promised Jeremiah and His people that He would be with them and would bless them. The people in captivity came back to their home land and through them God kept His promise to send a Savior into the world. He would restore them (and all of us) in our relationship with God.

Sometimes we look at the problems in our family and our school and we might feel like Jeremiah. We wonder whether God has forgotten us. We complain! God hears our complaints! We confess that many times our complaints are selfish. God also forgives our complaints.

Jeremiah is more than a prophet of complaints. He is a prophet of the covenant. Jeremiah was one of the many prophets who reminded people that God had made a promise to save them and He did. All God's promises to us are sure because He has kept His promise to forgive our sins through the blood of Jesus.

Conclusion

(Tear up the list of complaints used in the introduction.) _____

Lutheran School is not a place of complaints. It is a place of praise. We praise God for all He has done for us in Jesus.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, You hear our complaints. You forgive our complaints. Give us the faith of Jeremiah. Give us the hope of Jeremiah that sees and rejoices in Your plan for us. Amen.

Standing *Humbly* Before God

Introduction

Have you ever been part of a conversation like the one we just heard? I'm guessing that all of us have. The conversation might take place with a brother/sister, classmate, teammate or friend. There's something selfish and sinful in us that says, "I'm the greatest!"

Outline

Even Jesus' disciples had one of those conversations. Today's Bible lesson tells us about the disciples coming to Jesus with a question, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" What they most likely were asking is, "Which one of us is the greatest?"

One of the sins that we all struggle with is the sin of our pride. We'd like to think that we are the best. While it's God-pleasing to celebrate the gifts and abilities that God has given us, we often forget that they are God's gifts and we think our accomplishments are the result of our abilities.

Jesus brings in a little child and tells the disciples that they are to "become like children." Little children usually don't have much power or influence. Jesus wanted the disciples to be as humble as children.

While the disciples and others wanted Jesus to be some great earthly leader, Jesus showed that His was not a kingdom of power. He taught little children and served the poor, sick and hungry. Jesus did not come to be the greatest teacher or miracle worker. Jesus came to be the Savior of the world. Jesus humbly went to the cross to suffer and die for our sins. We have a great God. He is great in His mercy toward us.

Conclusion

Do we want to have a great school? (Yes!) Do we want to have great school teams and a great choir, band, etc.? (Yes!) We never want to be the greatest so that we can brag. We want to tell others about our great God and His great love. God is the greatest!

Prayer

"But when I think that God, His Son not sparing Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in; That on the cross my burden gladly bearing He bled and died to take away my sin; Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee! How great Thou art! How great Thou art!" Amen (LSB 801, verse 3).

Scripture:

Ezek. 33:7-9; Rom. 13:1-10; Matt. 18:1-6 (13th Sunday after Pentecost)

Text:

Matt. 18:1-10

Song:

"Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service" (LSB 848); (AGPS 172)

Visual:

Two students (picked and prepped before the service) in a dialogue: "I'm smarter than you." "I'm a better football player/speller/dancer than you."

Scripture:

Gen. 50:15-21; Rom. 14:1-12; Matt. 18:21-35 (14th Sunday after Pentecost)

Text:

Matt. 18:21-35

Song:

"Oh, For a Thousand Tongues to Sing" (LSB 528); (AGPS 187)

Visual:

Picture (or puppet) of Muppets character "The Count"

WEEK 6

Standing in God's *Forgiveness*

Introduction

Who can identify this character? (The Count) What does the Count do (counts everything)? It's fun to learn how to count and to practice the counting skills in different ways and places. Today Jesus teaches us that He doesn't count our sins and we shouldn't count the sins of those who sin against us.

Outline

Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, wanted to count. Peter wanted to count how many times he had to forgive someone else: "How often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?"

Like Peter, we too count the number of times that someone has said some bad things about us, taken something that is ours, hit us, etc. We count those things because often in our mind we want to get even and we want God to get even.

Jesus tells a story about a man who had a huge bill and wasn't able to pay it. He begged that his master would forgive his bill and the master did. However, then the man went and collected on a very small bill that someone else owed him.

Jesus wanted to teach Peter (and us) that He has forgiven us more times than we could ever count. Because He suffered and died for us and paid the price for all our sins, we can come to Him again and again and again and He forgives us every time.

Since Jesus completely and repeatedly forgives us, we show our thanks for His forgiveness by forgiving others again and again and again. We can count most anything but we don't count times that we forgive.

Conclusion

Read and review the Fifth Petition of the Lord's Prayer.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank You for paying the price for my sins on the cross. Thank You for forgiving me many, many times. Help me to show and share Your forgiveness by forgiving those who sin against me. Amen.

God's Thoughts

Introduction

Perhaps your teacher has put a problem or situation in front of you and asked you to “put your thinking cap on.” Most likely you don’t get out a real hat or cap and start thinking. She means that you are to think only about the problem and to concentrate really hard.

Outline

Sometimes we may wonder what God is thinking. God is a Spirit God who doesn’t have a mind like ours. God’s “brain” is not confined like ours to a small portion of our being. However, God uses words and pictures in His Word that help us understand Who He is and what He does. Today’s Bible reading shares that God has thoughts: “My thoughts are not your thoughts ... so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

We get to know God’s thinking through His Word. Through the prophet Isaiah, God reminds us that God’s thoughts are perfect. Sometimes in our sinful mind we think about things that are hurtful to God and others. God cannot think any bad thoughts because He is holy.

Sometimes our thoughts wander. We don’t pay attention to our parents and teachers and especially to God’s Word. God’s thoughts never wander. God does not think about Himself. God thinks about us.

We know what God thought about our sins. He not only thinks about our sins but He did something about them. He sent Jesus to die for our sins. Because our sins are forgiven God thinks about the time when we will live with Him in His kingdom.

We are blessed to be in a Lutheran school where we can not only think about God but celebrate and share that He thinks about us.

Conclusion

Has your teacher ever asked you, “What are you thinking?” We can think about God’s love for us and all the blessings He gives us. We can think about the time we will be in heaven with Him.

Prayer

“Lord Jesus, think on me And purge away my sin; From worldly passions set me free And make me pure within. Lord Jesus, think on me Nor let me go astray; Through darkness and perplexity Point out Your chosen way” (LSB 610, verse 1, 4).

Scripture:

Is. 55:6-9; Phil. 1:12-14 and 19-30; Matt. 20:1-16 (15th Sunday after Pentecost)

Text:

Is. 55:6-9

Song:

“What God Ordains is Always Good” (LSB 760); (AGPS 263)

Visual:

A “thinking” cap



WEEK 8

Standing with *Authority*

Scripture:

Ezek. 18:1-4, 25-32; Phil. 2:1-18; Matt. 21:23-32
(16th Sunday after Pentecost)

Text:

Matt. 21:23-32

Song:

"Christ Be My Leader" LSB
861; AGPS 81

Visual:

Symbols of authority:
policeman's badge, presidential seal, sign that says "principals' office," military uniform, etc.

Introduction

What does it mean to have "authority"? Who are some people in authority? (president, policeman, teacher, etc.) Here are some pictures (uniforms, badges, etc.), which remind us that God has placed them in authority over us.

Outline

Jesus didn't wear any badge or have any signs or certificates that said He was an authority. Jesus had been teaching in the temple and sharing the things of God when some people challenged Him: "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" Those who challenged Jesus thought that their authority came from their positions in the temple or from their heritage.

As the Creator of everything, Jesus had power over everything and everyone. Jesus did not come to show His power or to hold important earthly positions. He came as the Son of God and Savior to make things right between us and the ultimate Authority who is God.

Jesus has the most important authority there is. Jesus has the authority to forgive sins. Jesus welcomed sinners and told them, "You are forgiven." He had the authority to forgive sins because He was the one to pay the price for our sins.

Jesus has given the authority to announce the forgiveness of sins to His Church. You have probably heard your pastor say, "As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins." The pastor becomes God's spokesman and lets us know that God has forgiven all our sins.

Conclusion

We are blessed to have people in authority in our church and school. The pastor, principal, and teachers want us to be safe and respectful. Most of all they want us to know that God is the authority on our salvation. Because Jesus has saved us, He has the authority to share His forgiveness with us.

Review the Fourth Commandment.

Prayer:

Jesus, I humbly submit to Your authority. Help me to hear Your voice as I hear, "Your sins are forgiven." Amen.

Valuable Possessions

Introduction

Today I brought some things that are valuable to me. Explain the value: I paid a lot of money for this; this was given to me by my father; I've had this since I was a child, etc. What do you have that's valuable to you (get some comments from children)?

Outline

In today's text Paul shares a few things that are valuable to him. Paul doesn't list things as much as some of his accomplishments. His family heritage, his education, etc., were at one time very valuable to him.

The value of some things changed when Paul was called by Jesus. Paul (who was Saul) had once hated Christians and persecuted the Church. Jesus met Paul on the road to Damascus. Paul repented of his sins and was called to be the apostle to the Gentiles. Paul's life changed dramatically.

Paul now shares, "Whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord." The most valuable thing Paul had was the faith that He had in Jesus.

Paul couldn't buy the treasure of Jesus. Paul didn't work for or earn his salvation. It was God's gift to him. The same valuable possession that Paul had is ours also. When we were baptized God gave us the treasure of His grace. We have the forgiveness of sins and the promise of heaven. We are valuable to Jesus and He is valuable to us.

Conclusion

There are many valuable things at _____ Lutheran School. We have valuable computers and supplies. We have valuable people. The most valuable thing in our hearts, at our school and church, and in our homes is having Jesus as our Savior. He is priceless.

Prayer

"Hence, all earthly treasure! Jesus is my pleasure, Jesus is my choice. Hence, all empty glory! Naught to me thy story Told with tempting voice. Pain or loss, or shame or cross, Shall not from my Savior move me Since he deigns to love me" (LSB 743, verse 4).

Scripture:

Is. 5:1-7; Phil. 3:4-14;
Matt. 21:33-46

Text:

Phil. 3:4-11

Song:

"O Savior, Precious Savior"
(LSB 527); "Someone
Special" (AGPS 217)

Visual:

A collection of valuable possessions. The "value" may depend on the interests of the chapel leader (or children) — jewelry, sports memorabilia, family heirloom, etc.

Scripture:

Is. 25:6-9; Phil. 4:4-13;
Matt. 22:1-14 (18th Sunday after Pentecost)

Text:

Phil. 4:4-13

Song:

"Rejoice, My Heart Be
Glad and Sing" (LSB 737);
"Rejoice in the Lord Always"
(AGPS 203)

Visual:

Cards with words "never,"
"sometimes," "always" and
a variety of questions or
situations where one of
the three responses is
invited. Perhaps three different students could hold up one of the cards.

WEEK 10

Rejoice in the Lord Always

Introduction

I invite you to choose one of these three words in response to these situations: eat broccoli; enjoy an ice cream cone; go to the beach, etc. (Questions would reflect area and interest of children.) Another situation: "Rejoice in the Lord." If you chose to answer "always" you are responding to God's word from Philippians, Chapter 4.

Outline

Let's use the words "never," "sometimes" or "always" to answer some other questions. "I can live perfectly as a child of God?" The answer of course is "never." No matter how good we try to be, no matter how we might try to please Him, we can never obey all the commandments of God. The apostle Paul looked at his own life and confessed that he was the worst of sinners. We can never please God on our own.

"Jesus forgives me?" The answer is "always." Jesus died for all my sins on the cross. In my Baptism He gives me a faith to believe in all His promises. We believe that we are forgiven children of God. Confessing our sins and trusting in His sacrifice we know that Jesus always forgives us.

"I am thankful and praise God for His love for me?" The answer should be "always." The apostle Paul looked back on his life and remembered that He had not always been a child of God. He remembered that God had called him into his family, had blessed him with the gift of faith and the gift of the forgiveness of sins. Paul was so thankful and wrote, "Rejoice in the Lord always."

Do we always rejoice? Sometimes there are sad days. Sometimes we don't feel well. Sometimes we don't get along with others. Sometimes there are problems in our family and even in our school. But God's love is always certain. We are always God's children and we can always rejoice in Him.

Conclusion

Let's review and practice. "God loves me?" "Always!" "God is with me?" "Always!" "Tell others about Jesus?" "Always!" "Rejoice in the Lord?" "Always!"

Prayer

Jesus, forgive my "never" responses and my "sometimes" faithfulness. Help me to trust in You, praise You and rejoice in You "always." Amen.

Standing Alone

Introduction

“You can pick one!” When have you been asked to pick one? You’ve been invited to pick one kind of candy, dessert, gift, game, etc. Your teachers, parents and others have said “pick one.” It’s nice to have choices and sometimes it’s hard to have choices.

Outline

The Bible makes it very clear that there is only one God. The Bible begins, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” There is only One God who has been here through eternity. There is only One God who made everything.

The Bible also shares how people were unfaithful to this God and how they made their own gods. As God’s people ventured on their earthly journeys, they wandered away from Him. They saw other gods (idols) and began to worship other things. Even today there are people that suggest that we have choices when it comes to gods.

God’s first warning to the children of Israel as He brought them together at Mount Sinai was, “You shall have no other gods before me.” Unfortunately they didn’t listen and they made a golden calf. The prophet Isaiah reminds God’s people (and us) in today’s text, “I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God.” The God of Israel is the only God that gave His people a promise. The God of Israel is the only God who sent His Son to be the Savior of the world. There is no other God who loves and saves His people like our God.

Are we tempted to have other gods? What might be some of the gods that we might choose? When we are tempted to pick something or someone before God, we confess our sin of idolatry and we turn to the only God who forgives us and saves us.

Conclusion

While it may be hard to make one choice for a treat, food or activity, it’s not a life-changing factor no matter what the choice is. However, there is only one God and trusting Him is life changing.

Review the First Commandment.

Prayer

O Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we praise You as the God that stands alone. Help me to faithfully stand with You. Amen.

Scripture:

Is. 45:1-7; 1 Thess. 1:1-16; Matt. 22:15-22 (19th Sunday after Pentecost)

Text:

Is. 45:5

Song:

“Praise to the Lord, the Almighty” (LSB 790); (AGPS 201)

Visual:

Several options for dessert; candy, clothing outfits, games, etc.

Scripture:

Rev. 14:6-7; Rom. 3:19-28;
John 8:31-36 (Reformation)

Text:

Rom. 3:19-28

Song:

"A Mighty Fortress" (LSB
656); (AGPS 50)

Visual:

Picture of Martin Luther

WEEK 12

Here I Stand!

Introduction

This week our church has an important celebration. Does anyone know what we will be celebrating? (Not Halloween!) Our church celebrates the Reformation!

Outline

One of the important faces of the Reformation is Martin Luther. God chose Martin Luther to be His voice in an important time in history about 500 years ago. At that time many people did not know about the Bible and about the truths of God's Word. They followed man-made rules that were against God's Word. They believed that God would save them if they did enough good works.

God led Martin Luther back to the Bible, which teaches that all of us are sinners. God's Word says "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23 ESV). This is an important truth for it reminds us that we can do nothing to please God and we are not worthy to be His children. Luther confesses, "Here I stand as a sinner."

God's Word told Luther (and tells us) that Jesus has paid for all our sins and believing in Jesus God gives us our salvation as a gift. We call this grace. So Luther can celebrate, "Here I stand in God's grace."

The leaders of the church saw Martin Luther as a threat. They wanted Luther to keep quiet about the truth of the Bible and the Good News of Jesus. Luther was brought to trial and asked to take back what he had said were lies being told the people.

Luther said, "Here I stand! I stand on the truth of God's Word." God has blessed us to be part of a school and church that continues to say, "Here I stand." We stand on the truth of God's Word. We stand for the Good News that sin has been paid for by the sacrifice of Jesus. We stand in God's presence because He gives us all His blessings by faith.

Conclusion

Where does _____ Lutheran School stand? We stand in God's grace alone through faith alone based on God's Word alone.

Prayer

Lord, thank You for Your servant Martin Luther and for his courage to say, "Here I stand!" Give me faith to trust in You always. Give me faith to stand in Your truth always. Amen.

Standing with the *Saints*

Introduction

Where might we see lines at _____ Lutheran School? Give examples from the school day: kindergarten class forms a line to go to lunch, gym, etc. We make a line in our P.E. class. There's a line at the drinking fountain. Are lines helpful? Do you like lines?

Outline

In today's text we can picture a line. This isn't a school line where we might have to wait or where someone might push us, etc. We can picture a line in the kingdom of God. It is the line of believers who will someday be with Jesus in His kingdom.

In school we might have a line for first graders, a line of students waiting for lunch, a line waiting for the bus. The line in heaven will be a line of saints. "Saints" are people who believe in Jesus. Our church celebrates those people on "All Saints' Day." There are many people who have died believing in Jesus. They are saints in heaven with Jesus. We are the "saints" still waiting in line here on earth.

A line has a leader. The leader of the saint line is Jesus. Jesus died for all our sins. He is the One who has made it possible for us to be in His line. Even when we get out of line, Jesus forgives us and makes it possible for us to get back in His line again. We follow Jesus, our Leader, on earth. We look forward to being in the line around His throne in heaven.

We don't know exactly what the "saint" line will be like. The vision of John in the book of Revelation pictures everyone in that line being dressed in white because we are clothed in pure white through the blood of Jesus. We won't be standing silently in line. We'll be singing the praise of our God.

Conclusion

It's hard to wait in line. Many times we are asked to wait in line patiently. We patiently wait for the time when Jesus will come back to take us to be with Him forever. We will be with the resurrected Jesus in the new creation.

Prayer

"Life eternal! Heav'n rejoices: Jesus lives who once was dead. Shout with joy, O deathless voices! Child of God, lift up your head! Life eternal! Oh, what wonders crowd on faith; what joy unknown, When, amid earth's closing thunders, Saints shall stand before the throne" (LSB 671, verse 3).

Scripture

Rev. 7:2-17; 1 John 3:1-3;
Matt. 5:1-12 (All Saints'
Day)

Text

Rev. 7:2-17

Song

"Rejoice, O Pilgrim Throng"
(LSB 813); (AGPS 204)

Visual

A line of children



WEEK 14

Trumpet Call

Scripture

Amos 5:18-24; 1 Thess.
4:13-18; Matt. 24:1-13
(22nd Sunday after Pente-
cost)

Text

1 Thess. 4:13-18

Song

"The King Shall Come" (LSB
348); (AGPS 228)

Visual

Trumpet

Introduction

When and where might we hear a trumpet? (school band, "taps" at a military funeral, "charge" for an army, etc.) Trumpet sounds are powerful, exciting, etc. In Bible times trumpet calls also announced the arrival of a king.

Outline

We are in the final weeks of the church year. (Explain the difference between the calendar year and church year.) As we are in the last weeks of the "year," the Church often thinks about the last times. We are waiting for the time when Jesus will come to earth. He will come to show that He is King. He will come again to be with all who believe in Him and they will be with Him forever.

In today's lesson, the apostle Paul describes what Jesus' coming will be like: "The Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God." The apostle Paul wanted to share the excitement of Jesus coming back to earth. God will fulfill His promise to return, and we who have been forgiven and loved by Him will rise to greet Him.

The trumpet blast gets our attention. When Jesus returns He will certainly get our attention not just with a trumpet-like noise but with the rising of the dead. All who have died believing in Jesus will come from the grave to witness Jesus' return with us. Jesus warned those that did not believe in Him that His return would be frightening because He will remind them of all the ways they disobeyed Him.

This is not a trumpet call to frighten us. Because we believe in Jesus, we will be thrilled to see Him. We will see Jesus as the Holy God. We will be excited about being with Jesus forever.

Conclusion

Imagine the excitement of hearing a trumpet blast and seeing a King coming into our school. We wait for the time when our King will come for the final time. Right now as we worship and learn about Jesus every day, we say, "Welcome King Jesus!"

Prayer

Jesus, You are King and You will be on Your throne forever. Help us welcome You as King of our hearts, our homes, our church and our school. Amen.

Standing in the *Huddle*

Introduction:

Where have you seen a huddle? Have you been part of a huddle? What happens in a huddle? Before they run the next play the football team huddles together so all the players know the play. They review when and how the play will start (On three, Hut! Hut! . . .).

Outline

Sometimes it is difficult to describe what the Church looks like. The Bible uses several word pictures. The Church is like a building and every member is a brick in the building. The Church is like a body and every member is an important part of the body (an arm, leg, eyes, etc.).

We also can picture the Church as a team. We are part of God's team. We don't have to "try out" for the team. We don't have to be a good runner or thrower or anything else to be on God's team. Because of our sin we didn't deserve to be on God's team. God chose us to be on His team in our Baptism. He said, "You belong to me and you're on my team."

Every time we come together in Sunday morning worship or weekly school chapel, it's like we are in a huddle. We huddle around Jesus. Jesus is the leader of our team. He is the leader of the team because He is the Savior of the team. We listen to Him through His Word and follow the "plays" that He calls.

Just like a team gets together to work together and support one another, God brings His team together in His Church. We are a team that worships together, plays together, prays together and works together.

Conclusion

(Many schools have a team title/mascot.) We cheer for our teams at _____ Lutheran School. We're glad that we part of the (Tigers, Eagles, etc.) team. Most of all we're glad that we're on God's team.

Prayer

Jesus, You are more than a Coach. You are the Savior. May we huddle around Your Word and faithfully listen to Your will for us. Amen.

Scripture:

Zeph. 1:7-16; 1 Thess. 5:1-11; Matt. 25:14-30 (23rd Sunday after Pentecost)

Text:

1 Thess. 5:11

Song:

"Blest Be the Tie that Binds" (LSB 649); "Blest the Children of Our God" (AGPS 75)

Visual:

A huddle of students with the chapel leader positioned as a coach coordinating and directing the students in the huddle

Scripture:

Deut. 8:1-10; Phil. 4:6-20;
Luke 17:11-19 (Day of
Thanksgiving)

Text:

Phil. 4:6-20

Song:

"Now Thank We All Our God"
(LSB 895); (AGPS 181)

Visual:

Cornucopia of "blessings"

WEEK 16

Standing with *Thanksgiving*

Introduction

What is a cornucopia? We often see cornucopias at Thanksgiving. Usually they show ears of corn, pumpkins and some of the things that are associated with Thanksgiving. Cornucopias are not just for Thanksgiving and not just filled with fall fruits and decorations. What might go into a cornucopia of God's blessings?

Outline

We can imagine a school cornucopia with textbooks, friends, teachers, etc. We could imagine a family cornucopia with pictures of your family and things your family enjoys. What are some other cornucopias we might fill? What could we put in them?

This week we celebrate Thanksgiving and give thanks to God for all that He has given us. He fills our life with blessings. We confess that many times we are not thankful for what God gives us. We may want something more or different. God gives us what we need every day.

Paul wrote to the church at Philippi to give thanks to God for everything that God had given them. Paul especially gave thanks that Jesus was their Savior. The things that fill our cornucopias are usually things that we need or want for our daily life. What's most important is that God fills our hearts and lives with the things that we need for our relationship with Him.

What might go in our cornucopia of spiritual blessings? God has given us His Word, which tells us about our Savior. God gives us the blessings of our Baptism. God gives us pastors and teachers who share His Word with us. God takes away all our sins. (Ask children for suggestions.)

Conclusion

Review the explanation of the First Article of Apostles' Creed.

Invite each student to assemble (with objects, in a picture or mentally) their own cornucopia. Who and what has God placed in your life for which you give Him thanks today and every day?

Prayer

"Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow" (LSB 805); "Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart" or other prayers of thanks to sing with joy and thanksgiving.

Standing with the King

Introduction

How do you prepare for special guests? If a special guest is coming to your home, your parents might ask you to clean your room or in other ways prepare your home. If a special guest is coming to your classroom your teacher might ask you to clean out your desk and remind you to behave properly. We make special preparations for special guests.

Outline

It's a special season of the year (note the liturgical colors or other sanctuary preparations). (The chapel leader may want to review the seasons of the church year with the children.) In the church we are starting a new year and a new season called "Advent." "Advent" means "coming" and we are celebrating the coming of Jesus. The royal blue on the altar is a reminder that Jesus comes as our King. (If your congregation uses the purple cloths, you may want to note the royal significance.)

When Jesus came to earth many people were hoping for a mighty king who would come with a big army and show lots of power. They wanted a kingdom that they could brag about again. Why would people want a king like that? Jesus doesn't come like that kind of king.

Our Bible study tells us about Jesus' coming into Jerusalem. He doesn't come on a white horse or a grand chariot with a mighty army following Him. He comes on a donkey. The parade was simple and the ones who praised Jesus were children shouting, "Hosanna."

During Advent we welcome Jesus as our King. We are reminded that we are not worthy to be visited by a King because we are sinners. Jesus comes for us and to us. Jesus rode into Jerusalem so that He might go to a cross that said, "King of the Jews." Jesus our Savior King rules our hearts, our homes and our school. He does not rule in power but He rules by giving His life for us.

Conclusion

What are some ways that _____ Lutheran School can get ready for a king? Is there anything special that we can do in our classrooms or in our school that says, "Welcome King Jesus!"?

Review the Second Petition of Lord's Prayer.

Prayer:

We welcome You, King Jesus. Rule in our hearts, our homes and our school. Amen.

Scripture:

Is. 64:1-9; 1 Cor. 1:3-9;
Mark 11:1-10 (First Sunday
of Advent)

Text:

Mark 11:1-10

Song:

"Savior of the Nations,
Come" (LSB 332); (AGPS
205)

Visual:

A "busy" chapel leader
perhaps vacuuming the
floor, dusting the furniture,
picking up pieces of trash,
etc., saying, "We've got to
get ready?"

Scripture:

Is. 40:1-11; 2 Peter 3:8-14; Mark 1:1-8 (Second Sunday of Advent)

Text:

Mark 1:1-8

Song:

"On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry" (LSB 344); "Soon and Very Soon" (AGPS 218)

Visual:

A text message; a student coming into the sanctuary, "Pastor _____ there's a message for you in the office"; or some other message notification

WEEK 18

The Messenger with the Message

Introduction

I just got a message. We get messages all the time. Teachers get messages from the office. Parents send messages to school and have teachers give us messages. We get written messages, text messages and all kinds of messages.

Outline

Our Gospel reading today calls John the Baptist a "messenger." "Behold, I will send my messenger." The prophet Isaiah had written almost 700 years before Jesus was born that God would send a "messenger" to prepare the way for Jesus. From the time of the fall into sin God had continued to share the message that He would send a Savior.

John the Baptist was a rather unusual messenger — he had long hair, wore camel's hair, ate grasshoppers, lived along a river, etc. How would we react if a "strangely" dressed messenger came to our school and said, "I have a message for you"?

A messenger has to have a message. John's message was to repent. "Repent" means to say that we are sorry for our sins and we won't keep on with our sinful behavior. To get ready for Jesus' coming was to repent of the words and ways that would displease Him. Repenting of their sins, the people then were ready to hear about a Savior from their sins.

God's message to us comes through His Word. His message is for us to repent and to admit that we are sinners. God then comes with the message that through Jesus our sins are forgiven.

God still chooses messengers to deliver His message. As our pastor and teachers share His message, they are God's messengers to us. They share the call to repentance and the Good News of God's forgiveness.

Conclusion

Remember the message I got as I began today. The message was just for me, but God's message is to all of us and it comes every day through His Word. The message we have received, we get to pass on to others.

Prayer

"Lay on the sick Thy healing hand And make the fallen strong to stand; Show us the glory of Thy face Till beauty springs in ev'ry place." Amen (LSB 344, verse 4).

Rejoice Greatly

Introduction

Can you tell there's going to be party? We have party decorations. We have the invitations ready. The food is getting prepared. I can't wait for the party to begin!

Outline

In our homes and even in our classrooms, we're getting ready for a party — a Christmas party! We look forward to the gifts, special food, special guests and other aspects of the party. It's also party time in the Church. The third week of Advent we light the pink candle on the Advent wreath. The candle reminds us that Advent is also a time of joy and celebration.

Many people in the time of Isaiah the prophet weren't expecting a party. God had called them to repentance and God's warning was that they would be punished for their unfaithfulness.

The Advent season is a time of repentance. We are always to take our sin seriously and to be reminded that God punishes sin. The fact that we break the commandments and sin against God makes us sad and makes us feel unworthy to participate in a party. God's message to us is that Jesus has come and He has paid for the price of our sin.

During the Advent season we celebrate that Jesus has come for us and continues to come with His Word of forgiveness. When we hear that our sins are forgiven we rejoice. The Advent season is a time for joyful celebration. It's a time for the Church to celebrate that God has come to be with us.

We also celebrate that Jesus will come again. When Jesus comes it will be a time of joy for all of us who know Him as our Savior. There will be joy forever in heaven.

Conclusion

In a couple of days you will have your classroom Christmas party. In about a week you will have Christmas celebrations with your family. We don't have to wait. Let's party today because Jesus came!

Prayer

"Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace, Thy welcome shall proclaim, And heaven's eternal arches ring With Thy beloved name." Amen (LSB 349, verse 4).

Scripture:

Is. 61:1-4, 8-11; 1 Thess. 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28
(Third Sunday of Advent)

Text:

Is. 61:1-4

Song:

"Hark the Glad Sound" (LSB 349); "In You is Gladness" (AGPS 137)

Visual:

Party invitations, party decorations. Some party decorations may even be displayed in the worship area.

**Scripture:**

Is. 7:10-14; 1 John 4:7-16;
Matt. 1:18-25

Text:

Is. 7:14

Song:

"Oh, Come, Oh Come, Immanuel" (LSB 357); (AGPS 186)

Visual:

Pictures of people we might be with at Christmas celebrations: family pictures, gatherings of classmates and friends, worship gathering, etc.

WEEK 20

Standing with Jesus

Introduction

Who are you going to be with at Christmas? Many of us look forward to special gatherings. We may be together with our family. We may be together with friends. We will be together with our church family as we worship.

Outline

It's a special blessing to have special people with us at special times and places. We especially enjoy being with our family and church family at Christmas. While we know that Jesus is with us every day, Christmas reminds us that Jesus came to be with us as true Man when He came as the Baby in Bethlehem.

The prophet Isaiah had shared a special name for the Messiah. He said that he would be called "Immanuel." That word means "God with us." It was good news that God would be with His people because many times they wondered where God was or if He had forgotten them. Isaiah reminded God's people that He would come to be with them in person as the promised Savior.

When the angel came to Joseph (Matt. 1) and shared that Mary was going to have a Baby and her Child would be the Savior, the angel shared Isaiah's words again that His name would be "Immanuel." After many years of waiting God would be with them in human form.

We celebrate that our God is "Immanuel"— the God who is with us. Jesus came to be with His people as He was born in Bethlehem. Jesus was with His people as He taught them and showed His power in miracles. After Jesus had suffered, died and risen again, He promised them, "I am with you always."

Conclusion

Sometimes Christmas also has disappointments. Maybe we don't get to be with some family members we'd like to be with. God never disappoints us. He is "Immanuel," God is with us today and always.

Prayer

"O come, Desire of nations, bind In one the hearts of all mankind; Bid Thou our sad divisions cease, And be Thyself our King of Peace." Amen (LSB 357, verse 7).

Standing in the *Light*

Introduction

Have you ever had the lights go off in your home? Maybe there was a storm (depends on area of country) or some other problem that suddenly caused the lights to go off. How did you feel when the lights went off? What sources of light did your parents look for? It's nice to have some emergency sources of light. How did you feel when the lights came on again?

Outline

The prophet Isaiah was called by God to share God's message in a time of darkness. God's people were living in darkness more critical than the lights suddenly going off in a storm. It was the darkness of not being with God. There was the darkness of unfaithfulness and idolatry. Because of their sin, some of the people would be taken captive and they would feel like the lights had gone off.

The Good News of Isaiah is that the lights would not be off forever. Isaiah shares the exciting message: "Arise, shine, for your light has come." "The lights are on again!" When Jesus came into the world, the light would come on again. Jesus would take away the darkness of sin by paying the price for our sin on the cross.

We find ourselves in the darkness of sin. We disobey the commandments. We do not worship and serve God faithfully. But the light has come on again. The Gospel writer John calls Jesus the "Light." Jesus says, "I am the Light of the world." We do not live in the darkness of sin. By faith we live in the light of Jesus.

The Epiphany season is sometimes called the season of light. The light of Jesus is in the world. Every day the day gets a little longer and brighter as we get closer to spring. Every day as we gather around God's Word and the light of Jesus in our school, the light of Jesus shines brighter in our hearts and in our school.

Conclusion

When a neighborhood is dark, families invite their friends and neighbors to come together around the light. During the Epiphany season we invite our friends, neighbors and the world to gather around the light of Jesus with us.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, wise men saw a light in the sky and they were led to see the Light of the World. Lead us to see the light through Your Word so that Light may come to our school, our homes and the world. Amen.

Scripture:

Is. 60:1-6; Eph. 3:1-12;
Matt. 2:1-12 (Epiphany)

Text:

Is. 60:1-6

Song:

"Beautiful Savior" (LSB
537); (AGPS 70)

Visual:

Collection of lights such as
candles, flashlight, lanterns
and other sources of emer-
gency light

Scripture:

Gen. 1:15; Rom. 6:1-11;
Mark 1:4-11 (Baptism of
our Lord)

Text:

Rom. 6:1-11

Song:

“God Loved the World So
That He Gave” (LSB 571);
(AGPS 108)

Visual:

Amazing Journeys — travel
brochures, pictures of places
the leader (or others)
may have visited

WEEK 22

Baptized *into Christ*

Introduction

Have any of you been on an amazing journey? (Welcome experiences of students: “We went to Disneyland, beach, mountains, etc.”) I’ve got some pictures of one of my favorite journeys. If you could journey any special place, where would you like to go? Journeys are adventurous and fun.

Outline

God’s Word to us today describes an amazing journey. First of all, we remember the amazing journey of Jesus. We have reviewed some of His journey the past few weeks and we’ll learn even more in the weeks ahead. Jesus journeyed from heaven to earth. He journeyed with His parents from Bethlehem to Egypt and then to Nazareth.

During the Epiphany season of the church year (which we are just beginning) we will learn more about the journey of Jesus. He journeyed from town to town teaching and performing miracles. He journeyed from sea shores to mountains. Jesus came so that He might journey to the cross and to the tomb and rise again.

We not only get to hear about His journey, we get to be part of His journey. We join him on His journey through Baptism. God’s Word to us in Romans, chapter 6, says, “We were baptized into his death ... We were buried with him by Baptism into death ... just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” Only Jesus went to the cross and to the tomb and came out again. Only He could make that journey so that we might be His children forever. When we are baptized Jesus’ journey becomes our journey. We get the blessings of His cross and empty tomb.

All the blessings of what Jesus did become ours through faith — the blessings of the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. In Jesus our journey on earth is blessed, and finally, we will join Jesus in His final journey when He comes to make all things new.

Conclusion

Review *Luther’s Small Catechism* — Baptism. “What does such baptizing with water signify?” “Where is this written?”

Prayer

Jesus, my journey with You began in my Baptism. Thank You for receiving me as Your child and blessing my life journey. Help me to journey faithfully with You. Amen.

WEEK 23

I'm Listening

Introduction

"Are you listening to me?" Has your mother or teacher ever asked you that question? There are many reasons we may not be listening. There may be something creating too much noise or too great a distraction (like the objects above) to keep us from listening. Today's Bible lesson tells us about a good listener and the importance of listening to God's Word.

Outline

As a little boy Samuel had been taught to listen. His mother Hannah had listened to God and had brought her son to God's house to have him trained by Eli the priest. She had promised God that her son would serve Him.

One night Samuel heard an unusual voice calling his name, "Samuel, Samuel." Samuel thought it must be his master who was the priest, Eli. Several times Samuel heard his name and came to Eli wondering what he wanted. Eli assumed it was God calling and told Samuel to respond, "Speak Lord, for your servant hears." Samuel followed Eli's instruction and indeed the special voice was the voice of God.

God had a special message for Samuel and the people of Israel. Samuel was to be a special servant in God's kingdom and he would listen to God often and share God's Word with people. Listening carefully, the people of Israel would hear again and again about God's love for them and the promise of a Savior. Many times Samuel would ask the people, "Are you listening to me?"

We confess that many times we don't listen very well to our parents, our teachers and especially to God. God has important messages for us in His Word. His message is that Jesus is our Savior. God opens our hearts and ears and we get to listen to God's news of His forgiveness. Because we love God, we listen to God. We listen as we worship in church; we listen to God's Word in our classroom; and we listen to our parents as we have devotions in the home.

Conclusion

Sometime we need to get rid of the things in our ears and other distractions (from introduction) and listen for God. Like Samuel we say, "Speak Lord, for your student hears."

Review the Third Commandment.

Prayer

Lord, open my heart and ears to hear You. Amen.

Scripture:

1 Sam. 3:1-20; 1 Cor. 6:12-20; John 1:43-51
(Second Sunday after the Epiphany)

Text:

1 Sam. 3:1-20

Song:

"Thy Strong Word" (LSB 578); (AGPS 246)

Visual:

Earphones, loud music, looking at iPad (or other electronics), intently reading a book, or tending to other gadgets or activities that might distract one from listening

Scripture:

Jonah 3:1-5, 10; 1 Cor. 7:9-35; Mark 1:14-20 (Third Sunday after the Epiphany)

Text:

Mark 1:14-20

Song:

"In Christ There Is No East or West" (LSB 653); (AGPS 135)

Visual:

Fishing equipment

WEEK 24

Fishers of Men

Introduction

How many of you have ever gone fishing? How many of you like to fish? Today I brought with me some of the equipment that I might need to go fishing. Do I have what I need? Is there anything else that I should have brought?

Outline

Several of Jesus' disciples were fishermen. Today's Bible lesson tells of fishermen Peter, Andrew, James and John. Their fishing equipment was most likely different from what we use. Typically they did not use fishing poles and bait. They dropped a net into the water and when they brought the net back into the boat they hoped that there would be some fish in the net.

Jesus invites the fishermen to leave their fishing business and follow Him. He says, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." Jesus invites them to stop fishing for fish and to start "fishing" for people.

Obviously the disciples would not catch people swimming in a lake. They would find people wandering down the streets of town and the roads of the community. They would not catch them with nets. They would catch them with God's Word. When people heard about Jesus and believed in His Word they would be "caught" for the kingdom of God.

Jesus invites us to be fishermen and fisherwomen. He doesn't ask us to use nets, fishing poles or other fishing equipment. He asks us to use His Word. He asks us to be "fisher" children, teachers, etc. He asks us to share the news about Jesus who came to "catch" us for His kingdom. Even when we don't feel like we have the right equipment or we're not fishing in the right place, God blesses us and uses us as His fishers of men.

Conclusion

Where's your favorite fishing place (lake, pond, etc.)? God sends us out to fishing places. Where are some places that we can go fishing for Him (friends, family, other places in the world)?

Prayer

Jesus, help me to hear Your invitation, "Let's go fishing!" Thank You for Your Word, which brings me and others into the boat of Your grace. Amen.

Standing with *the Prophet*

Introduction

Can you tell me what these people have in common? These are all names out of the Bible. They are all Old Testament names. They are all prophets. What is a “prophet?” It might be one who prophesies — who tells something about the future. Mostly in the Old Testament a prophet was God’s voice to His people.

Outline

Our Bible lesson describes God’s prophet Moses. The Bible tells us that Moses was the greatest Old Testament prophet. Moses went to Pharaoh and told him that God wanted His people released. Moses went up Mount Sinai and he heard and saw God and brought down God’s Law to the people. Many times Moses shared God’s Word with the people of Israel.

Following Moses, God chose many other prophets: Elijah, Jeremiah, etc. Many of the books at the conclusion of the Old Testament are the messages of God’s prophets. The prophets often told the people that God was very sad and angry at their sin. The prophets also shared that God had Good News for them and that He would send a Savior to them.

All the Old Testament prophets were to prepare the way for Jesus. Jesus would come as the Son of God to speak God’s message to His people. Jesus not only shared the message, He lived the message. Jesus was the Message. Everything the Old Testament prophets had shared about the Savior whom God had promised was fulfilled in Jesus.

Jesus has come as the perfect Prophet. Jesus came to earth to tell the people of God’s plan for their salvation. He not only taught the plan, He was the plan. Jesus was the last prophet sent from heaven. Everything God wants us to know He tells us in His Word. Like the message of the prophets, God’s Word tells us about the need to repent and look to God for forgiveness. God’s Word tells us that Jesus has given His life for our sins.

Conclusion

Your pastor and teachers remind us of God’s prophets. Like the prophets of long ago, God sends them to teach us from God’s Word.

Prayer

“Anoint them prophets, men who are intent To be Your witnesses in word and deed, Their hearts aflame, their lips made eloquent, Their eyes awake to ev’ry human need” (LSB 682).

Scripture:

Deut. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28 (Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany)

Text:

Deut. 18:15-20

Song:

“The Law of God is Good and Wise” (LSB 579); (AGPS 230)

Visual:

List of Old Testament prophets — Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc. (and perhaps some of the minor prophets)

Scripture:

Is. 40:21-31; 1 Cor.
9:16-27; Mark 1:40-50
(Fifth Sunday after the
Epiphany)

Text:

Is. 40:28-31

Song:

"On Eagles' Wings" (LSB
727); (AGPS 193)

Visual:

Book of animals (or
pictures of animals)

WEEK 26

Eagles' Wings

Introduction

How many of you enjoy learning about animals? Do we find animals mentioned in the Bible? Can you think of some of the animals in the Bible? The book of Genesis tells us about the snake in the garden; Daniel faced the lions; Jonah was inside a fish; Jesus rode on a donkey, etc. God created all the animals. Animals played an important part in some Bible stories. Animals are sometimes used in God's Word to help us picture what God is like and how God works.

Outline

Have you ever seen an eagle? What does an eagle look like? One of the special features of an eagle is its powerful wings. An eagle can swoop down and grab its prey and its strong wings lift it up. God's Word for today pictures how God is powerful and can lift us up like an eagle's wings lift it up.

Sometimes we feel really weak. We may be weak because we have been sick. Sometimes things happen to make us feel very sad or worried. The hymn, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" (LSB 770) asks the question, "Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care?" The answer to the question is "yes." While health and other factors make us physically weak, by ourselves we are completely powerless against our sinful nature and the devil's temptations.

But our God is not weak. He is all powerful. God had the power to create everything including every animal. God has the power to take care of all of creation. Most importantly our God is strong to save. When we were weak in sin, Jesus was mighty to save. Like the eagle Jesus swooped down and rescued us from sin and the devil.

Because He loves us and cares for us, God protects us. When we are afraid, sick or in other ways in need, He promises to be with us. Like a soaring eagle He looks down on us with His all-seeing eyes and, when necessary, defends us and lifts us ... like a mighty eagle.

Conclusion

Using a book of birds (or pictures of birds), praise God for His lessons through birds. God used a raven to feed a prophet. God says we're just as important as His sparrows. Most of all He protects us and lifts us like an eagle.

Prayer

Thank You Lord for the beauty of all Your creation and the lessons from Your creation. Give me Your grace that helps me to soar like an eagle. Amen.

Return to the Lord

Introduction

Do you have some places you'd like to return? Have you said to your parents, "Could we go back there?" Maybe you had a great day at the park or at the beach. Maybe your family went on a vacation and you'd like to go back to that special place. Maybe you enjoyed a visit with grandparents or friends and you asked, "When can we go back?"

Outline

The prophet Joel says to God's people, "Let's return. Let's go back." Prophet Joel was not talking about going back to a special place. He was writing about going back to a special God. The children of Israel had wandered from God. They had wandered off to look for other gods and to worship idols. Those gods could not hear them or help them. In their desperation, they called for God to find them and bring them back.

When we get lost and when we wander from God, the Holy Spirit leads us to say, "Let's go back." Sin leaves us lost and lonely. We want to go back to the place where we are safe. We want to go back to the God who loves us and forgives us.

When Israel went back they would find a loving God who would welcome them and bless them. Jesus told the story of the wandering (prodigal) son who wandered from his father. The father saw the son coming back home and he welcomed him back to his family.

Just like it's great to go back to a special place, it's always great to be welcomed back to God. God welcomes us back to His Church where we learn more about Him and love worshiping and serving Him.

Conclusion

God used a prophet to lead His people back to Him. Who are some of the people who lead us back to God when we wander from Him (our parents, teachers, Christian friends, etc.)? We thank God for the people who lead us back when we are tempted to wander from Him.

Prayer

Jesus, bless us as we pray, "Let's go back!" Lead us back to Your cross where we see You dying for our sins. Lead us back to Your empty tomb where we celebrate that You rose for us. Thank You for welcoming us back again and again. Amen.

Scriptures:

Joel 2:12-19; 2 Cor. 5:20-6:10; Matt. 6:1-6, 16-21
(Ash Wednesday)

Text:

Joel 2:12-19

Song:

"O God of Mercy, God of Light" (LSB 852); (AGPS 182)

Visual:

Pictures of places the leader (or children) have been and would like to return

Scriptures:

Gen. 22:1-18; James 1:12-18; Mark 1:9-15
(First Sunday in Lent)

Text:

James 1:12-18

Song:

"Let Us Ever Walk With Jesus" (LSB 685); (AGPS 159)

Visual:

Display of things that are tempting — box of chocolates, package of cookies, an answer sheet to a test, a toy or other items that are tempting to covet, steal, etc.

WEEK 28

Standing up to *Temptations*

Introduction

Have you ever been tempted? Your mother may say, "Don't eat any of that candy or cookies before dinner." Your teacher may say, "Please keep your eyes on your own paper." We are tempted in lots of ways. It is hard to say "no" to temptations.

Outline

What are some of the ways we are tempted at school or at home, when we are with our friends, and in all sorts of times and places? The devil tempts us. The devil does not want us to know about Jesus. The devil does not want us to know that our sins are forgiven and that God loves us. The devil does not want us to be with Jesus forever in heaven.

Temptations are all around us coming not only from the devil, but also from the world and our own sinful nature. However, temptations never come from God. God never wants us to wander from Him. God always wants us to be in His Kingdom.

Jesus was tempted and overcame all temptations. The Bible tells us that Jesus was tempted every day for 40 days. However, Jesus never once gave in to a temptation. When Jesus was tempted, He told the devil, "Get away." Jesus died for all the times we give in to temptations. When Jesus rose from the dead He defeated the devil forever.

Jesus used the Word of God to fight the devil's temptations. We also have that Word, which has the power to send Satan away. We learn Bible stories and memorize Bible passages in our school so that we will have the weapons to fight off the devil's temptations.

Conclusion

Review the Sixth Petition of Lord's Prayer.

Prayer

"But while watching, also pray To the Lord unceasing. God protects you day by day, Strength and faith increasing, So that still, Mind and will, Shall unite to serve Him And forever love Him" (LSB 663, verse 5).

WEEK 29

Who Am I?

Introduction

I have some pictures of individuals. Imagine each one of these individuals asking “Who am I?” I’m going to have some volunteers tell us who they are.

Outline

Jesus asked the question, “Who am I?” Jesus was not playing a game with His disciples. Jesus was trying to get His followers to know more about who He was and why He came. Some people had seen Jesus and thought He was like John the Baptist. Others had compared Jesus to Elijah or an Old Testament prophet. Obviously Jesus did not come to imitate or replace someone else. Who was Jesus?

Peter gives an answer and gets it right when he says, “You are the Christ.” Peter had listened to Jesus. Peter had watched Jesus do miracles. Peter had heard Jesus emphasize that He was the fulfillment of all the Old Testament prophecies. Jesus was the Messiah, the Savior, whom God had promised. Our parents, teachers, pastors and others have taught us the truth of God’s Word. Like Peter we are blessed to know that Jesus is the Son of God and Savior of the world.

Even though Peter confessed Jesus, he would later deny Him. While Jesus was being falsely accused, Peter was saying, “I don’t know who Jesus is!” Like Peter we may be tempted to deny who Jesus is. Someone may make fun of us as a Christian or laugh at us for going to a Lutheran school and church. We may be afraid to stand up for Jesus. We rejoice that Jesus forgives us and welcomes us back like He welcomed Peter.

Sometimes we are asked, “Who is Jesus?” It may be easy to give the answer in church or in our class at school, but it’s a lot harder to give an answer to our friends and neighbors outside of this building. We pray for the Spirit’s courage to answer, “Who is Jesus?” with the answer, “He is the Savior and Friend who loves me and I love Him!”

Conclusion

While it’s nice to recognize some famous and important faces, it’s really important to know who Jesus is. Getting that answer right gives us the joy of seeing Jesus’ face in heaven.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank You for the confession of Peter. Help me confess You boldly, always. Amen.

Scriptures:

Gen. 17:1-7, 15-16; Rom. 5:1-11; Mark 8:27-38 (Second Sunday in Lent)

Text:

Mark 8:27-38

Song:

“When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” (LSB 425); (AGPS 266)

Visual:

“Who Am I?” game. Leader shares pictures of well-known individuals — presidents, athletes, actors and perhaps some school personnel — pastor, principal, etc. Students are invited to identify the individuals in the pictures: “Who am I?”

Scriptures:

Ex. 20:1-7; 1 Cor. 1:18-31;
John 2:13-25 (Third Sunday
in Lent)

Text:

John 2:13-25

Song:

"Built on the Rock" (LSB
645); "We are the Church"
(AGPS 252)

Visual:

Build a tower with blocks;
knock it down.

WEEK 30

Standing in the Temple

Introduction

Have you ever built a tower or made something else only to have a little brother or sister (or someone else) come and knock it down? How do you feel when your construction is knocked down (frustrated, angry, etc.)?

Outline

The temple in Jerusalem had been built many years before Jesus' time. It was the church of the Jewish people. It was the place of worship, prayer and sacrifice. Jesus often went to the temple with His family and with His disciples. One day when Jesus went to the temple He saw people doing all sorts of things other than worshipping God. They were selling things. It was as if something God had built was suddenly knocked down. Jesus wanted God's house to be a holy place.

Jesus used the occasion to talk about another "temple." Jesus called Himself a temple. Obviously Jesus wasn't another construction of stones or boards. Jesus was talking about His body. Like a temple building, He was the place where God was because He was God.

The temple of Jesus' body would be torn down. During the Lenten season we follow the story of Jesus' passion. We see the body of Jesus beaten by the soldiers. We see the body of Jesus bleeding from the crown of thorns. We see the body of Jesus hanging on a cross. Jesus' "temple" was destroyed. Jesus allowed Himself to receive all this punishment because He was suffering and dying for our sins.

Jesus promised "in three days I will raise it up." Early in His ministry Jesus was already talking about His resurrection. His "temple" would not stay crumbled in ruins. His body would be alive again. Even as we review Jesus' passion we know the end of the story. Easter is coming. Jesus rose from the dead and promises that we will rise also.

Conclusion

There is one more important temple! The apostle Paul (1 Cor. 6:19) calls our bodies "temples." Because the Holy Spirit brings us to faith in Jesus and lives in us, we are God's temple. The devil can never knock down that "temple." We stand solid in His grace.

Prayer

Jesus, we rejoice that Your temple could not be knocked down but will stand forever. Help us to stand firm in You. Amen.

WEEK 31

God's Gift for Me

Introduction

Imagine a nicely wrapped gift delivered to your home or to your classroom. There might be several questions about the gift including: "What's in it" and more importantly, "Who's it for?"

Outline

At Christmas time we often see gifts underneath a tree. We like to look at the name tags and discover which gifts are for us. We can also look at gifts during the Lenten season. The gift of this season is under a different kind of tree.

In our Bible reading for today Jesus reminds His audience that back in their history God had placed a gift on a tree. When the children of Israel had disobeyed God, God punished them by sending poisonous snakes. To save them, God had Moses put a bronze snake on a pole (tree) and when they looked up at the serpent they were saved.

Fortunately God doesn't send poisonous snakes into our lives to punish us for our sins. However, God's Word reminds us that we are sinners and that we deserve God's punishment for all the ways that we disobey Him. To save us from our sins, God doesn't have us set up poles and put up homemade snakes. God had a much better plan.

God put Jesus on a tree. It was the tree of the cross. We call it the tree of the cross because the cross was made of wooden beams. Jesus is the gift on the tree for us. With His suffering and death He paid the price for all our sins. He gives us His forgiveness as a gift. Jesus is the gift that God gives to us so that we can be His children forever.

One of the joys of the Christmas season is sharing gifts. Lent reminds us of the special gift we have and the gift of Jesus that we get to share with others.

Conclusion

What's the best Christmas gift you ever received? What's the best Lenten gift you ever received? We are blessed to have the gift of Jesus!

Prayer

"Be of good cheer, for God's own Son forgives all sins which you have done; And, justified by Jesus' blood, Your Baptism grants the highest good" (LSB 571, verse 4).

Scriptures:

Num. 21:4-9; Eph. 2:1-10; John 3:14-21 (Fourth Sunday in Lent)

Text:

John 3:14-21

Song:

"My Song is Love Unknown" (LSB 430); (AGPS 176)

Visual:

Nicely wrapped gift and a cross

Scriptures:

Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 5:1-10; Mark 10:32-45 (Fifth Sunday in Lent)

Text:

Mark 10:32-45

Song:

"Christ the Life of All the Living" (LSB 420); (AGPS 82)

Visual:

Leader picks several students for a gift, assignment, etc. Most likely many students will be raising their hands and saying, "Pick me!"

WEEK 32

Pick Me!

Introduction

Did you notice that as I was picking students there were lots of hands up and voices saying, "Pick me!"? We want to be picked whether it's for a team, a playground game, classroom activity or some other school activity.

Outline

Two disciples of Jesus, James and John, came to Jesus and said, "Pick us." Many people thought Jesus had come to be an earthly ruler and they wanted to have some of the power and prestige in His kingdom. Even the disciples who heard Jesus say many times that He had come to suffer and die wanted some earthly power and wanted others to think that they too were important.

God did not send His Son to be an earthly king. That would not have made a difference for all people for all times. While Jesus could have picked to be anything He wanted or to do anything He wanted, God picked Jesus to come to be the Savior. God picked Jesus to suffer and die.

Because God picked Jesus to be the sacrifice we can be part of His kingdom. God came to us through our Baptism and said, "I pick you!" "I pick you to be my child. I pick you to be a member of my family." God didn't pick us because we were good athletes or musicians or because we were good looking. God picked us because He loved us and wanted us to be with Him forever.

Sometimes we get prideful and want to be the first chosen. Sometimes we pick others because they may be our friend or they can help our team. It's important to always remember that God loves each of us the same and so we treat one another with the same love and respect.

Conclusion

God picked us in our Baptism.

Review "What is Baptism?" and "Which is that word of God?" in *Luther's Small Catechism*.

Prayer

Thank You, Jesus, for picking me to be Your child. As I make decisions help me to choose You and to worship You faithfully. Amen.

Standing *at a Parade*

Introduction

Have you ever seen a parade? Maybe you've seen the Rose Parade or the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade. Have you ever stood along the streets and watched a parade? Parades are fun.

Outline

Today God's Word takes us to a parade. It's not a famous parade on television. It's not a parade down the main street of our town. We will watch the parade that begins on the streets of Jerusalem and winds through the city to a hill called Calvary on the edge of the city.

Many, many years before Jesus was born, the prophet Zechariah had written about the parade, "Behold, your king is coming." The parade would feature a King. The King would not ride on a grand horse or fancy chariot. The King would come riding into town on a donkey. Many people would not recognize the King in the parade. They were looking for a powerful earthly king. This King was very plain and humble. The children watching the parade cheered for Jesus, "Hosanna, to our King."

This was a very long parade. It began on a Sunday and it ended on a Friday. The parade went through a high priest's office and it went by a Roman governor's house. When the parade finally stopped, the King on the donkey would be found on a cross. There would be a sign on the cross reading, "The King of the Jews." Again many people did not recognize the King because now he was beaten and dying. He certainly didn't look like a king. God the Father had sent this King not to rule like an earthly king but to die for the sins of the world so that we could be in His kingdom forever.

The King in the parade is Jesus. This week we get to follow Jesus' parade. The parade began on Palm Sunday and continues to Good Friday when many people thought the parade was over forever. It was just beginning. There was going to be an Easter parade!

Conclusion

If a map/visual of the city of Jerusalem at Jesus' time is available, share the parade route.

Prayer

"You are the King of Israel And David's royal Son, Now in the Lord's name coming, Our King and Blessed One. To You before Your passion They sang their hymns of praise; To You, now high exalted, Our melody we raise" (LSB 442, verse 1, 4).

Scriptures:

Zech. 9:9-12; Phil. 2:5-11;
Mark 14:1-15:47 (Sunday
of the Passion)

Text:

Zech. 9:9-12

Song:

"Hosanna, Loud Hosanna"
(LSB 443); "Hosanna, Hal-
lelujah" (AGPS 121)

Visual:

Picture of a parade; list of
famous parades

Scriptures:

Is. 25:6-9; 1 Cor. 15:1-11; Mark 16:1-8 (Easter Sunday)

Text:

Mark 16:1-8

Song:

"Christ the Lord is Risen Today" (LSB 469); (AGPS 83)

Visual:

Running shoes (children might even bring their favorite running shoes to chapel)

WEEK 34

Running from *the* Tomb

Introduction

Do you like to run? Do you have a favorite pair of running shoes? Did you do any running on Easter Sunday? Perhaps some of you ran through the yard looking for Easter eggs. Some of you may have run around and played with family and friends who may have joined you for Easter.

Outline

The first Easter probably started out with some very slow walking. Some women were walking to the cemetery and to Jesus' burial place. They may have been walking slowly because it was dark and hard to see the path. They may have been walking slowly because they thought it was going to be a very sad day for them. The women were sad that their friend Jesus had been crucified and had been buried in a tomb.

The Bible tells us that there was also some running taking place. The Easter story in the Gospel of John (Chapter 20) tells that two disciples (Peter and most likely John) ran to the tomb when they were told that Jesus wasn't in the tomb. They hurried because they had to see what might have happened to Jesus.

The Easter story in the Gospel of Mark tells us that the women who visited the tomb ran from the tomb. They ran because they were afraid. The angel may have been an unusual and frightening thing for them to see. They also ran because they were excited. They ran because they wanted to tell others what they had heard and seen.

The first Easter visitors weren't sure yet of what had really happened to Jesus. We know what happened. Jesus was alive. Jesus had promised that He would rise again and He did! Because He rose from the dead Jesus defeated death and Satan for us. Because Jesus rose from the grave, all who believe in Him as the Savior and risen Lord will rise again also.

Conclusion

Sometimes our parents or teachers might say, "Don't run." They don't want us to run in places where we should be walking. They don't want us to fall and get hurt. With the Good News of Jesus' resurrection the message is "Run!" "Run and tell everyone that Jesus is alive."

Prayer

"Hail the Lord of earth and heav'n! Praise to Thee by both be giv'n! Thee we greet triumphant now: Hail, the resurrection, Thou" (LSB 469, verse 6).

WEEK 35

Prove It!

Introduction

“Hello, I’m Thomas; Thomas the detective. You all probably know that a detective explores mysteries and tries to solve cases. I’m trying to solve the case: Is Jesus alive?”

Outline

Disciple Thomas was looking for clues. Thomas had not been with the other disciples as they were hiding in a room in Jerusalem. The other disciples had told Thomas that Jesus had suddenly appeared to them and had greeted them. They had told Thomas what Jesus had said to them, “Peace be with you!”

Detective Thomas had to solve his own case. Thomas was not at peace. Thomas had said that he would not believe Jesus was alive unless he solved the case himself. He wanted to see the scars on Jesus’ hands and feet. If the person they had seen was really the crucified Jesus, He would have the scars from the nails on the cross and the sword piercing His side.

Detective Thomas did not have to look far for clues. Jesus came to Thomas and the disciples again and invited Thomas to touch His hands and see the scar on His side. Thomas was convinced Jesus was alive and praised Him, “My Lord and my God.” Thomas and the other disciples saw Jesus several more times before His ascension. There was no doubt that Jesus was alive.

Some people are still trying to be detectives and trying to solve whether Jesus is alive or not. We don’t need detective tools to solve the case. We have the proof that Jesus is alive. God’s Word tells us that Jesus is alive. When we have doubts about Jesus, we can go to God’s Word and read all the true details. Because Jesus is alive we can be sure that Jesus will greet us with His peace now and when our bodies are risen from the dead just as Jesus was risen from the dead.

Conclusion

Jesus greeted Thomas and the disciples with His words, “Peace be with you.” When and where are we greeted with those words? What do those words mean to us?

Prayer

“May we, O God, by grace believe And thus the risen Christ receive, Whose raw imprinted palms reach out And beckoned Thomas from his doubt” (LSB 472, verse 4).

Scriptures:

Acts 4:32-35; 1 John 1:1-2:2; John 20:19-31 (Second Sunday of Easter)

Text:

John 20:24-31

Song:

“Good Christian Friends Rejoice and Sing” (LSB 475); (AGPS 112)

Visual:

Leader is dressed like a detective (spyglass, hat, trench coat, notebook, etc.)

Scriptures:

Acts 3:11-21; 1 John 3:1-7;
Luke 24:36-49 (Third Sunday of Easter)

Text:

Luke 24:36-49

Song:

"I Know that My Redeemer Lives" (LSB 461); (AGPS 127)

Visual:

Several "true" or "false" statements. A Bible

WEEK 36

It's True!

Introduction

Do you like "true" or "false" questions on a test? Let's see how you do on this test. (Share age and subject appropriate questions for the children in the group.) True or false? George Washington was the first U.S. president? The earth is round? Jesus has risen from the dead?

Outline

Even though Jesus had shown Himself alive to them several times, the disciples still found it hard to believe that Jesus was really alive and with them. There were many people who said, "That can't be true. Nobody rises from the dead." Sometimes the disciples may have even doubted what they saw, "Did I really see Jesus?"

In today's Bible reading Jesus comes to His disciples again. Jesus shows them His hands and feet again and invites them to touch Him. It was not a ghost they were seeing. It was really Jesus. Jesus even ate some fish with the disciples. Jesus showed the disciples that He had proved all the Bible prophecies about Him as true statements.

There are still people who say, "Jesus can't be alive because nobody can be raised from the dead. Jesus' resurrection has to be false." The New Testament writers of God's Word saw the resurrected Jesus and all of them say, "It's true!" Because Jesus' resurrection is true, all the promises of God's Word are true. Our sins are forgiven. We will rise again from the dead just as Jesus is risen from the dead. When we doubt we go back to God's Word and the Holy Spirit gives us the faith to trust His Word.

Believing that Jesus' resurrection was true, the disciples were to tell everyone else that it's true. Jesus says to the disciples, "You are witnesses of these things." A witness tells the truth of what he saw. The disciples (and we) tell others, "It's true!"

Conclusion

True or false? Jesus has risen from the dead.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, forgive me for the times that I doubt Your Word and Your love for me. The proof of Your love is Your resurrection. Give me a faith to believe and the joy of sharing the Good News. Amen.

Standing with *our Shepherd*

Introduction

What do you know about lambs? Children may share a variety of real observations or their perceptions: “They’re cuddly.” “They stink.” “They have soft wool.” “They aren’t very smart.”

Outline

Like many other animals, lambs are not able to take care of themselves very well. They are not very smart. They do not have natural ways (sharp teeth, fast feet, etc.) to protect themselves from predators. They are not real strong or very fast. Lambs are dependent on a care taker. Lambs need a shepherd. Jesus often used the plants and animals of His time and place to teach important lessons. Jesus taught an important lesson with sheep.

The Bible sometimes compares human beings to sheep. “All we like sheep have gone astray.” We don’t know how to protect ourselves from our enemy the devil. We easily get lost. Like sheep we are tempted to follow others who might lead us astray.

The Bible has Good News for us. Jesus says, “I am the good shepherd.” Our Good Shepherd knows us and protects us. Jesus as the Good Shepherd “lays down His life for the sheep.” Jesus, the Shepherd, is willing to die for the sheep.

The song says, “I am Jesus’ little lamb.” We have a Shepherd who knows every little lamb by name. We have a Good Shepherd who protects us. Jesus says that nothing will ever keep us from Him. Like sheep we follow the Shepherd who gave His life for us. We faithfully follow our Shepherd every day. As we follow Him, He will lead us to heaven.

Conclusion

King David, who himself was a shepherd, wrote a psalm about our God who is our Shepherd.

Review Ps. 23 together.

Prayer

“Savior, like a shepherd lead us; Much we need Your tender care. In Your pleasant pastures feed us For our use Your fold prepare. Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, You have bought us; we are Yours. Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, You have bought us; we are Yours” (LSB 711, verse 1).

Scriptures:

Acts 4:1-12; 1 John 3:16-24; John 10:11-18 (Fourth Sunday of Easter)

Text:

John 10:11-18

Song:

“I Am Jesus’ Little Lamb”
(LSB 740); (AGPS 125)

Visual:

Lambs (picture of lambs, accumulation of stuffed animal lambs). In some rural communities a live little lamb may be available for the children to see and touch.



WEEK 38

Bearing Fruit

Scriptures:

Acts 8:26-40; 1 John 4:1-11; John 15:1-8 (Fifth Sunday of Easter)

Text:

John 15:1-8

Song:

"Creator Spirit, By Whose Aid" (LSB 500); "The Fruit of the Spirit" (AGPS 225)

Visual:

Bunch of grapes. (Perhaps have a grape "snack" for the children following the service.) Additional pictures of a vineyard or a grapevine also would be helpful.

Introduction

Do you like fruit? Do you like grapes? Where did these grapes come from? How are grapes grown?

Outline

Jesus often told stories and used illustrations that His listeners could understand. In the land where Jesus lived there were many vineyards. Jesus may have been looking at one of the many vineyards when He said, "I am the vine; you are the branches."

The vine is the thickest and strongest part of the plant. The vine reaches down into the ground. The vine receives the water and nutrients from the soil. Jesus said, "I am the Vine." As the resurrected Lord, Jesus gives life to everyone. He is the only Vine that connects us to the Heavenly Father. Branches stay alive only if they are connected to the vine. Branches that are not connected wither and die. If we are not connected to Jesus we are spiritually dead. We would be lost forever.

The Good News is that God has attached us to Himself. In our Baptism we have been attached to the Vine that is Jesus. Healthy branches connected to a vine look green and healthy. They also produce fruit. Jesus said, "Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit."

We don't see any apples, oranges or grapes hanging from our fingers or ears or any other part of us. Jesus isn't talking about real fruit. Jesus is talking about the fruit of our faith. Believing in Jesus we want to obey His commandments; we want to please Him; we want others to see that we are attached to Jesus. The apostle Paul describes some of the faith fruit (fruits of the Spirit) in Galatians, Chapter 5 (love, joy, peace, etc.). These are the fruit that show that Jesus is our Vine.

Conclusion

Depending on the size of the school, the names of the children could be attached to a vine, demonstrating that we are attached to the Vine, Jesus Christ.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank You for revealing Yourself through Your Word as the "I Am" Lord. We celebrate that You are our Shepherd, Way, Truth, Life, Light and Vine. Thank You for connecting us to You, our Vine. Help me to be fruitful for Your glory. Amen.

God's Favorites

Introduction

What's your favorite food? What's your favorite game? What's your favorite team? Who's your favorite baseball player? What's/who's your favorite _____? It's fun to have favorites.

Outline

Do you think God has favorites? As we read the Old Testament we read how God chose Abraham and told him that his family would be special to God. From Abraham's family all the nations of the earth would be blessed. When we read about the Old Testament kings we discover that God had a special love for King David. In one sense they were God's favorites.

God reminded them often that He had not chosen them because they were better looking or they were smarter or more powerful than anyone else. God chose them out of His grace. From the family of Abraham and David God had promised to send the Savior. We've celebrated again how Jesus came and suffered and died and rose again.

Even after Jesus' resurrection some of the family of Abraham and David (the Jewish people) still thought they were God's favorite because of their heritage. They expected everyone to keep all the family customs of the Old Testament. In today's Bible reading God shares a special lesson with Peter and His Church. The Bible says, "God shows no partiality." When it comes to sin, everyone is a sinner. When it comes to His grace God doesn't play favorites. God wants everyone to be part of His family.

God doesn't have a favorite country, culture, color of skin or anything else that we might note as a difference between people. God treats everyone the same and He wants us to treat everyone the same also. We treat every person with respect. We want to share the Good News with everyone.

Conclusion

Is _____ Lutheran School God's favorite? Yes! But so is every other school. Is first grade God's favorite? Yes! But so is every other grade.

Prayer

Thank You, Jesus, for choosing each one of us to be Your favorite. Help us tell the friends in our neighborhood and the children around the world, "God loves you and He died to make you His favorite." Amen.

Scriptures:

Acts 10:34-48; 1 John 5:1-8; John 15:9-17 (Sixth Sunday of Easter)

Text:

Acts 10:34-35 (God shows no partiality)

Song:

"Lord of All Nations, Grant Me Grace" (LSB 844); (AGPS 168)

Visual:

Collection of favorite things: foods, games, souvenirs of sports teams, etc.

Scriptures:

Acts 1:12-26; 1 John 5:9-15; John 17:11-19 (Seventh Sunday of Easter)

Text:

John 17:11-19

Song:

"What A Friend We Have in Jesus" (LSB 770); (AGPS 261)

Visual:

Pictures or examples of partners: tennis partners, work partners, play partners, husband and wife, etc.

WEEK 40

Standing with *Prayer Partners*

Introduction

I have shared some examples of partners with you. What does it mean to have a partner? A partner is someone we do something with. Sometimes your teacher or coach might say, "Pick a partner." We pick someone to work with or play with.

Outline

Today's Bible reading introduces us to a special prayer partner. The prayer partner is Jesus. When Jesus was on earth He spent a lot of time praying. He knew it was important for Him to talk to His Heavenly Father. He often asked the disciples to pray with Him. (Share examples of Jesus in prayer.)

In today's Bible reading Jesus has been teaching His disciples in the Upper Room shortly before He goes to the cross to suffer and die. Before Jesus leaves to face His arrest, He prays. In the verses read to you today, Jesus prays for His disciples. He is their prayer partner. The disciples would face many challenges after Jesus ascended to heaven and left them. Jesus reminded them that they would never be alone. He would always be with them. He would always be praying for them.

Jesus not only suffered, died and rose again for us. He promises to be with us always and He continues to pray for us. Why do you suppose Jesus is praying for us? Why do we need Him to pray for us?

Jesus invites us to be prayer partners with one another. As members of Jesus' church we are prayer partners. Every Sunday in worship we take time to pray. The pastor shares the prayers of the church and we pray the Lord's Prayer. How are we prayer partners at school? Why do we need to pray for one another? What do we pray for one another? Not only are we praying for one another but Jesus is praying with us and for us.

Conclusion

Read and review the First Petition of the Lord's Prayer and the Conclusion of the Lord's Prayer.

Prayer

If the setting allows have children choose (or assign) prayer partners for the remainder of the service or for another setting. The prayer partners pray for one another and also pray together for others.

Standing in the *Spirit*

Introduction

Review the Trinity. How many Gods are there? (One!) How many persons are there in the One God? (Three!) We celebrate the three Persons when we begin our worship in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are reminded of the Persons and presence of our God in some of the artwork and symbols in our church. We are reminded of the Holy Spirit in the symbols of the dove (because the dove was a sign of the Spirit at Jesus' Baptism) and the flame. We're going to learn about the flame today.

Outline

Jesus had promised that after His resurrection and ascension that He would send the Spirit. The disciples did not know exactly when or how that would happen. The disciples went to Jerusalem and waited.

Many believers were gathered in Jerusalem for a special Jewish festival — Pentecost. It was a celebration 50 days after the Jewish Passover. It also happened to be 50 days after Jesus' resurrection and God was about to add a new meaning to this day. The Bible tells us that a wind blew through the assembly and “tongues of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them.” It was a sign of the Spirit's presence.

God had used fire several times in the Bible as a sign of His presence. God came to Moses in a burning bush. God led the children of Israel with a pillar of fire. At the Pentecost gathering the people knew that God was with them because they saw a sign of His presence in the tongues of fire.

The Holy Spirit comes to us. He doesn't come as fire on our heads. The Spirit comes to us in the water of our Baptism. We know Jesus because of the work of the Holy Spirit. When we were baptized, God put faith in Jesus in our hearts. At our Baptism the pastor blessed us, “The almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given you the new birth of water and of the Spirit and has forgiven all your sins, strengthen you with His grace to life everlasting.” You received the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is more than a symbol in our church and school. He is really present. The Spirit is in you! The Spirit makes you “on fire” for Jesus.

Conclusion

Read and review the Third Article of Apostles' Creed.

Prayer

Holy Spirit, thank You for the gift of faith. Glow in me and through me. Amen.

Scriptures:

Ezek. 37:1-14; Acts 2:1-21;
John 15:26-27, 16:4-15
(Pentecost)

Text:

Acts 2:1-21

Song:

“Holy Spirit Light Divine”
(LSB 486); (AGPS 120)

Visual:

Point out symbols of the Trinity in the church and school. Point out symbols of the Holy Spirit (dove, flame) in the church and school.

Scriptures:

Is. 6:1-8; Acts 2:14a, 22-36; John 3:1-17 (Trinity Sunday)

Text:

Is. 6:1-8

Song:

"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence" (LSB 621); (AGPS 154)

Visual:

Chapel leader has dirty hands, dirty mouth (perhaps chocolate frosting or some other food on face), dirty clothes, etc.

WEEK 42

Standing in the Presence of the Holy God

Introduction

Do you notice anything "different" about my appearance today? (You're dirty!) What do I have to do? (You need to get cleaned up.) Today we're going to learn about a dirty prophet and how God cleaned His prophet.

Outline

In the Old Testament God chose some special people to share His message with His people. They were people who did different jobs and had different personalities. His messengers were priests, farmers, shepherds, etc. God chose them in different ways. Some He chose very dramatically. One of these messengers was Isaiah.

God came to Isaiah in a vision. Isaiah saw God sitting on a throne. There were angels all around the throne. The angels were singing praises to God, "Holy, holy, holy." Isaiah was very impressed with the vision and very frightened by it. He said, "I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." In other words, "I'm dirty!"

Are you dirty? Sometimes your parents tell you to go and clean up. Sometimes your teachers will remind you to wash your hands. There is another kind of dirtiness. We are all dirty with sin. When God looks at us He sees dirty hands, dirty mouth and dirty hearts. We need to get clean.

One of the angels touched Isaiah's lips with a burning coal. The angel told Isaiah, "This has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for." Isaiah stood cleanly before the holy God.

God doesn't clean us with hot coals. God touched us with the cool waters of Baptism. As God touched us in Baptism, He also touched us and cleaned us with the blood of Jesus. We too stand before God clean and holy.

Conclusion

Read and review the Second Petition of the Lord's Prayer.

Prayer

"Holy God, we praise Thy name; Lord of all, we bow before Thee. All on earth Thy scepter claim, All in heav'n above adore Thee. Infinite Thy vast domain, Everlasting is Thy reign" (LSB 940).

WEEK 43

I'm Home!

Introduction

Have you ever been some place and walked back into your house (apartment, etc.) and said, "It's great to be home!" Why might we say that (Home is familiar, comfortable, safe, etc.)?

Outline

We thank God for our homes. Some children are "homeless" — they don't have a place to call home. There are other children in parts of the world that live in very simple homes — grass huts or simple tents.

Sometimes we also talk about our church and school as "home." We have our friends and family here. The school has been a kind of "home" for us for the last nine months. Even though we will have a few months away from school, many of us will come to this home again in the fall.

Our school and church are temporary homes. We live there for only a few years or for part of our life. These homes get old and need repairs. Sometimes we move to another home. In today's Bible reading the apostle Paul talks about earthly homes that are destroyed. Because of sin our earthly homes don't last forever.

Jesus promised that He would go and prepare a place for us. As children of God we have another home in the kingdom of God. The Bible talks about this perfect home that is a mansion. The best part of this home is that Jesus is there and we get to be with Jesus forever. What's it going to be like to be at home with Jesus?

Conclusion

What's your street address? (Children can respond.) Your street address is a temporary address. Your permanent address is "The Kingdom of God."

Prayer

"Jerusalem, my happy home, When shall I come to thee? When shall my sorrows have an end? Thy joys when shall I see? O Christ, do Thou my soul prepare For that bright home of love That I may see Thee and adore With all Thy saints above" (LSB 673, verse 1, 6).

Scriptures:

Gen. 3:8-15; 2 Cor. 4:13-5:1; Mark 3:20-35

Text:

2 Cor. 5:1

Song:

"I'm But a Stranger Here" (LSB 748); "This is the Feast of Victory" (AGPS 242)

Visual:

Pictures of homes. Perhaps ask some children to bring a picture of their home. The leader also could show pictures of different kinds of homes from around the world.

Scriptures:

Ps. 130:1-3; 1 Peter 5:12-14; Matt. 7:24-27

Text:

1 Peter 5:12-14

Song:

"Amazing Grace! How Sweet the Sound" (LSB 744); (AGPS 63)

Visual:

Pictures (memories) of places where children and staff have stood during the school year.

CLOSING SERVICE

Standing in the *Grace* of God

Introduction

Many times during our worship this year we have talked about "standing." We've been doing a lot of standing this year at _____ Lutheran Church and School. Let's review some of the places and reasons we've stood: stood in chapel for prayer, stood in line _____, stood and cheered for our team, stood at/for _____.

Outline

The apostle Peter stood with Jesus many times. He stood and saw Jesus' miracles. He stood outside in a courtyard and denied knowing Jesus. He stood outside the empty tomb on Easter. Peter stood and saw Jesus ascend into heaven.

On Pentecost Sunday Peter stood and preached to the assembly that Jesus had died for their sins and risen again. Peter invited the crowd to stand with him in faith with Jesus. Through the apostle Peter God shared His Word with the Church. Peter is privileged to write about "the true grace of God." Peter reminds us that we are blessed to stand in the presence of God. As sinners we stand outside of God's presence. We don't deserve to stand next to Him.

Jesus has taken away our sins. We are God's children. God does all that out of His grace and mercy. We stand in the mercy of God. We stand together as the Church. Peter says, "Stand firm in it." The Holy Spirit keeps us in faith and helps us stand firm. The Spirit helps us face temptation and to stand with and for Jesus.

Where are you going to stand this summer? (Stand on a ball diamond; stand in the mountains, beach, stand in a park, swimming pool, amusement park, etc.) We're going to stand in many different places.

Wherever we are we stand in His grace and mercy.

Conclusion

We have been privileged to hear about God's grace every day in our school. It's important that we stand firm in that grace that we heard about during the school year and continue to receive God's grace during the summer. We do that as a family in our devotional times. We do that as we gather with our church family in worship. We stand with our church and school friends in Sunday school and vacation Bible school.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank You for standing with us this year at our Lutheran school. Bless us as we keep standing in Your mercy this summer. Amen.



THE
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