

Equipped to serve



CHAPEL TALKS
for *LUTHERAN SCHOOLS*

2011-2012

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Chapel Talks for Lutheran Schools 2011 – 2012

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Chapel Talks for Lutheran Schools

2011 – 2012

Dear Chapel Leader:

Do you realize what an important task you have accepted as you prepare a chapel talk for your school family? You are not alone as you prepare. God is with you. He is your Helper and Friend. Ask Him to speak through you as you present His Holy Word and what it means to children, teachers, helpers and visitors in your chapel services.

In this booklet, you will find suggested chapel messages for each week of the school year. They are original talks, written by educators and pastors who serve Lutheran schools.

You may find the following helpful as you prepare for children's chapel services:

- Pray for the Spirit to speak through your words.
- Review the outline for the chapel service. Note that the outlines reflect the writers' personal styles.
- Consider the season of the church year, the holiday, or special observance that may fall during that week.
- Gather material or find suitable substitutes for the visual element.
- Personalize and expand the outline to meet the needs of the students.
- Be sure to read and/or retell the Bible readings.
- Choose an order of service. *Lutheran Service Book (LSB)* and *All God's People Sing! (AGPS)* are the suggested resources for hymns, songs and orders of service.
- Select your vocabulary with the children's various developmental levels in mind. Define words that children may not know, especially if the children do not come from a religious background.
- Scripture readings are from the lectionary for the Sunday preceding chapel.
- Pray for God's guidance and direction as you lead the chapel service. Ask God to help you speak to each child and teacher's heart.

William D. Cochran
Director of Lutheran Schools
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod



Students featured on the cover represent Concordia Lutheran School, Conover, N.C.; Unity Lutheran Christian School, East St. Louis, Ill.; Salem Lutheran School, Orange, Calif.; and West Portal Lutheran School, San Francisco, Calif.

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Week of August 14 Chosen for God's Team

Scripture: Isaiah 56:1, 6–8; Romans 11:1–2a, 13–15, 28–32; Matthew 15:21–28
Text: Matthew 15:21–28
Songs: “Someone Special” *AGPS* 217; “Jesus Sinners Doth Receive” *LSB* 609
Visuals: Prepare 6–8 students to be chosen for two teams. Introduce the students to the process, especially emphasizing the teaching point to those who may be chosen last.

Introduction

These students are going to be organized into two teams (athletic or academic). [Select two captains, and have them begin the selection process. “I choose . . .” Continue until the two teams are complete. Ask the team members some questions about the process.] What do you think about your team? How did it feel to be chosen first? How did it feel to be chosen last?

Outline

1. Many of us have experienced the process of being selected for a team, a part in the school play, etc. When we are among the first selected or the one chosen for the solo, lead role, etc., we are excited and thankful. When we are not one of the first chosen or when we are not selected, we may feel sad and left out. Today's Bible story tells us about a woman who may have felt left out. She was a Gentile (not a member of the chosen family of Israel). She was a woman (women were looked down upon in the culture). She had a daughter whose life was controlled by a demon.
2. Jesus was traveling about, showing that He was the almighty Son of God. He was healing people and feeding people. He was showing that God the Father had chosen Him to save the world. He was the only member of God the Father's “team” who could save the world from sin. Some thought Jesus had come only for the family of Israel. They thought they might deserve to be on God's team because of their family name or because they thought they acted more holy than others.
3. Jesus says to the woman, “I choose you!” He chose the woman because of His love for her. She believed in Him and Jesus complimented her, “Great is your faith.” In our Baptism, God says to us, “I choose you” to be on “My team”—the church. God chooses us not because we are good in math, basketball, music, or any other activity. He chooses us because He loves us and wants us to be part of His kingdom now and forever.

Conclusion

Together we are part of a team called _____ Lutheran Church and School. God has chosen you to be here to grow as His child. He also has chosen us to invite others onto His team. We have the privilege of telling our friends and family: “God picks you too!”

Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank You for choosing us. Bless us as we learn together and serve together as Your team in our school and church. Amen.

RR

Week of August 21 Keys of the Kingdom

Scripture: Isaiah 51:1–6; Romans 11:33–12:8; Matthew 16:13–20
Text: Matthew 16:13–20
Songs: “Amazing Grace! How Sweet the Sound” *AGPS* 63, “Amazing Grace” *LSB* 744;
“Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive” *AGPS* 96, *LSB* 843
Visuals: Several sets of keys

Introduction

Have your parents (or teachers) ever misplaced keys? Adults panic if they can't find the keys to the house, car, classroom, or other place that might be locked. My keys are very important to me. Today's lesson talks about the “keys of the kingdom.” God gave His church some important keys.

Outline

1. We have a number of Biblical illustrations to help us understand what Jesus is like: light, shepherd, bread. We might add to that list “Jesus is The Key.” Because of sin, we can picture the door to heaven as locked. The almighty, holy God is in His throne room and because we are sinful and separated from Him, we have no chance of getting in. Jesus is The Key.
2. Peter is blessed by the Holy Spirit to confess who Jesus is: “You are the Christ.” Jesus is the Promised One who came to suffer and die for us. By His suffering and death, He unlocked the door to heaven. Peter is blessed to believe that Jesus opened heaven for him and for all who believe in Jesus. When we are baptized, we can imagine that God has given us the keys to heaven. Because Jesus has forgiven all our sins, heaven is always open to those who believe in Jesus. We never have to worry about losing the keys! God's keeps the keys in our heart.
3. Jesus does something very special for Peter, the disciples and the church. Jesus gives him the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Peter and the disciples would have the privilege of telling the world about the forgiveness of sins. When they told people “your sins are forgiven,” heaven was unlocked for them. Jesus gives those keys to the church. When your pastor announces, “As a called and ordained servant of Christ . . . I forgive you all your sins . . . ,” he is using the keys of the church. When a person is baptized, the pastor is using the keys. Your pastor has the church keys!

Conclusion

You have keys too! Keys are given to the children, teachers and parents of _____ Lutheran School. When a classmate says, “I'm sorry, will you forgive me?” you can say, “I forgive you.” More importantly, you can say, “Jesus forgives you!” Let's use our keys this school year.

Prayer

Jesus, You are The Key to heaven. We rejoice that we know that the doors to heaven are unlocked for us. We are privileged to hold and share Your precious keys. Help us share them frequently and joyfully. Amen.
RR

Week of August 28 What to Do

Scripture: Jeremiah 15:15–21; Romans 12:9–21; Matthew 16:21–28
Text: Romans 12:9–21
Songs: “Go, My Children, with My Blessing” *AGPS* 102, *LSB* 922;
“A Time to Serve” *AGPS* 54

Visual: Several sheets of paper representing a list of things to do

Introduction

[Wave your long list in the air; look exasperated.] Oh, I have such a long list; I don’t know how I’ll ever get to the end of it. Yes, this is the list of today’s assignments for the fifth grade [adjust to your circumstances]. It will take an entire class period just to tell them the work that’s due tomorrow. Okay, okay relax. It’s not really a list of assignments. It’s a list of ways that we can show that we are Christians. Can you guess some of the things that might be on this list? [Encourage responses without comment.]

Outline

1. We don’t need to guess how believers can show they’re Christians. (What if we guessed wrong?) The Bible tells us, and the list is quite long. Listen to Romans 12:9–21, and see if you can count the number of ways. [Read the text.] How many ways did you count? I counted 26.
2. Let’s see how many we remember. [Encourage responses; offer prompts based on the reading.]
3. Would you say there are enough ways to show that you are a Christian no matter who you are? No matter what your skills and talents are? No matter how smart or athletic or musical you are? No matter your age or height or weight? Yes, all Christians have more than a few ways to show that they are Christians.
4. Here is a very important question: Even if you could show that you were a Christian all 26 ways that we heard, would that be enough to take you to heaven? Would it make Jesus love you more? No. You can’t get to heaven by being a good Christian. You can’t earn Jesus’ love.
5. No matter how many ways we show we’re Christians, there are lots and lots of ways that we fail to show we are Christians. There are lots and lots of ways that we show we are sinners. Does that mean we won’t go to heaven? Does that mean Jesus loves us less? No.

Conclusion

Jesus is the only reason we go to heaven. He lived a perfect life—one God demanded of us that we are unable to do. He died as a sacrifice for our sins—to pay for our sins. Then He rose from the dead, and that proved He won the war on sin and the devil. He did it all, so why should we show that we are Christians? We want to show that we are Christians because Jesus loved us in all 26 ways—and more. Because of what Jesus did for you and me, we can do all kinds of good things for others.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank You for taking away our sins. Send Your Holy Spirit to help us show Jesus’ love to others. Amen.

EG

Week of September 4 The Greatest

Scripture: Ezekiel 33:7–9; Romans 13:1–10; Matthew 18:1–20
Text: Matthew 18:1–4
Songs: “God Loves Me Dearly” *AGPS* 109, *LSB* 392;
“Beloved, Let Us Love One Another” *AGPS* 72
Visuals: Basketball and several student volunteers as well as a pastor or teacher

Introduction

Ask for several volunteers. Be sure to select a range of students from different grade levels, including some of the very youngest and the oldest. It also would be helpful to have one of your more athletic, older students come forward.

Outline

1. Imagine that we’re going to have an assembly this afternoon. We will get together for some games, including a basketball game, and we’re going to divide into teams.
2. Look at the students I have brought up here. If you were chosen to be a captain for one of the teams, who would you choose first? Second? [Assuming that most students will choose the older students first, ask them why they chose as they did.]
3. Sure, these older students are bigger, probably stronger, and have more experience playing the game. You might assume that they are the best players, and you would probably be correct.
4. In today’s lesson, Jesus’ disciples asked Him who was the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. In a way, they were asking, “Who is the best or most important?” And they received a rather surprising answer from Jesus. Who did He say was the greatest? Yes, a little child.
5. [Now ask a pastor or teacher to come forward and join the group.] What if, instead of a basketball game this afternoon, I said that we were going to play Bible Baseball or have some sort of contest where your Bible knowledge is important? Now whom would you choose first? Why?
6. [Thank those who came forward and have them return to their seats.] Most of the time we choose what is best for ourselves. We might choose the tallest student, Pastor _____ or Teacher _____.
7. It is our sinfulness that causes us to make such choices—our nature and desire to put ourselves ahead of others in this case— to win at something. That’s probably what the disciples were doing when they asked Jesus this question in the first place. It is likely they were expecting Him to say that they were greater than others or maybe even who was the greatest disciple.

Conclusion

“Unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” Jesus teaches that we are headed in the wrong direction if we seek to become greater than others. Instead, being part of God’s kingdom means living a life of service and putting others ahead of ourselves, just as Jesus set aside His glory to die for us. In addition, when Jesus used a little child to answer the question, He reminds us that we need to humble ourselves like little children and be completely dependent upon Jesus, who took away our sins and gave us power to serve Him.

Prayer

Jesus, thank You for setting aside Your glory and giving Your life to save us from our sins. Amen.
CJS

Week of September 11 Forgiveness

Scripture: Genesis 50:15–21; Romans 14:1–12; Matthew 18:21–35
Text: Matthew 18:21–35
Songs: “Forgive Our Sins As We Forgive” *AGPS* 96, *LSB* 843;
“Go, My Children, with My Blessing” *AGPS* 102, *LSB* 922
Visuals: 10 dimes and possibly some type of display board to write on – paper and easel is fine

Introduction

In last week’s lesson, we learned from Jesus about being humble, not thinking more highly of ourselves than we should, and putting others first. That’s one of the characteristics with which God equips us to serve Him. God also equips people to forgive as they have been forgiven.

Outline

1. In today’s lesson, Peter asked Jesus how much we should forgive another person, and he uses an example from the Old Testament. An Old Testament passage says to forgive a person three times. Therefore, when Peter asks if we should forgive seven times, it is like saying twice as many times as it says in the Old Testament (2×3) plus one more. $2 \times 3 = 6 + 1$ more = 7. Pretty good, huh?
2. To answer Peter’s question, and more importantly, to help us learn how God forgives us, Jesus tells a parable about a couple of men who borrowed money. What does it mean to borrow?
3. [Call two students forward.] In today’s lesson, two men borrowed money, one a small amount and the other a large amount. [Use the two students to demonstrate what took place.]
4. Why was the king so upset with the first man? Yes, he owed much and had been forgiven much but would not show even a tiny bit of forgiveness to the second man.
5. There are other ways to compare what each man owed, and don’t get too caught up in the mathematics, but a display may be handy to explain just a bit about the numbers. Explain that we’re going to use the 10 dimes to represent what the second man owed to the first man. A dime is about the size of a *denarii* and we want to think more of its visual size than actual monetary value. (One estimate on actual value, if you choose to go that direction, likens this as a \$50 debt compared to a \$1 billion debt.)
6. Another way of looking at this debt is visually. The 10 dimes weigh about half a pound and can be easily carried in one student’s pocket. To carry what the first man owed to the king, one person estimated we would need about 8,000 men, strong men like soldiers, each carrying 60 pounds of gold. Lined up a couple feet apart, that many men would stretch out for over five miles. (60 pounds is about the weight of a second grader. Keep in mind this example is visual, not exact value.)

Conclusion

Comparing what these men owed, we might say the first man’s debt to the king was a fortune, more money than you can imagine. The second man’s debt was merely a few coins, so little that we could carry it in our pocket. The forgiveness God calls on each of us to show one another is tiny compared to the great love and forgiveness God has showered on us for Jesus’ sake.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank You for Your great love and forgiveness. By Your Holy Spirit, give us the strength to share that same forgiveness freely with others. Amen.

CJS

Week of September 18 Unfair or Generous?

Scripture: Isaiah 55:6–9; Philippians 1:12–14; Matthew 20:1–16
Text: Matthew 20:1–16
Songs: “Amigos de Cristo” *AGPS* 64;
“Father Welcomes All His Children” *AGPS* 95, “Father Welcomes” *LSB* 605
Visuals: 3 candy bars or some type of treat, but make sure they are identical
A bucket and some bean bags or a similar type tossing game

Introduction

[Briefly review the chapel theme, **Equipped to Serve**.] In the past two weeks, we’ve learned that by the power of the Holy Spirit, God equips us to serve Him and one another in a spirit of humility and forgiveness. In today’s lesson, we will learn about generosity, especially God’s generosity toward us.

Outline

1. Bring out the bucket and bean bags. It would probably be good to have 8 or 10 bean bags. Some other tossing game may be substituted (ring toss or some other bag tossing game).
2. I’ve brought a game along to chapel today, and I need three students to come forward and play. I also have prizes, so do your very best. [DO NOT show the prizes.]
3. Select three students, perhaps one from the lower grades, one from the middle, and one from the upper grades. Set the students up some distance away where it is likely that they won’t all have the same amount of success, but where it is likely the oldest student might make the most shots.
4. Each of you will get the same number of tries to get bean bags into the bucket. I’d like the rest of the students to keep score. [Then allow each student to toss the bags.]
5. Who made the most or had the highest score? [Place the students in order of finish.]
6. Wow, that’s great, and I have a prize for each of you. For first place, here is a candy bar (or whatever you’ve brought). [Proceed with the remaining prizes for second and third. All the same.]
7. Watch for reactions from the students, both those playing as well as others who did the counting. You will likely find some who feel all three getting the same prize is “unfair.” Explore that feeling.
8. In today’s lesson, Jesus tells a parable about workers who are hired to work in a vineyard. At the end of the day, all the workers are paid the same amount, no matter if they worked all day or just part of the day. Some of the workers cry, “Unfair!” just as some of you did for the game. Why did you think it was unfair?

Conclusion

We are used to getting paid or rewarded by how much work we do or how high we finish, but in Jesus’ parable, He is teaching about the kingdom of heaven. God wants all people to enter the kingdom, and it doesn’t matter whether they come to faith in Him when they are very young or when they are old. In our sinfulness, we might say this is “unfair,” but God is generous, His love is great, and He desires all people to be saved.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank You for the amazing love You show to us. Help us remember it is what You have done that has won for us the prize of heaven and eternal life with You and to share that Good News with others.
Amen.
CJS

Week of September 25 Like-Minded

Scripture: Ezekiel 18:1–4, 25–32; Philippians 2:1–4 (5–13) 14–18; Matthew 21:23–32
Text: Philippians 2:1–11
Songs: “Jesus, Name above All Names” *AGPS* 145; “Christ Be My Leader” *AGPS* 81, *LSB* 861
Visuals: A few volunteer students

Introduction

In our first few weeks of chapel, we learned how very much God wants everyone to spend eternity with Him in heaven. God calls us to Himself, and He uses us to bring other people to Him as well. Jesus—who lived, died and rose from the dead to take away our sins—teaches us to show love, humility, forgiveness and generosity to others as we seek to bring them to Him.

Outline

1. I need some volunteer helpers again this week. [You can bring forward as many as you feel comfortable handling for a couple of games.]
2. There are two games I’d like to play with you today. The first is ‘Simon Says’. How many know how to play? [If needed, explain the game briefly and then play a few rounds.] What is the object of ‘Simon Says’? [Play the game – there is no need to knock everyone out or get down to just one but eliminate some players.]
3. OK, now a second game: ‘Follow the Leader’. [Proceed to walk around the sanctuary having the children follow you. Perhaps take a minute at the end to act out some poses or gestures, allowing the students to copy this as well.]
4. Great, that was fun. I hope you enjoyed the games and thank you for your help. You can return to your seat.
5. What’s the main difference between the two games we just played? [Explore how ‘Simon Says’ was much more competitive, you trying to knock students out of the game and everyone tries hard to be the last one left. By comparison, ‘Follow the Leader’ was played at a slower pace with care given not to lose anyone along the way.]
6. In today’s lesson, St. Paul calls on us to have an attitude like Jesus. He says that we should have “the same mind” as Jesus. That means thinking and acting like Jesus.
7. We can think and act like Jesus because by taking away our sins, He enabled us to serve Him.

Conclusion

Jesus doesn’t bark out commands like in Simon Says, hurrying us along, trying to get us confused and lost. That sounds more like what Satan does when he misleads us or, even like what we sometimes do in trying to trick one another. No, Jesus invites us to “follow Him,” much like I did in Follow the Leader. By His example, Jesus shows us love, humility, forgiveness and generosity, giving us everything not because of anything we have done but rather because He loves us so very much. Now, He invites us to serve Him and others by showing that same generous love and forgiveness to everyone we meet.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for the love You have shown in sending Jesus to be our Savior. Thank You for the Holy Spirit, who has called us by name and made us Your dear children and servants. Amen.

CJS

Week of October 2 First Place

Scripture: Isaiah 5:1–7; Philippians 3:4b–14; Matthew 21:33–46
Texts: Philippians 3:7–9; 12–14
Songs: “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” *AGPS* 266; *LSB* 425, 426;
“Christ Is Surely Coming” *LSB* 509
Visuals: Awards, certificates, trophies, ribbons – symbols of winning (either personal or for the school)

Introduction

Soon it will be time for Major League Baseball’s World Series. The winning team will be awarded the Commissioner’s Trophy—a symbol that it is the best team. I have brought with me some other symbols of being the best. [As you hold up each award, etc., share with the students what it signifies – extraordinary effort, great team work and how it forever marks you (or the school) as a champion – the best in the race.]

Outline

1. In our text for today, St. Paul shares that he was a champion, but he wasn’t talking about a baseball game, a basketball game, or even a football game. He was trying to be the best in order to go to heaven. He didn’t have awards, certificates, trophies, or ribbons. What he had were things he did: He belonged to the right group of people, he studied hard, he did everything his church said to do, and he obeyed the laws better than he obeyed anybody. If there were a trophy for being the best in his church, he would have won it.
2. Awards, certificates, trophies and ribbons are good things. It is a good thing to train hard and play well, but will trophies and awards get you into heaven? [Have students shout, “No!”]
3. St. Paul knew that all he did would not get him into heaven either. [Read Philippians 3:12–14.] He knew that no awards or certificates would save him. It is only through faith in Jesus Christ that we receive heaven. He knew he couldn’t be made perfect by anything he did; it was Christ who died on the cross and rose from the dead that gave him the faith that he would be in heaven—that gave him the best prize ever.
4. It’s a good thing to want to work hard and win first place. It is fun to be on a team and work hard to win. It is fun to cheer for our favorite team and celebrate when the team wins. But like St. Paul, we must remember that we will never win enough contests or be good enough on our own to enter heaven. It is Christ who saves us through His death and by rising from the dead for each of us.

Conclusion

Some of us here today may never win an award, certificate, trophy, or ribbon for sports or for being the best in a subject or knowing how to spell words, but that doesn’t mean we are worth nothing. Jesus loves each of us so much that He took our sins on Himself and died and rose for us. Jesus gives us the best gift of all – heaven – not because of how good we are, but because of how much He loves us.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank You for loving us no matter how many awards we win or don’t win. Thank You for Your love on the cross and through the empty tomb that gave us heaven. Let us always share this Good News.
Amen.
RC

Week of October 9 **You Are Cordially Invited**

Scripture: Isaiah 25:6–9; Philippians 4:4–13; Matthew 22:1–14
Text: Matthew 22:1–14
Songs: “His Banner Over Me Is Love” *AGPS* 118;
“Spread the Reign of God the Lord” *LSB* 830
Visuals: Various invitations – birthday party, prom, etc. One invitation should include the words “formal attire.”

Introduction

Hold up and read various types of invitations. Have students share for what event they would be invited, for example: child’s birthday, wedding, anniversary party, etc. End with the invitation that says, “formal attire.”

Outline

1. We may receive many invitations in our lifetime. When you are invited, it is because the person who invited you thinks you are a special person and wants you to help celebrate. I have received invitations for birthday parties, weddings, dances, etc. I also have invited guests to come celebrate with me.
2. When we receive an invitation, what is the first thing we must do? That’s right – we must look at the calendar. We have to make sure we have not said we will go somewhere else first. If we are free to attend, then what must we do? That’s right – we must make sure we are prepared. If it’s a birthday party, what will we have to do? (gift) If it is a wedding, what must we do? (gift) OK, then what is the last thing we need to do before we go? That’s right – we need to make sure we are dressed correctly. Would you wear a swimsuit to a swim party? (yes) . . . to a professional baseball game? (no) Would you wear shorts to a summer barbecue? (yes) . . . to a wedding? (no) What if you wore shorts and a T-shirt to a formal attire affair? (Asked to leave.)
3. What if we said we were going to attend a party but then didn’t go—would that be right? Suppose we were invited to a swim party but had no swimsuit —would that be a good thing?
4. Jesus told a parable about a king who invited lots of people to a wedding, but the people didn’t go. Was that a good thing? He then sent his friends to invite the people again, but they still wouldn’t attend. What did the king do? He invited many other people—and they had a good time. However, there was a problem; one of the guests didn’t wear the clothes the king gave him to wear to the party. The king was mad and made the man leave.

Conclusion

God has invited us all to the best party ever—to be with Him in heaven. He sent the invitation to us in the Bible. He even gave us the clothes to wear for the party. He dresses us in the perfect clothes given to us through Jesus. Jesus gave us the robe of Righteousness when He died and rose for us. The gift is ours, but we can choose not to attend or choose not to wear the clothes Jesus gives us. That would not be good, for then we can’t go to the party.

Prayer

Dear God, thank You for the gift of heaven. Thank You for the gift of perfect clothes given to us by Jesus. Help us invite others to the heavenly party. Amen.

RC

Week of October 16 What's in a Name?

Scripture: Isaiah 45:1–7; 1 Thessalonians 1:1–10; Matthew 22:15–22
Texts: Isaiah 45:4–6; 1 Thessalonians 1:4
Songs: “I Am a ‘C’ *AGPS* 124; “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name” *AGPS* 56, *LSB* 549
Visuals: Examples of genealogical meaning of names, coats of arms, birth certificates, baptismal certificates, etc.

Introduction

On the count of three, I want you all to shout out your name: one, two, three! [Everyone shouts out their names.] Wow, that was fun, but it was hard to hear each of you because we all have different names. Do you know what your name means?

Outline

1. Our names have meaning, for they tell everyone who we are and whose we are. My name tells everyone that I am [say your name], and that I belong to the family [say your family name]. These tell us who I am [hold up and explain visuals]. Names are very important.
2. Do you know what your name means? For example, the name *Sophia* means *wisdom* and *Lewis* means *warrior*. Sometimes last names have meaning; for example, *Carpenter* meant that the person was a carpenter, and *Kingsland* means that the person used to live on the king's land. *Smith* made a living as a blacksmith, and *Baker* was a _____? (baker)
3. Many of us here today have another name. Yes, [hold up baptismal certificate] when we are baptized we receive another name. We are called *Christian*. God called us by name [read Isaiah 45:4–6], and He has chosen us [read 1 Thessalonians 1:4]. Our name, Christian, tells the world who we are; we are a follower of Christ, and our name tells the world whose we are. We belong to God.
4. God has chosen us to be part of His family and has given us the same name—Christian. We belong to the Lord. He is our Father. We did not choose to belong to God. He loved us so much that He chose us—each of us.
5. God loves us so much that He sent Jesus to suffer the punishment that we deserve. Jesus died and rose for us so that we will always be part of God's family.

Conclusion

Our name is very important to us and to our family. Some of you were named in memory of a relative. Some of you were named because your parents liked what the name meant. All of you have names that identify just you. But as children of our heavenly Father, we all share the name: *Christian*. Our Father is God; our brother is Jesus. God chose us. Jesus saved us. Together we rejoice that we are a big family. We are so happy to be part of this family that we want others to be part of our family. Let us tell everyone who we are and whose we are. OK, on the count of three, I want you all to shout out your name: one, two, three (No, your “other” name). [Everyone shouts out the name “Christian.”]

Prayer

Dear God, thank You for choosing us to be Your children. Thank You for our brother and Savior, Jesus. Help us tell others about You. Amen.
RC

Week of October 23 I Love You

Scripture: Leviticus 19:1–2, 15–18; 1 Thessalonians 2:1–13; Matthew 22:34–46

Texts: Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:37–39

Songs: “They’ll Know We Are Christians by Our Love” *AGPS* 237;
“God Loves Me Dearly” *AGPS* 109, *LSB* 392

Visuals: Poster board printed with “I ♥You”, marker, wedding ring, engagement ring, pictures, love letters, Bible

Introduction

Do you know what I love? [Share your “loves,” e.g. chocolate, steak, quiet drives, walks on the beach, etc.— most of the time, the students can guess your “loves.”] How do you think others know what I love? (I talk about it, have lots of it around, etc.) Do you know whom I love? [If married say spouse, or family names, or if single someone you love.] How do you think others know that I love [say name]? (Wedding ring, engagement ring, pictures, loves letters, etc.)

Outline

1. What do you love? [Have students share answers.] How do I know what you love? [Repeat answers—and have them share how you would know.] Whom do you love? [Have students share answers.] How do I know whom you love? [Repeat answers and have them share with you how you would know.] Sometimes people share their love with a big heart—like this one [share poster]. When you see this, you know that “I”—“Love”—“You.”
2. We show we love someone by how we treat him or her. When we love someone, we want to spend time with him or her, we want to talk with him or her, and we want to give him or her presents. We also will speak up for them when others speak against them.
3. When Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was, He answered [read Matthew 22:37-39]. Jesus tells us we should love God and love others. How do you show that you love God? [Have students share how they love God.] Yes, when we love God we want to spend time with Him, talk to Him, and give Him presents. Does God love you? (yes) How do you know? [Hold up Bible.] His love letter to us is in the Bible; He speaks to us and shares how He loved us so much that He sent Jesus to take away our sins. [Hold up poster board and draw a cross through the heart.]
4. We love God, and He loves us, but does God love those who make fun of us? Tease us? What about them? Well, [Read Leviticus 19:18.] He loves them and wants us to love them so much that we do not hurt them. Wow! That is really love—like when we sin, God loves us so much He sent Jesus to take our punishment.

Conclusion

God loves all people so much that He sent Jesus to take their punishment for sin. Sometimes it is hard for us to forgive other people, especially when they are mean or say bad things. But we always remember that God loves them, and we can too. Let us always love God and show it with everything we do and say. Let us also love those around us—and show it.

Prayer

Dear God, thank You for loving us so much that You sent Jesus. Help us show love to You and everyone around us. Let all people know how much You love them. Amen.

RC

Week of October 30 Amazing Grace

Scripture: Revelation 14:6–7; Romans 3:19–28; John 8:31–36 or Matthew 11:12–19
Text: Romans 3:23–28
Songs: “Amazing Grace” *AGPS* 63, *LSB* 744;
“Jesus Loves Me, This I Know” *AGPS* 144, *LSB* 588
Visuals: Clear glass, can of clear soda pop; raisins (Check this video of the experiment that can be used with large audiences. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9-BxO9g-EzM>)

Introduction

Raise your hand if you have ever done something wrong. How does it feel? When I do something wrong I always get a sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach. Sometimes that feeling happens because I worry I will be caught, but often that feeling happens just because my heart knows I did something wrong. We are going to try a short science experiment that will help us understand what God does for us when we do something wrong.

Outline

1. [Pour the soda pop into the glass.] I have some raisins, and I wonder if you can predict whether the raisins will sink or float when I put them in the glass. Let's think of some hypotheses about these raisins: Perhaps they will float because they are small or shaped like a boat; perhaps they will sink because they are dry and have no water, or they are heavier than the soda.
2. [Drop the raisins in the soda pop; they will sink.] The raisins have sunk right to the bottom. This is a reminder that when we sin we fall away from God. We sink down into our sinful nature. Just as the raisin can't lift itself up, we cannot save ourselves by following God's law. We have that sinking feeling because God has put His word into our hearts. Our conscience tells us we have sinned.
3. (After a few seconds, the carbon dioxide bubbles in the soda pop will surround the raisins and lift them to the surface.) Wait a minute ... I thought those raisins went to the bottom - but now they are floating. I can see that the bubbles in the soda pop surrounded the raisins and lifted them up to the surface. This reminds me of God's forgiving love and mercy. When we sin, He reaches out with forgiveness and love, earned for us when Jesus died on the cross and rose again. God forgives us and brings us back to Him.
4. (The raisins will begin to sink as the bubbles pop.) I can now see that the raisins have once again sunk to the bottom, but the bubbles are surrounding the raisins again. Because we are sinners in a sinful world, we keep on sinning. Every time we fall away from God He reaches out again with His grace to bring us back to Him.

Conclusion

God loves us very much. Not only does He forgive us, but also He sends His spirit to work in our hearts to help our faith grow. When we read God's Word, and when we hear God's Word in church and school, the Spirit moves in our hearts and helps us to know Him more; just like when we were baptized. God knows we sin, and He knows we will keep on sinning as long as we live here on earth. He still loves us and reaches out to help us. As our Bible reading says: We “are justified by His grace as a gift . . . received by faith.”

Prayer

Dear Jesus, we thank You for dying and rising again to save us from our sins. Spirit, we thank You for working faith in our hearts so we can serve You. Father, we thank You for Your grace that brings us back to You, again and again. Amen.

KM

Week of November 6

Winning a Prize We Haven't Earned

Scripture: Revelation 7:[2-8]9-17; 1 John 3:1-3; Matthew 5:1-12
Text: 1 John 3:1-3
Songs: "God Loves Me Dearly" *AGPS* 109, *LSB* 392; "Behold, What Manner of Love" *AGPS* 71
Visuals: A winning student (previously made aware of the nature of the contest)

Introduction

How many of you have won a contest? Was it a prize that you won by chance (because someone drew your name out of a bowl full of names) or a contest where you earned the prize? We have a winner in the audience today. I would like _____ to come forward and receive the prizes he/she has earned.

Outline

1. The other teachers and I got together and chose this student, out of all the students in the school, as the winner of a new contest called "The BEST student of _____ Lutheran School" We took a look at each student's grades and attendance records, and talked about which students were especially careful about obeying all the rules. We also talked about which students were always nice to other students. _____ is our winner for this year; let's give him/her a round of applause.
2. Now, let's find out what this student has won! First, his/her name will be put on a special plaque that will hang by the office door for all future students to see. [applause]
3. Second, this student can take a week off school, with no homework penalties, anytime he/she chooses! [applause]
4. Third, this student will get an all-expenses paid vacation to Disney World. [applause]
5. Now, before we give the prizes we need to check to make sure this student really deserves the prize. Did you get straight A's for all your years of school? Did you have perfect attendance? Have you always obeyed every school rule perfectly? Have you always been nice to every student in the school? Since your answer to each question was not *yes*, I guess you don't win the prizes. We will have to save them for next year, for a different student. You sure did a good job, though. [applause]

Conclusion

Our Bible verse talks about a special prize we have been given: we are called children of God. We did not earn this name; there is no way to earn this prize. We have been given this prize by a loving God who calls us His own, even when we don't measure up. This prize is better than our name on a plaque, better than a week off school, better than even a trip to Disney World. There is nothing better than to be called a child of God. This means that we are loved, that Jesus died and rose for us, and that the Spirit lives and works in our hearts.

Our Bible verse also talks about how the world does not know us because it doesn't know Him. Many people in our world do not know God. Some of these people live in other parts of the world; some of these people live right next door to us. This special gift gives us an excitement even bigger than winning a prize. It is an excitement that the Spirit helps us to share with others, so they can be called children of God too.

Prayer

Dear heavenly Father, we are humbled by the gift of being called Your children. Fill our hearts with Your Spirit, so we can share the joy we have in knowing we belong to You. Amen.

KM

Week of November 13
God is Omnipotent and Omniscient

Scripture: Zephaniah 1:7–16; 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11; Matthew 25:14–30
Text: 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11
Songs: “Holy Spirit, Light Divine” *AGPS* 120, *LSB* 496; “I Will Sing of the Mercies” *AGPS* 133
Visuals: A volunteer and a chair

Introduction

What if you had a friend who knew everything and could do everything? Our Scripture reading talks about a thief who comes in the night. If you had a friend who could do anything, you would be safe from a thief. I know what I would do if I found a thief in my house at night. Do you have a plan?

Outline

1. I need a volunteer to sit in this chair. Sit up straight and tall with your feet in front of you. Now, if I put my thumb on your forehead let's see if I can keep you in your chair. You can't get up because your center of gravity is in your stomach. If I keep your head from going past your stomach, you cannot get up. Pretty cool, huh? Now all I have to do is figure out how to get the thief to sit up straight in one of my kitchen chairs while I hold a thumb on his forehead and call the police. Hmm, maybe I should rethink that plan a bit.
2. God is omnipotent; this means that He can do anything. A thief would not have a chance against God, even if he were not sitting in a chair. God is also omniscient; meaning He knows everything. Not only does He know everything that is happening right now, but also He knows everything that has ever happened and will happen in the future.
3. Because God is our creator and heavenly Father, we have the peace and security that we read about in our text for today. We don't wait in darkness for the Lord to return to find us. We are children of the light; children of God's light. Because we are God's children, because Jesus died and rose to save us, we can live in God's light.
4. God has work for us to do. He wants all the people in the world to know Him and love Him. He asks us to shine like lights, not hide in the darkness, so others can see Him and know His love.

Conclusion

We do not know when Jesus will come back. We do know many other things: we know God is powerful, that He loves us and protects us, that Jesus saves us, and that the Spirit works in our hearts to help us to share God's love. We may not be strong enough to catch a thief, but God makes us strong enough to catch people for His church.

Prayer

Dear heavenly Father, keep us safe and in Your light. Help us share Your love with others so they may know You too. Amen.

KM

Week of November 20 As Lost as Sheep

Scripture: Ezekiel 34:11–16, 20–24; 1 Corinthians 15:20–28; Matthew 25:31–46
Text: Ezekiel 34:11–16
Songs: “The King Shall Come” *AGPS* 228, *LSB* 348;
“O God of Mercy, God of Light” *AGPS* 182, “God of Mercy, God of Might” *LSB* 852
Visuals: A toy stuffed sheep with a set of keys tied around its neck

Introduction

How long would you look for something that belonged to you? Would you look for a few minutes? An hour? A few days? I suppose for me, it would depend on how important that lost item was. I might only look a few minutes for a lost pen, but I would look for a long time if I lost my wedding ring.

Outline

1. I am missing something that is important to me; I am missing my keys. If I don't find those keys, I can't lock up the school at the end of the day. If I don't find those keys, I can't get into my house. In fact, if I don't find those keys I can't even drive my car to get to my house. My keys are very important to me because they help me get my job done. My keys are even important to you, because I still need to open the computer lab.
2. Someone played a trick on me. They took my keys, tied them around the neck of a stuffed sheep, and hid the sheep somewhere in our worship area. I am going to try to find the sheep, so I can get my keys back.
3. [Hypothesize where the sheep might be and dramatically look several places before finding the sheep with the keys.] I am so glad to have these keys back; they are very important to me. It is a good thing I have them because now I can open that computer lab.
4. We are very important to God. Several different times in the Bible, God refers to us as sheep. It is easy for us to get lost; just like sheep. We cannot save ourselves; and neither can sheep. When we are lost to God, He never stops looking for us. Our Bible reading for today reminds us of this. God says He will rescue us from all places and gather us from all countries. We are His precious children, and even when we run away from Him by sinning, He searches us out and brings us safely home.

Conclusion

We have a strong Father who loves us and protects us. He sent His Son, Jesus, to be our shepherd because He knew we needed Jesus to love us, guide us and save us. He also sends His Spirit to live in our hearts and to teach us about God's love. It is good to be a child of God; it is good to be a sheep of God. When He searches for us and finds us, it is even better than when we find something we have lost.

Prayer

Dear heavenly Father, sometimes we run away from You and find that we are lost. Thank You for sending Your Son to be our shepherd and for keeping us safe with You. Amen.

KM

Week of November 27 Light One Candle I

Scripture: Isaiah 64:1–9; 1 Corinthians 1:3–9; Mark 11:1-11 or Mark 13:24–37
Text: Mark 11:1–11
Songs: “Light One Candle” *AGPS* 163; “The King of Glory” *AGPS* 227;
“Hosanna, Hallelujah” *AGPS* 121
Visuals: Advent wreath, lighting one purple candle

Introduction

The chapel talks for the next four weeks center on the Advent wreath. Today we light the first candle on the wreath, known as either the Prophecy candle or the candle of Hope. Prophecy means to tell what is to come. I can tell what will happen when I put vinegar and baking soda together. I can tell what happens when I put jelly on a piece of bread first, followed by the peanut butter. A prophet has a special job of *forthtelling*, which is speaking forth for God what is going to happen. Prophets knew what was going to happen; they didn't know when. For instance, I can also *forthtell* Christ will one day return to take us to heaven. I just don't know when. I can predict this because God promises this in His Word. What are some things you can predict?

Outline

1. Mark 11:1–11 recounts the story of Jesus riding into town on the back of a colt. Christ told two of His disciples to go into the village and find the colt that had never been ridden and bring it to Him. He went on to say that if anyone asks, explain that the Lord needs it. What other things did He tell them?
2. As Christ was riding into Jerusalem, people took off their cloaks and others cut branches and spread them on the ground. They shouted the word, *Hosanna*. The prophet Zechariah said this would happen (Zechariah 9:9).
3. The people who gathered sang praises and hoped that Christ would be an earthly king. Were they right or wrong?
4. Christ's riding into Jerusalem was fulfilling a prophecy. He was riding into Jerusalem as their King, but not an earthly king. He came as their heavenly King, as **our** heavenly King.
5. Our first Advent candle reminds us of the prophets who foretold that Jesus would come in love to die for our sins. Christ is the fulfillment of prophecy. He is our hope for life eternal with Him in heaven.

Conclusion

Advent is a time for us to prepare for Christ's coming, for He is the Light of the world.

Prayer

Dear Lord, we thank You for the gift of Jesus. We thank You that the words of the prophets have come true. Help us to live in the hope that only Jesus can bring as we share His message with others. Amen.
JL

Week of December 4 Light One Candle II

Scripture: Isaiah 40:1-11; 2 Peter 3:8-14; Mark 1:1-8
Texts: 2 Peter 3:10-11, 14; Mark 1:7-8
Songs: "Light One Candle" *AGPS* 163; "O Little Town of Bethlehem" *AGPS* 183, *LSB* 361;
"God Loves Me Dearly" *AGPS* 109, *LSB* 392; "Once in Royal David's City" *LSB* 376;
"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" *LSB* 338
Visuals: Advent wreath, lighting two purple candles

Introduction

Today, we light the second candle, the Bethlehem candle, or the Love candle. Christ was born in Bethlehem as the gift of God's love to the world. But Jesus was not what people expected. They did not expect God to come as a baby. We have certain expectations. When you come to school every day, you have an idea of what is expected. You are expected to dress in a certain way. You are expected to act in a certain manner. You are expected to clean up after yourself when you are finished eating. You are expected to bring your homework to school. What if I told you today you might receive something you are not expecting? How would you feel?

Outline

1. A long time ago, John the Baptist shared with the people that he baptized with water and that he was expecting someone to baptize them with the gift of the Holy Spirit. This someone was John's cousin Jesus, who was born in Bethlehem.
2. Mary and Joseph may have expected to deliver their son in an inn, but instead Mary delivered Jesus in a stable where the animals were kept.
3. The wise men who followed the star expected to worship an earthly king, not a heavenly king. They expected an adult, not a baby.
4. Herod was not expecting the news of a king living in Bethlehem. He issued a decree to kill all the male babies under 2 years old. He loved himself and his throne more than he loved God.
5. Peter wrote that Christ expects us to live holy and godly lives, spotless, blameless, and at peace with Him. He equipped us to do that, but because we are sinners, we can't live perfectly. One day He will come unexpectedly, as a thief in the night.
6. We can be sure that when Jesus comes, we can expect Him to take us to heaven, having been forgiven our sins through His life, death and resurrection.

Conclusion

Some people don't like to be surprised. They want to know what is expected. However, when Christ comes again, it will be a surprise. The Bethlehem candle reminds us that because of Christ's love for us, we can look forward to the surprise of His coming.

Prayer

Dear Lord, thank You for the unexpected events that surrounded Your Son's birth in Bethlehem. Help us, Lord, to welcome the unexpected in our lives and to prepare our hearts for Your second coming. Amen.
JL

Week of December 11 Light One Candle III

Scripture: Isaiah 61:1–4, 8-11; 1 Thessalonians 5:16–24; John 1:6–8, 19–28
Text: Isaiah 61:10
Songs: “Light One Candle” *AGPS* 163; “Go Tell It on the Mountain” *AGPS* 104, *LSB* 388; “Silent Night, Holy Night” *AGPS* 211, *LSB* 363; “Joy to the World” *LSB* 387
Visuals: Advent wreath, lighting two purple candles and the rose-colored candle, a variety of cookie cutters

Introduction

Today we light the rose-colored candle on the Advent wreath, known as the Shepherd’s candle or the candle of Joy. The shepherds were boys and men who watched the sheep out in the grassy fields around Bethlehem. The shepherds were smelly, unkempt and uneducated. Not many people befriended them. But God sent His angels to them to announce that Jesus was born. Imagine the look of joy on their faces! Imagine the joy they had, sharing what they had seen and heard.

Outline

1. I brought a variety of different cookie cutters. What are some of the ways you could categorize them? (i.e. metal, plastic, large, small, Christmas, Easter, etc.)
2. These cookie cutters have the ability to shape cookie dough into a variety of different shapes. I know there are people who experience great joy when they eat cookies, especially the iced sugar cookies, which are formed with these cookie cutters.
3. But I cannot guarantee that the shape the cookie cutter makes will remain. When I bake it, the cookie might turn a little too brown or it will break when I try to take it off the cookie sheet.
4. God formed each of us to His likeness, but He didn’t use cookie cutters. We are all unique. We all have different color skin, eye, or hair color. Each of us has different talents. However, we are also sinful, and because of sin, we are blemished in the sight of God.
5. God chose the shepherds to share the news of the birth of His Son. We also are called to share the news of Jesus. We share the news because we too have the joy of wearing the garment of salvation and the robe of righteousness.

Conclusion

The shepherds were given a story, and they told it to anyone who would listen—and probably to people who did not want to listen. Their story is now our story. As we reflect on the third candle on our wreath, let the joy of Christ fill you as it filled the shepherds long ago.

Prayer

Dear Holy Spirit, fill our hearts with joy, as you filled the hearts of shepherds so many years ago. They were your bold witnesses, keeping their focus on the babe in the manger. Help us to keep Jesus as our focus and as our joy. Amen.

JL

Week of December 18 **Light One Candle IV**

Scripture: 2 Samuel 7:1–11, 16; Romans 16:25–27; Luke 1:26–38
Text: Luke 1:26–38
Songs: “Light One Candle” *AGPS* 163; “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” *LSB* 380;
“Angels We Have Heard on High” *AGPS* 65, *LSB* 368;
“The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came” *LSB* 356
Visuals: Advent wreath, lighting three purple candles and the rose-colored candle, a sign that reads
“No Jesus, no peace; Know Jesus, know peace”

Introduction

The fourth candle on our Advent wreath is known as the Angel’s candle or the candle of peace. At this time of the year, sometimes it is hard to feel at peace with all the activities that are going on (i.e. semester projects and tests, Christmas programs and rehearsals, teachers grading papers, Christmas parties, etc.). The activities can draw us away from the meaning of the season and instead bring the exact opposites of peace: tension, anxiety and fear!

Outline

1. Mary was a young teenager when the appearance of the angel surprised her. Gabriel told her not to be afraid. He shared with her that she was going to have a son and that she should name Him Jesus.
2. Jesus would also bring His people peace, the calmness of heart that comes from being loved, forgiven and blessed by God.
3. [Hold up sign.] If Jesus isn’t in my heart, I have no peace from the constant barrage of activities that I am engaged in. I cannot hear the quiet of His voice when the focus is centered on me and my wants instead of what Jesus wants for me. I have no inner peace.
4. However, when I know Jesus, then I also know peace. Jesus is the Prince of Peace. He modeled what true peace is for His followers as He gave Himself. Jesus gives us the best peace of all, eternal life, bought and paid for by His death and resurrection.

Conclusion

God sent Jesus to be our Savior. God became one of us—a true human. He walked and talked with people. He loved us, died for us, and rose for us. He gives us peace in the hope of eternal life.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank You for the peace that only You can give. Thank You for your birth in a manger, for Your earthly walk, and for Your death on the cross and Your life-giving resurrection. Help us, Lord, to be bold witnesses of that peace. Amen.

JL

Week of January 1 Happy New Year!

Scripture: 1 Kings 3:4–15; Ephesians 1:3–14; Luke 2:40–52
Text: 1 Kings 3:4–15
Songs: “Seek Ye First” *AGPS* 207, *LSB* 712; “Make Me a Servant” *AGPS* 174
Visuals: Horns and decorations left over from a New Year’s Eve party

Introduction

Happy New Year! [Carry on with your props.] May God bless you all in 2012! [Go among students shaking hands and well wishing. Encourage students to do the same (if you’re sure you can stabilize the situation when you’re ready to continue).]

Outline

1. What is a new year without resolutions? Do you know about resolutions? They are things that people plan to do in the new year. What resolutions have you heard people making? [Let students share; tell them of your own.]
2. Most resolutions are things that people hope to do to make their life happier or healthier. Making resolutions is one thing. But what is the hard part? [Invite responses]. It takes work to carry out resolutions. Often, it takes sacrifice. For example, if someone wants to lose 20 pounds in 2012, what must they give up?
3. Have you ever thought of resolutions having anything to do with God? God tells us He wants the best for us, and so it’s good to make resolutions that improve our lives. But it’s easy to forget other people when we make resolutions. It’s easy to forget plans for serving God and His people.
4. When God chose Solomon to be king of Israel, Solomon made some resolutions for his new life as king. His resolution came in the form of prayer. He prayed, “Give your servant . . . an understanding mind to govern you people, that I may discern between good and evil . . .” (1 Kings 3:9). Solomon’s resolution was to be the best king possible for God’s people. Do you think that would take hard work?
5. Do you agree that many of our own resolutions should be about how to help others be happier and healthier? We can make those kinds of resolutions, because when Jesus died to take away our sins, He also gave us the power to serve others as He served people during His time on earth.

Conclusion

Resolutions are good; resolutions often are broken. God forgives us when we fail at the resolutions He has blessed, because Jesus perfectly carried out His resolution to be our Savior.

Prayer

[Ask students to silently pray several resolutions for their service to others in 2012. Ask them to be very specific in resolving to meet the specific needs of others. Conclude by saying, “Lord Jesus, hear our prayers. Amen.”]

EG

Week of January 8

The Sign

Scripture: Isaiah 60:1–6; Ephesians 3:1–12; Matthew 2:1–12
Texts: Matthew 2:1–12; Ephesians 3:12
Songs: “O Little Town of Bethlehem” *AGPS* 183, *LSB* 361;
“Oh, That the Lord Would Guide My Ways” *AGPS* 191, *LSB* 707
Visuals: Variety of signs: stop sign, yield, no smoking, etc.

Introduction

Following directions is a good thing . . . especially when you don’t know where you’re going. When people give directions, they often refer to specific landmarks or signs, so that one can find what they are looking for easier. For example, turn right when you come to Bell Street, it’s the one with a Chili’s Restaurant on the corner. Signs are important too. [Hold up samples of different signs.] All these signs get us some place safely or tell us something important. What if we don’t follow directions or signs correctly? [Wait for some responses.] We may get hurt or miss something special.

Outline

1. Listen to a reading from Matthew 2:1–12. [Read the passage.] The Magi saw a sign, a star in the east, and went to worship the King of the Jews. This star was not an ordinary star. It was a special sign from God. In fact, we heard from the reading that . . . [reread Matthew 2:9–10]. This special sign went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the Child was! That’s definitely not an ordinary star! It was an amazing sign!
2. God used a star to guide and direct people to His Son. What if the Magi ignored the star? God used a whole host of angels to announce the birth of His Son! What if the shepherds ignored the angels? [Note that if the Magi or shepherds skipped their opportunities to respond, God would have used someone else.]
3. God used Jesus too. He was born into this world to die on a cross and take away our sins. Because of that, we have been saved! We have been given a gift. We can accept this gift and follow Jesus or we can ignore the gift. If we ignore the sign or the gift, we will not live with Him in heaven and we will miss something special. Listen to Ephesians 3:12. [Read the passage.] Jesus was born to be the Way to God. Because of Jesus, we may with all boldness and confidence have a closer relationship with our God. He is our Maker and we are His children!

Conclusion

God still uses signs today. [Hold up the variety of signs.] No, not these kinds of signs. But He does use teachers, pastors, moms, dads, grandmas, and grandpas to direct and guide us. He may use a great grade or even a bad grade on a test in order to show us something. God may even use a simple basketball game as a sign to show us what He wants us to do or not do. God used His precious Son to show us the way to Him because He loves us so much.

Prayer

Father, thank You for sending Your Son into this world! Help us to follow Jesus and tell others about Your love. Amen.

CG

Week of January 15 The Voice

Scripture: 1 Samuel 3:1-10; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; John 1:43-51
Text: 1 Samuel 3:1-10
Songs: "Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing" *AGPS* 187, *LSB* 528; "Open Our Eyes" *AGPS* 195
Visuals: A picture of a huge penguin colony (The Internet has many.)

Introduction

Where do most of the penguins in the world live? [Wait for responses.] Yes, on the continent of Antarctica. I have a picture for you. Check this out! [Hold up the picture or put it up on the wall via Internet.] Penguin colonies are huge! There can be more than 500,000 in just one area! All the adult penguins look the same. All the baby penguins look the same. Yet, in that large mass, a baby penguin, or chick, can pick out its Mama's or Papa's voice or sound. As soon as they hear their Mama's sound, the chick begins to trumpet the sound back until the Mama comes to her baby's side. The voice or sound is special and unique to that particular penguin family.

Outline

1. Before we hear our Bible reading for today, I want to try something. [Call on a child to come forward. Have the child turn with his back to the rest of the children.] Now, Charlie, someone is going to say something to you. I want you to guess who it is. Ready? [Have that child's good friend say "Hi Charlie"]. (Hopefully Charlie will know that voice.) OK, let's try one more for you, Charlie. [Have his teacher say something to Charlie.] Very good. Charlie how did you know that it was your friend and teacher? [Wait for responses.] You knew those voices because you spend time with your friend and have been with your teacher for more than half a school year. When you're with people all the time, you get to know them very well.
2. In our reading today, we have a young boy, Samuel, who lives at the temple with a priest named Eli. Listen to 1 Samuel 3:1-10. [Read the passage.] Samuel heard a voice calling him. He thought it was his friend, Eli. Three times this happened, until Eli realized it was the Lord calling Samuel.
3. Samuel, unlike the baby penguin we talked about, did not know the voice of God because he did not know God yet. When you do not know someone, you can't know his or her voice. Our friend Charlie knew his friend's voice and his teacher's voice because he has spent time with them. Samuel had no personal relationship with God. But, all that was about to change for Samuel. God was ready for Samuel to get to know Him and to see what God was about to do in his life.
4. In order for us to know God, we must spend time with Him. Daily, we need to be in the Word. The Bible is God's amazing love letter to us all. It tells what God has done for us. It tells how Jesus took away our sins!

Conclusion

It is incredible how God made a special sound or voice for each penguin family to know each other. Even more incredible is God's wonderful love for you and me. Get to know Him and listen carefully to Him.

Prayer

Father, open our ears and help us to hear your voice. Thank You for loving us so much! Amen.

CG

Week of January 22 **The Commitment**

Scripture: Jonah 3:1-5, 10; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31 [32-35]; Mark 1:14-20
Texts: 1 Corinthians 7:29a; Mark 1:14-20
Songs: “My Faith Looks Trustingly” *AGPS* 175, “My Faith Looks Up to Thee” *LSB* 702;
“Go into the World” *AGPS* 101
Visual: Picture of a roller coaster via Internet.

Introduction

Picture this! [Show a picture of a roller coaster from via Internet.] Someone convinced you to try the ride. You’ve waited in line, just got strapped in, and the ride begins. As it ascends the first incline, you suddenly change your mind and don’t want to go. Sorry! You jumped into this and there’s no turning back!

Outline

1. Once you’re strapped into a roller coaster and the ride has begun, there really is no turning back. Whether you like it or not, you have just committed yourself to the full ride. You aren’t getting off until the ride has come to a stop.
2. Jesus was on a roller coaster ride while he was on earth. He invited some friends to join him. Listen to Mark 1:14-20. [Read the passage.] We hear from the reading that Jesus spoke few words to these fishermen: “Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Immediately, they put down their nets and followed Him. They didn’t ask where they were going, what they should bring, or even what Jesus meant by “fishers of men.” They just put the nets down and followed Him.
3. That, my friends, is called commitment! Being committed to something is being devoted. Devoted until the end. Some of you love basketball. You have committed yourself to the sport. Your family, friends, teammates and coach depend on you. You aren’t finished until the season is over. You’ve tried out for the school play and you made it. You go to the practices and memorize your lines. You have devoted yourself to the play until it is over.
4. When Simon, Andrew, James and John dropped their nets to follow Jesus, they were answering to the call of being a disciple of Christ. They were obeying Jesus. Just like being committed to a team, Simon, Andrew, James and John were committed to Jesus’ team—the team of fishing for men.

Conclusion

Sin sometimes makes us want to quit Jesus’ team. But Jesus is committed to us. After all, He died for His team and took away their sins.

Prayer

Father, we want to be on Your team. Fill our hearts with the true desire and total commitment to sharing Your love with others. We love You! Amen.

CG

Week of January 29 The Authority

Scripture: Deuteronomy 18:15–20; 1 Corinthians 8:1–13; Mark 1:21–28
Texts: Mark 1:21–28; 1 Corinthians 8:3
Songs: “Lift High the Cross” *AGPS* 162, *LSB* 837;
“Go Tell It on the Mountain” *AGPS* 104, *LSB* 388
Visuals: Photographs of the U.S. President and a few famous people

Introduction

If President _____ [put in the current name] walked in here right now, we would all be in awe. I mean, he’s it! He is the man with all the authority in our country! Like him or not, having someone famous or well known in the room is exciting. Same thing if a famous person like _____ [put in a well-known name] was here. We would all think it was pretty cool. The President and famous people are all popular by the title they hold or because the media or reporters promote what they are doing. We know where they go, what they wear, and what their favorite things are. We feel like we know them because of the updates on their lives.

Outline

1. Back when Jesus walked on earth, there were no news reporters. Listen to Mark 1:21–28. [Read the passage.] There was more than one evil spirit inside the man. One spoke up in verse 24, “What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!” The demon, or evil spirit, recognized Jesus by name and knew that Jesus was powerful and able to destroy them. No reporter informed the evil spirits who Jesus was; they just knew!
2. The people watching these events were amazed at what they saw, but they did not understand whom they were watching and the authority He had. They knew it was different from anything else they had ever seen or witnessed before and quickly spoke about it with others.
3. We are no better. Like the evil spirits, we know who God is. We just forget how much authority He truly has. If He wanted to, God could move a mountain to the middle of Illinois; He could move a whole forest to the middle of the desert; and He can and did move evil spirits out of a man. God can do anything! He defeated the devil. He sent Jesus to take away our sins by dying on the cross and rising from the dead.

Conclusion

Now listen to 1 Corinthians 8:3[read the passage]. The world doesn’t know me. I don’t have reporters keeping everyone updated on my life, nor do I want them to. But, God knows me. He knows everything about me because He made me. He knows I am not perfect and that I am in constant need of His forgiveness. He knows that I love Him and I love that He sent His Son into this world for me. I trust Him and want Him to have complete authority over and in my life.

Prayer

Father, thank You for Your amazing love! Allow the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts so that we will tell others about You! Amen.

CG

Week of February 5 Job Descriptions

Scripture: Isaiah 40:21–31; 1 Corinthians 9:16–27; Mark 1:29–39
Text: Mark 1:40–45
Songs: “God Loves Me Dearly” *AGPS* 109, *LSB* 392;
“God Loved the World So That He Gave” *AGPS* 108, *LSB* 571
Visuals: Sample of a job description for teachers; white board or newsprint with marker;
presentation slide with text

Introduction

Did you know that most jobs have descriptions written for them that spell out exactly what that job is? The job description tells what a person should be like, and what that person should do. Here is a job description for a teacher at our school. What kinds of things do you think should be on this list? What should a person who is a teacher here be like? [Write suggestions on white board or newsprint.] What should a teacher do? [Write those suggestions.] Being a teacher is an important job. Good teachers enjoy doing things that are expected of them. They may get tired, but there is nothing they would rather do than teach.

Outline

1. What was Jesus’ job? What things did He do? [Elicit responses from the children.] He taught people, healed diseases, cast out demons, and did other miracles. But His main job was to be the Savior.
2. Our Bible reading tells about a very busy day in Jesus’ life. [Place the words of Mark 1:29-34 on the screen. Ask children to name some of the things Jesus did on that day.] He kept busy all day long, and even into the evening. Do you think Jesus was tired at the end of the day?
3. The next morning Jesus needed to get away for a little while to pray and be refreshed. But what happened? People came looking for Him. They wanted Him to keep on helping people. Did Jesus tell them to leave Him alone because He was tired? No, He was ready to get back to work—this time in another city—so that more people could learn about Him.
4. Jesus was getting ready for the most important job ever: to be the Savior of the whole world. It was also the hardest job in the world—something only He could do because He was God.
5. When we are sick or sad or in trouble, who do we go to for help? We go to Jesus, because He invites us to do so. Do you think He ever gets tired of helping us? No. He loves us and is always ready to listen and to answer our prayers.
6. We go to Jesus to ask Him to forgive our sins too. Do we ever sin so much that He says, “That’s enough. I can’t forgive you anymore?” No, Jesus would never say that. He continues to give us His grace because He loves us. The Bible says that God is love. It is not a job; it is Who He is.

Conclusion

Since we are God’s forgiven children, He gives us work to do. What kinds of things can we do to show our love for Jesus? We may get tired, but the Holy Spirit is in our hearts to refresh us and make us strong. Do you remember what Jesus did when He felt tired? He prayed. We can pray and receive the power to do what God wants us to do. He gives us what we need so we can give to others.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank You for doing the work You came to do. Thank You for loving us, for answering our prayers, and for dying on the cross to take away our sins. Help us do the work You give us to do so that others can know about You too. Amen.

CCS

Week of February 12 Special Water?

Scripture: 2 Kings 5:1–14; 1 Corinthians 10:(19–30) 31–11:1; Mark 1:40–45
Texts: 2 Kings 5:2–4, 12–14
Songs: “Today Your Mercy Calls Us” *LSB* 915; “Father Welcomes” *AGPS* 95, *LSB* 605
Visuals: A glass of dirty water and a glass of clean water

Introduction

Which of these glasses of water would you rather drink? Why? Right. Drinking dirty water could make you sick. Fresh, clean water is refreshing and good for you.

Outline

1. Our Bible reading for today tells about a man named Naaman who was fussy about the quality of water he was told to use—not to drink, but to bathe in.
2. Naaman was a rich and powerful commander in the Syrian army. He had leprosy, a painful disease that had no cure in those days. His wife’s servant girl, who had been taken away from her own home during a war and who knew the true God, told her master about a prophet who could cure leprosy. So Naaman went to Samaria to be healed. First, he went to the King of Israel and asked for help, because he thought the king would have the power. But the king could not heal leprosy. When Elisha, the prophet, heard that Naaman had come to his country to be healed, he wanted to show Naaman that he was a prophet of the true God. He told Naaman to wash seven times in the Jordan River. Naaman was insulted and angry. He was not impressed with the Jordan River at all. He said he had better rivers in Syria. Why did he have to come all the way to Samaria?
3. Naaman didn’t understand that the power to heal wasn’t in the water itself, but in God’s Word, spoken by His prophet Elisha. Naaman’s servants convinced him at least to try what Elisha said to do. He bathed himself seven times in the Jordan River. The leprosy left him, and he was well.
4. Can you think of another example of water that takes away an even worse condition and makes people clean? In baptism, our sins are washed away. When water is poured on the head of a baby, child, or adult, the dirt of sin is washed into the water of baptism, and we are made spiritually whole and well. Is it the water that heals us? No, it is the Word of God that has the power to take away our sins and that gives us faith to believe in Jesus as our Savior. Some of you may not have been baptized yet, but if you know that Jesus is your Savior, the Holy Spirit has put faith in your heart. You, too, have been washed clean by Jesus’ blood on the cross.
5. Every time we begin our chapel service or church or school day in the name of the True God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—we remember our baptisms and the power of God that makes us His children. Like Naaman, we may not understand what is so special about baptismal water. But we know that we are blessed when we believe God’s promises. It is not the water that is special. It is our God and His Word.

Conclusion

Do you know someone who doesn’t know the True God or who has not been baptized? Like the servant girl, we can tell them about Jesus, who not only heals our earthly sicknesses but also who washes away our sins.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, Your Word is strong enough to heal us from all that would hurt us. Thank You for taking away our sins and giving us faith to believe Your promises. Amen.

CCS

Week of February 19
A Friend in Need is a Friend, in Deed

Scripture: Isaiah 43:18–25; 2 Corinthians 1:18–22; Mark 2:1–12
Text: Mark 2:1–12
Songs: “Lord, Help Us Walk Your Servant Way” *LSB* 857;
“Lord of All Nations, Grant Me Grace” *AGPS* 168
Visuals: A Bible, a picture of a car and an ax

Introduction

Ask, “What do all of these have in common?” They can bring people to Jesus. [Discuss how the Bible and car could be used.] But, what about the ax? In our Bible reading today, some people had to cut a hole in the roof of a house in order to bring their friend to Jesus. They could have used an ax or other type of tool—or maybe just their hands. But nothing was going to stop them from accomplishing their task.

Outline

1. A man who couldn’t walk knew that Jesus could heal him, but he had no way to get to Jesus. His friends figured out a way to get their friend into the room where Jesus was healing people. They could let him down through the ceiling—right in front of where Jesus was standing.
2. When Jesus saw the man, the first thing He did was tell him that his sins were forgiven. Why did He do that before He healed his body? Sin separates us from God. Even if our bodies are healthy, it does us no good if our sin remains a barrier.
3. Then Jesus told the man to take up his bed and walk. And he did. The man came into the room through a hole in the roof, unable to move by himself. He left walking out past everyone, carrying the mat that had been his bed for so many years.
4. The Bible says people were amazed because they had never seen anything like that. However, they were not all happy. Why were some people upset? Those who didn’t believe Jesus was God couldn’t understand how He could work miracles and forgive sins. They became angry and jealous. Sadly, not everyone is a friend of Jesus. Even though Jesus loved everyone in that house and was willing to die for them all, those who refused to believe were left out of the celebration.
5. Who were the man’s friends in this story? The ones who brought him to Jesus and Jesus Himself, Jesus gave the man more than he wanted (to be healed); He gave him what he needed (forgiveness of sins). Jesus does that for us too.

Conclusion

Think about your friends. It’s fun to do things together and play games and talk. But the most important thing is to know that your friend is a child of God—just like you. You can talk about Jesus together, bring your friends to church or youth group, and let them know that Jesus is their Savior too. He will forgive their sins and take care of their needs just like He does for you.

What would have happened if the friends were too busy that day or too tired to help? The sick man would have remained sick and would not have had his sins forgiven by Jesus. Your friends depend on you, too, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to bring them to Jesus—by car or text message or any way you can.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank You for loving me and taking away my sins. Please be with me in all that I do. Let me gladly tell others about You so that they can be a part of Your family too. Amen.
CCS

Week of February 26 Temptation Is Not for Wimps

Scripture: Genesis 22:1–19; James 1:12–18; Mark 1:9–15
Text: Mark 1:9–15
Songs: “Take My Life, O Lord, Renew” *AGPS* 223, “Take My Life and Let It Be” *LSB* 783, 784;
“Oh, That the Lord Would Guide My Ways” *AGPS* 191, *LSB* 707
Visuals: A skit for four students. Prepare the students briefly beforehand; giving them index cards on which is written the lines they are to say. A cell phone or laptop computer.

Introduction

Read the text for the day, repeating verse 12. The Bible says the devil tempted Jesus. Do you think the devil still tempts people? Watch what happens to these students, and tell them with a thumbs up or thumbs down what you think they should do.

Outline

1. [Student 2 stands in the front. Student 1 approaches him and says, “Oh, Dude, I didn’t do my math assignment last night. Can I copy yours? You’re a good friend, right? What harm could it do?” Ask the group to give thumbs up and say yes if they think Student 2 should give in to the temptation. They should give thumbs down and say *no* if they think Student 2 should say *no*.]
2. [Student 3 stands in the front. Student 1 approaches her and says, “Oh, look, all the kids are lining up to go in for recess. I’ll go with you so you can shove the front person back and then you can be line leader. You hardly ever get to be line leader, and, besides, she’s always saying bad things about you.” Follow the same procedure with thumbs up or thumbs down from the rest of the group.]
3. [Student 4 stands in the front. Student 1 hands him a cell phone or laptop and says, “Go ahead. Put suggestive stuff on your Facebook page, and answer that message from someone who wants to meet you. Your parents will never find out. Don’t worry. I’ll protect you.” Follow the same procedure with thumbs up or thumbs down from the group.]
4. These students were being tempted, just as Jesus was. Jesus said *no* to all the temptations that came His way. Do we always say *no*—even though we know we should? The fact is that we often say *yes* to temptation. We may be unkind, dishonest, or selfish. That’s why it is so important that Jesus lived a perfect life for us
5. When we say *yes* to temptation, that is called *sin*. The devil did all he could to tempt Jesus to follow him and to keep Jesus from dying on the cross for us. Jesus is stronger than the devil, and nothing could stop Him from taking our punishment and forgiving us for all the times we do wrong.
6. When we are tempted, what helps us to be strong and do the right thing? It’s the Holy Spirit in our hearts and the encouragement of other Christians. Jesus had angels who helped take care of Him in the wilderness. We have angels too, and we have each other. God gives us Christian friends to help. You can encourage others!

Conclusion

We know that the devil will always try to tempt us to do wrong. By ourselves, we can’t stand up to him. But with God’s help and the help of our friends, we can be strong and make good choices. When we fail, we trust in Jesus, who never failed, and who died so we can be forgiven. That makes us want to do even more things that please Him.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank You for living a perfect life and for dying for me. Please forgive me when I sin, and fill me with Your Holy Spirit so that I can stand up to temptation and live a life that honors You and helps others. Amen.

CCS

Week of March 4
National Lutheran Schools Week
Great Promises

Scripture: Genesis 17:1–7, 15–16; James 1:12–18; Mark 1:9–15
Texts: Gen. 17:1–7, 15–16; James 1:12–18
Songs: “Amazing Grace! How Sweet the Sound” *AGPS* 63, *LSB* 744;
“Great is Thy Faithfulness” *LSB* 809; “Come to Calvary’s Holy Mountain” *LSB* 435
Visual: Advertisement or mailing that promises something wonderful

Introduction

Who makes promises to you? Do they keep their promises? [Show and discuss advertisements or mailings.] To whom do you make promises? Are you good at keeping your promises? Who is someone whose words of promise you can believe? [Accept responses.]

Outline

1. People have broken promises they made to you. And, if you are honest, you will admit that you have broken promises that you have made. However, there is someone who always keeps His promises. Do you know who it is? [Encourage responses.] It is our loving God.
2. Long ago, God Almighty made a covenant (a special promise God makes to His people) with Abram and Sarai. [Read Gen. 17:1–7, 15–16.] Abram (99 years old) and Sarai (89 years old) were too old to have children. Some people may have said that they were not worth much. Yet, God made a special promise to them. In the process of making a covenant with Abram and Sarai, God changed their names to Abraham (father of a multitude) and Sarah (princess). In these names, God made known His promise/covenant to them: God would be their God, and He would cause great, numerous nations to come from them. The great kingdom of Israel, which became a blessing to the whole world, came from Abraham and Sarah. Even kings would be descendents of Abraham and Sarah. King David, King Solomon and King Jesus would come from their family. God keeps His promises.
3. Just as Abraham and Sarah didn’t deserve God’s promises, you don’t deserve God’s wonderful promises, either. Without God, you are not worth a thing. You are a sinner. Yet, God made a promise to you too. God the Almighty promises to be God to you, [insert your name]. You are also part of King Jesus’ family. He even promises to give you the crown of life. [Read James 1:12.] You will live forever in heaven, praising King Jesus for keeping His wonderful promise to you.

Conclusion

[Show advertisement or mailing piece again.] You will have many people make promises to you. You will make many promises, and you will break some of them. Yet there is One who always keeps His promises. God Almighty promises you, through the death of Jesus, that He will be your God, forgive your sins, and keep you in His kingdom forever.

Prayer

Dear God Almighty, thank You for teaching us about Your great promise to Abraham and Sarah—and the promises You made to all believers. We praise You for making us Your people and for being our God.

Amen.

GB

Week of March 11
Jesus: Powerful and Wise

Scripture: Exodus 20:1-17; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; John 12:13-22 [23-25]
Text: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31
Songs: “Let Me Learn of Jesus” *AGPS* 156; “In the Cross of Christ I Glory” *LSB* 427;
“Jesus Loves Me” *AGPS* 144, *LSB* 588;
“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” *AGPS* 50, 51, *LSB* 656, 657
Visuals: Picture of a weakling on the beach and a professional wrestler (Internet search “98 pound weakling”); picture of Jesus on the cross or a crucifix

Introduction

Do you like to be called weak or foolish? Have you “put someone down” whom you thought was weak or foolish? [Show picture of weakling.] Have you bragged/boasted about how (great, smart, athletic) you are? Oh, how easy it is to think that we are better than other people.

Outline

1. [Show the picture of the wrestler.] Professional wrestlers like to boast about their powerful moves, strength and championship belts. They can talk all day about themselves and can talk “trash” about their opponents. But are they truly powerful?
2. During this season of Lent, we remember the suffering and death Jesus endured to take the punishment that we deserved due to our sin. [Read 1 Corinthians 1:18–25.] The people of Jesus’ day were looking for a wise, powerful leader. They were looking for someone who would perform powerful miracles. Jesus could certainly do that, but His power was perfectly shown on the cross of Calvary. In humility, He hung on the cross. He seemed weak and helpless. Yet, He was showing the ultimate strength as He endured the awful pain and suffering caused by the sins of the whole world. In His death, He defeated sin, death and the devil. That’s power!
3. Jesus’ death may seem like foolishness. Why would the Son of God need to die? The reason He died was that He loves you. His humiliating death gives to us the wisdom of God, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. [Explain this in a way that is appropriate for your children.] [Read 1 Corinthians 1:28–31.]
4. Look at this picture of a professional wrestler. He might brag that he is the best wrestler in the world. He may boast that no one can beat him. What is the only thing you can boast about? Can we boast about ourselves? No. In our sinfulness, we are foolish because we do not follow God’s commands (Ten Commandments). In our sinfulness, we are weak because we depend on ourselves. In our sinful weakness, Jesus comes to us to save us and to give us His love and forgiveness that He won for us.

Conclusion

[Show Jesus on the cross.] What do we preach? Christ crucified—the power of God. In what do we boast? We can confidently boast in our Lord Jesus Christ, who was crucified for us. Boast about Him today with your family and friends. Boast every day about what He has done for you.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, You are our Savior. You showed Your power and love for us in Your death on the cross. Thank You for being our strength. Amen.

GB

Week of March 18 Lifted Up

Scripture: Numbers 21:4–9; Ezekiel 2:1–10; John 3:14–21
Texts: Numbers 21:4–9; John 3:14–16; Romans 6:23
Songs: “God Loved the World So that He Gave” *AGPS* 108, *LSB* 571;
“Jesus, I Will Ponder Now” *LSB* 440; “God Loves Me Dearly” *AGPS* 109, *LSB* 392;
“My Faith Looks Trustingly” *AGPS* 175, *LSB* 702
Visuals: Rubber snake and crucifix

Introduction

What are some dangers that you face? What are some things that could harm you? [Based on your knowledge of your audience, you may talk about tornados, earthquakes, tsunamis, car accidents, sicknesses, accidents, etc.] Some snakes are poisonous, and their bite can cause sickness or even death. In the Bible story today, you will learn how snakes caused sickness and death in the Israelites.

Outline

1. [Reveal a rubber snake.] Some of you are afraid of snakes. This snake will not hurt you. Let me tell you about a time when God used snakes to show the Israelites that they were sinning. [Read Numbers 21:4–9.] The Israelites complained about the food and even called it “worthless,” even though God was the One who had given them the food. They were sinning by being ungrateful. “The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). God sent poisonous snakes to bite the sinful people and to bring death that they deserved. Yet, God showed mercy. God had Moses put a bronze snake on a pole. If the people looked to the bronze snake, they would be saved.
2. Do you complain? Are you ungrateful to God despite all that He has done for you? Are you a sinner? You and I deserve death and eternal separation from God because of our sin. Is there any way for you and me to be saved from death? We do not look to a snake on a pole to be saved. Jesus was put on the pole of the cross to die in our place. All who look to Jesus in faith and believe will have eternal life. [Read John 3:14–16.] Say John 3:16 with me. [Lead the group in reciting these beautiful words of comfort and love.]
3. Romans 6:23 is a wonderful summary of the main teaching of today’s chapel talk. “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Just like the Israelites who complained and sinned in the wilderness, we sin and deserve the payment of death. But thanks be to God who in loving mercy gives us forgiveness, life and salvation through Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

[Show the crucifix.] We deserve death and hell for the sins we commit. But Jesus took the death we deserved. Our sins caused Jesus’ death. Yet, Jesus willingly took that punishment so we could be saved. As we believe in Jesus, who loved the world, we are given the gift of eternal life.

Prayer

Dear Jesus. Please take away our sins. We praise and thank You for the gifts of forgiveness and eternal life You have given to us. Amen.

GB

Week of March 25
Serving the One Who Served Us

Scripture: Jeremiah 31:31–34; Hebrews 5:1–10; Mark 10:[32–34] 35–45
Texts: Mark 10:35–45; Hebrews 5:5–10
Songs: “Make Me a Servant” *AGPS* 174;
“Lord, Help Us Walk Your Servant Way” *LSB* 857
Visual: Food server uniform (alternative: search Internet for photo of food server)

Introduction

This year’s theme for chapel talks has been “Equipped to Serve.” Today we will see how Jesus has served us. Since He has served us, we can serve each other in love.

Outline

1. Who serves you? [Make a list with the students: food servers, police, firefighters, doctors, teachers, parents, etc.] [Display the food server’s uniform.] What will this person do for you? Why does he/she serve you? What would happen to you if he/she didn’t serve you?
2. Jesus has served us. He certainly does not serve us because we deserve it. We often think and act like we don’t need what He wants to give us. Sometimes we even refuse the gifts He has for us. We depend upon ourselves. When we do that, we are breaking the First Commandment by making ourselves a god. But Jesus doesn’t turn His back on us. He is our High Priest. [Read Hebrews 5:5–10.] Jesus prays for us. He lived the perfect life that was impossible for us to live. He sacrificed Himself on the cross to pay for our sins. Because of that, Jesus offers forgiveness and eternal life to those who believe.
3. Now, Jesus tells us that we are to be the servant of all, not to be first or the greatest. The world tells us that it is of utmost importance to be first. We think we have to be the best at basketball, grades, making money, etc. Even at school, we want to be first in line, the first to do the activity, the first person done with the assignment. Can you think of other times when you want to be first? [Accept student responses.] Jesus’ disciples also wanted to be first. [Read Mark 10:35–45.] James and John, who were brothers, asked Jesus if they could have the best seats next to Him when He entered the glory of heaven. Jesus told them that “whoever would be great among you must be your servant.” Since Jesus is the only perfect servant, He alone is first and greatest. Jesus also reminded the two brothers that He, the Son of Man, not only came to serve, “but to give His life as a ransom for many.” Jesus gave His life because He loved you, me and the world. That is the best example of someone showing loving service to others.

Conclusion

[Show the uniform again.] This uniform reminds us of someone who serves us. What uniform do you wear? Do you know how to serve others? Jesus shows us how to serve. You are clothed with Jesus' righteousness and ready for service. We share God's word with others and love them with our words and actions. He equipped us to serve. Now we serve Him and our neighbors in joy and in His name. To God be the glory!

Prayer

Dear Jesus, You are our King, yet You came to serve us humbly and in love. Thank You for continuing to serve us with Your love, forgiveness and care. Amen.

GB

Week of April 1 Stuff That Is Hard to Understand

Scripture: Zechariah 9:9–12; Philippians 2:5–11; Mark 14:1–15:47
Text: Philippians 2:5–8
Songs: “Let Me Learn of Jesus” *AGPS* 156; “I Was Made a Christian” *AGPS* 132
Visuals: Passages from the most difficult book you can find, perhaps on medicine, theology, math, or law

Introduction

[Read a passage from the selected book.] Hmm. I don’t get it, do you? This stuff is too hard to understand. Just because it’s too hard to understand, does that make the information false or inaccurate? No. The writer understood what he said; people in the field of [mention vocational specialty] understand it.

Outline

1. Do you remember what happened after Adam and Eve sinned? They had to leave their perfect garden home as a consequence. As they left, God said, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel” (Genesis 3:15). Do you think Adam and Eve really understood that God was talking about how Jesus would defeat the devil? That stuff was probably too hard to understand, but it was a comforting promise from God—a promise He kept centuries later.
2. You certainly remember Christmas! We spent lots of time celebrating His birth. The prophets in the Old Testament spent even more time talking about the day Jesus would come. But talk can be hard to understand. God knew that. Listen to the Apostle Paul [read text]. He said that God knew how hard it would be to understand His love for sinners, so He sent Jesus—a real human being and our very real God—to make it easier to learn about Him. Today, the Bible teaches us what we need to know about God’s love and how we were saved from our sins.
3. We believe what the Bible tells us about Jesus. We often hear about what He did for sinners. It’s the most important thing we teach at (name) Lutheran School. Do you understand how Jesus could live perfectly His whole life? Do you understand how He could die and come back to life? Do you understand how you too will come back to life after you die?
4. What is the difference between understanding and believing? [Explore this with students.]

Conclusion

Right now, we don’t understand lots of stuff about God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We don’t understand, but the Bible tells us everything we need to know for right now. God gives us faith to believe the stuff we don’t understand. But someday, we’ll grasp everything about God’s love. We’ll meet Jesus and live with Him forever in heaven. Then, we’ll understand all this stuff.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for sending the Holy Spirit to give us faith to believe the stuff that’s impossible to understand. Thank You for sending Jesus to die that we may be forgiven our sins and look forward to days in heaven with You. Now send me to share with others some of the stuff that’s hard to understand.

Amen.

EG

Week of April 8 Jesus Is Alive

Scripture: Isaiah 25:6–9; 1 Corinthians 15:1–11; Mark 16:1–8
Text: Mark 16:1–8
Songs: “I Know That My Redeemer Lives” *AGPS* 127, *LSB* 461;
“The Lamb” *AGPS* 229, *LSB* 547
Visuals: Dead twig, live plant

Introduction

We have just celebrated Easter. What do you see in the church that is different today? What are some things that your family did to celebrate Easter? At Easter, we celebrate a truly wonderful thing. Jesus, who was dead, is alive again! That is amazing! Is this just an amazing historical event, or is it something that is significant to us today? Why is Easter so important to Christians?

Outline

1. [Show the stick and the plant.] What is the difference between these two? (One is alive, the other is dead.) If I put the twig in water or plant it in the ground, will it grow? Is there any way I can make the twig alive again?
2. Jesus was dead. [Recount the Good Friday story.] We know the reason that Jesus needed to die was to pay for our sins. He was crucified, and He died. He was buried and was in the grave for three days. But now, Easter is the celebration of the fact that Jesus rose from the dead. He is alive!
3. Because Jesus is alive, we know that we too will live even after we die. Just as God raised Jesus back to life, He will raise us from death so that we will live forever with Him in heaven.
4. What are some things the live plant can do? (grow, give off carbon dioxide, take in water, produce new leaves or flowers) What can the stick do? Because the stick is not alive, it cannot do anything. It is not useful in any way.
5. Because Jesus rose from the dead, we know that He is with us and helps us every day. He lives in our hearts. He loves us and forgives all our sins. We do not follow a dead Savior, but rather a Jesus, who is alive!

Conclusion

Jesus' resurrection is very important to us because it means that we, too, will be raised from death. Because of Jesus' resurrection, we will live forever with Him in heaven. Because Jesus is alive, we also know that He lives within us and that He is with us and helps us each and every day. We also know that we live to serve God and His other children in what we think, say and do.

Prayer

Dear heavenly Father, we thank You for raising Jesus from the dead. Because of His resurrection, we know that we too will rise and live with You forever. Thank You that Jesus lives and is with us each and every day. Amen.

WB

Week of April 15 Hear God's Word

Scripture: Acts 4:32–35; 1 John 1:1–2:2; John 20:19–31
Text: John 20:19–31
Songs: “My Faith Looks Trustingly” *AGPS* 175, *LSB* 702;
“I Am Trusting You, Lord Jesus” *AGPS* 126, *LSB* 729
Visuals: Several objects that can be dropped without breaking

Introduction

Have you ever heard someone say, “I’ll have to see it to believe it”? That is an attitude people sometimes get. We are not willing to believe something unless we can see it with our own eyes. Thomas reacted that way in the reading for today. He was not there when Jesus appeared to the rest of the disciples. When they told Thomas about it, he wouldn’t believe it because he hadn’t seen it for himself.

Outline

1. I want to try an experiment today. I have these objects that I am going to drop. I want you to predict what will happen when I drop them. Will they float? Rise? Fall down? Will it depend on the object? [Make a show of dropping several objects and watching what happens with each one.]
2. Why were you certain that these objects would fall to the floor when I dropped them? [Lead the students to verbalize that they know that gravity exists even though they have never seen it.] Is it hard to believe something that you cannot see? Are there other things that we believe without seeing with our own eyes?
3. Thomas had a hard time believing what he could not see. The other disciples told him they had seen Jesus, but he just couldn’t believe it without seeing for himself. What changed this for Thomas?
4. Have we physically seen Jesus with our own eyes? Do we still believe in Him? What leads us to believe even though we have not seen Him? [Lead students to verbalize that God works faith in us through His Word.] Do we also see evidence of God in our lives? In the world around us?
5. We are confident in believing what God tells us in His Word because of faith. In Hebrews 11:1, God tells us, “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the assurance of things not seen.” Even though we do not see, we can be sure of what God tells us. Most important, we believe that God sent Jesus to take away our sins and enable us to serve Him and live with Him forever.

Conclusion

We have not seen Jesus with our eyes, but we still believe. The Holy Spirit works this faith in our hearts through the Word. We also see evidence of God’s working in our lives and in the world around us. We are included in the people Jesus talks about when He said, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

Prayer

Dear Jesus, while we have not seen You with our eyes, we do believe! We see You at work in our lives and in the world around us. Thank You for revealing Yourself in the Bible. Thank you for bringing us to faith through the work of the Holy Spirit. Please keep our faith strong throughout our lives. Amen.

WB

Week of April 22 Witnesses

Scripture: Acts 3:11–21; 1 John 3:1–7; Luke 24:36–49
Texts: Luke 24:36–49; Matthew 28:18–20
Songs: “Pass It On” *AGPS* 196; “I Love to Tell the Story” *AGPS* 128
Visuals: Perform a simple procedure, and ask volunteers to witness what they saw.

Introduction

Have you ever seen a movie or TV show about a courtroom trial? A witness is an important person in a trial. What is a witness? [Solicit responses. Lead students to see that a witness must have first-hand knowledge of an event and must tell about that event.] What does it mean to have first-hand knowledge of something? In order to be a good witness, a person must also tell others what he or she has seen. Witnesses who keep what they have seen or experienced to themselves are not useful witnesses.

Outline

1. In the reading from Luke, Jesus told His disciples that they were to be witnesses of something special. What was the event of which they were witnesses? Did they have firsthand knowledge of this event? In what way? What were they now to do as witnesses?
2. Why was it so important that the disciples tell others about the resurrection? Jesus wants everyone to know about His death and His resurrection because, through Him, we are restored in our relationship to God. Because of His death and resurrection, we are God’s children with all the privileges of children.
3. We, too, are to be witnesses. In what ways do we have first-hand knowledge of God? [Lead students to express that we experience God’s love and provision in our lives.] As witnesses, we are to tell others about what we have experienced.
4. At times, we fail to be the witnesses that God wants us to be. We are reluctant to tell others about Him. Sometimes our actions suggest that we really don’t know God. When we fail to be His witnesses, we know that He forgives us and that He will help us to be the witnesses He wants us to be.

Conclusion

Jesus told His disciples that they were to be witnesses of His resurrection. They had seen with their own eyes that Jesus had risen from the dead. They were to tell others about Jesus’ resurrection because God wanted everyone to know this wonderful news. God also wants us to tell others the great news of Jesus and His love for everyone.

Prayer

Dear Father, thank You for sending Jesus to take away our sins. Thank You that He is alive and living in our hearts. Thank You for the privilege You give us in allowing us to be witnesses to others. Please forgive us for the times that we have failed to witness as we ought. Help us to faithfully tell others the good news about Jesus every opportunity we have. Amen.

WB

Week of April 29 Following Jesus

Scripture: Acts 4:1–12; 1 John 3:16–24; John 10:11–18
Texts: John 10:11–18; Psalm 23
Songs: “Come Follow Me” *AGPS* 85, *LSB* 688; “Christ Be My Leader” *AGPS* 81, *LSB* 861
Visual: Sign saying *Follow me*

Introduction

Have you ever seen an old western that shows a cattle drive? In a cattle drive, the cowboys ride behind the herd of cattle and keep pushing them forward. The cowboys are in the back of the herd. They keep the herd moving forward from behind. Jesus refers to Himself as the Good Shepherd. There is an important difference between a shepherd and a cowboy.

Outline

1. [Solicit a group of volunteers. Demonstrate how a cattle drive would work by “leading” the group by driving them from behind.]
2. Jesus refers to Himself as the Good Shepherd. What are some things that a shepherd does for the sheep? [Focus on the facts of the shepherd’s provision, protection, and guidance for the flock.]
3. Read Psalm 23:1–3. [Focus on verses 2 and 3 and the phrases, “He leads me.”] How is leading different from driving as in a cattle drive? [Demonstrate this with the group of volunteers by leading them and having them follow. Use the *Follow Me* sign to emphasize this difference.]
4. What difference does it make that Jesus our Good Shepherd leads us rather than drives us? (He knows the way and can spot dangers and help us avoid them. He walks before us and shows us the way to go.)
5. A really good shepherd might even have to put himself in danger to protect his flock. The flock might be threatened by wild animals or weather or other dangers. A good shepherd would do all he could to protect the sheep. How does this apply to Jesus as our Good Shepherd?
6. As sheep, it is our job to follow our shepherd. How do we know which way Jesus is leading us? How does He show us the way to go?

Conclusion

Jesus is our Good Shepherd. He guides and leads us. Because He leads us, He shows us the way He would have us go. He helps us avoid dangers and things that would threaten us. He even gave up His life for us, His sheep. He suffered and died to take away our sins. What a blessing that we have such a Good Shepherd!

Prayer

Dear Jesus, You are our Good Shepherd. We thank You that You walk before us and show us the way to go. We thank You for leading us and protecting us. We praise You that You were even willing to give up Your life for us. Help us to follow You each day of our lives. Amen.

WB

Week of May 6 He Loves Me

Scripture: Acts 8:26–40; 1 John 4:1–11 [12-21]; John 15:1–8

Text: 1 John 4:7-12

Songs: “God of the Sparrow” *AGPS* 111; “Beloved, Let Us Love One Another” *AGPS* 72; “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee” *AGPS* 147, *LSB* 803

Visual: Flowers with multiple petals, like daisies

Introduction

You may see a sign or bumper sticker that reads, “God is Love.” We hear that quoted often at our school and in our church. While many people believe in a general way that “God is Love,” what does this really mean for us as God’s children?

Outline

1. Who knows what kind of flower this is? [Display flower and have someone identify it.] That’s right! You might see flowers just like this one, because it is spring. You might even give flowers to your mother for Mother’s Day, or to a boy or girl you care about. An old test to see if a boy or girl that you like is really in love with you is called “He Loves Me/He Loves Me Not.” Who can explain how this works? [Demonstrate this process by plucking off the petals one at a time, reciting “He Loves Me” or “He Loves Me Not.”] Do you think this is an accurate way to determine whether someone loves you? Why not?
2. How do you know that God loves you? We can certainly turn to the Bible to hear what God says about this [read message text]. The Bible tells us that God showed His love for us when Jesus, His only Son, died for us on the cross! If someone is willing to die for you, you don’t have to wonder if he or she loves you. You know it!
3. How does God know that we love Him? Does He know that we love Him just because we say we do? No. Once again, we find the answer in the Bible. The Bible says that we show our love for God by loving others. The Bible says we can’t say that we love God when we have never seen Him, if we don’t love our brothers and sisters we see every day. God lives in us, so we can love others. Can you think of some ways to show love to someone? [Allow for responses.] This is really Good News!

Conclusion

God is love. He loves the whole world enough to send His Son to pay the price for our sins. He lives in us. We show our love for God when we serve others. Even though we cannot see God now, we are confident through faith that He lives in us.

Prayer

Dear heavenly Father, thank You for loving me. Thank you for forgiveness that comes from Your Son. Help us today to show You that we love You as we express love to one another. Give us the power and the desire to share Your love with others. Amen.

LS

Week of May 13 **Love Each Another**

Scripture: Acts 10:34–48; 1 John 5:1–8; John 15:9–17
Text: John 15:12, 17
Songs: “This Is My Commandment” *AGPS* 240; “This Is He” *AGPS* 239
Visual: Mother’s Day card

Introduction

Did you know that God wrote a love letter to you? The Bible is God’s love letter. The Bible tells us that God made each of us, and that He loves all of us no matter what! It doesn’t matter what bad actions we make; God will still love and forgive us. The Bible tells of God’s love and how to be God’s children.

Outline

1. How many of you gave a card or a present to your mother for Mother’s Day? Listen to what this card says [read inscription from card]. Do you think your mother likes to hear that you love her? I bet she likes you to show your love for her even more than she likes to hear the words. What are some ways you have you recently shown your mother that you love her? [Solicit responses.] It is easy to tell your mother that you love her, but it takes actions to show it.
2. As we worship today, it is important to tell God how much we love Him. In our chapel service today, what are some ways that we express our love to God? [Solicit responses.] That’s right, when we pray, sing, and praise God—that’s how we tell God we love Him.
3. Jesus called His disciples “friends.” He calls us friends too. He also tells us to “Love each other.” What are some ways that we can show love to each other? [Solicit responses.]
4. Jesus enables us to bear fruit, as a result of faith. Because of this, we can ask the Father for anything and He will give us what is good for others and us. We can approach the Father with confidence, as friends of His Son, knowing that He will listen and give us what is best. What a comfort to know that God chose us to be His children!

Conclusion

God sent His Son to pay for our sins and to rescue us. We are made friends of the Father through faith in Jesus. We show love to others and bear fruit for God’s kingdom. We are able to bring our requests to God, confident that He will answer our prayers for the sake of His Son. God’s great love for us inspires us to tell of our love for Him, just as we are pleased to tell our mothers how much we love them [show Mother’s Day card].

Prayer

Dear heavenly Father, thank You for loving me enough to send Your Son to die for my sins. Thank You for promising to answer my prayers. Thank You for my family, especially for my mother. Thank You for the Bible, which tells me of Your great love for me. Give us the power and the desire today to love each other. Amen.

LS

Week of May 20 What's in a Name?

Scripture: Acts 1:12–26; 1 John 5:9–15; John 17:11b–19

Text: John 17:11b–12

Songs: “Jesus, Name Above All Names” *AGPS* 145;
“There Is a Name I Love to Hear” *AGPS* 236

Visual: A key chain with name or initial on it.

Introduction

How many of you have gone on a vacation where you had to drive a very long distance? Every so often, you and your family would stop and get something to eat and take a restroom break. Sometimes when you stopped, there might have been a little souvenir shop where you could purchase something to help you to remember the trip, to recall the special times you and your family shared together. Often, key chains with names can be found in these types of shops. [Display visual.]

Outline

1. Some people can't find a key chain with their name. Sometimes they find their name, but it is spelled differently than they spell their name. That is because these souvenir places don't know "them." The shops just want to sell items that are common to many people who may share the same name. Who here has a name that can be spelled in several ways? [Solicit responses.]
2. Even though many people around the world may have the same names as us, we are all very different. We have different likes, talents and hobbies. We also have different sins. We all do things we shouldn't, and we deserve consequences for our actions. Sometimes when our parents find that we have done something we shouldn't have, they issue a consequence. Like if we break a lamp, we may have to do some chores to earn money to purchase a new one. Or if we eat our brother's sandwich, we may go to the kitchen to make him another one to replace it. For our sins, the consequence is separation from God. What can be done about this?
3. Our Father in heaven can see all the things we do, and He knows our weaknesses. He could give us a consequence for our actions, as we deserve. However, God decided to send us a Savior by sending Jesus down from heaven to die for us and take away all of our sins. For God does know each of us by name, and that name is unique to God. Like the Bible reading says today, "While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me." God gave us a special name, the name of Jesus, to call upon in times of joy, sadness, fear, trouble or thanksgiving.
4. Jesus' name is special too! You probably won't find it on a key chain at the souvenir shop. God gave this name to us to remind us that He loves us and has not forgotten us.

Conclusion

So, the next time you go on a car trip and stop for something to eat, while you are browsing around for something with your name on it, remember that God has given you the best name of all, "Jesus," to keep you close to Him.

Prayer

Dear Holy Spirit, send us to those who need to hear about You. Give us the power and the desire to tell others about the special name of Jesus. Amen.

LS

Week of May 27 **Lend Me Your Ear**

Scripture: Ezekiel 37:1–14; Acts 2:1–21; John 15:26–27; 16:4b–15

Text: John 16:12–15

Songs: “There Is a Name I Love to Hear” *AGPS* 236; “Listen! You Nations” *AGPS* 164

Visuals: A megaphone (can make one from paper), a pair of glasses or sunglasses, a photograph of a hearing aid (picture mounted on a 3x5 card), and a Bible. Practice making the “I love you” sign in sign language, by folding down your two middle fingers while leaving your index finger, pinky and thumb straight up.

Introduction

The world is an interesting place because of all the sounds around us. In the lessons for today, the focus is on hearing. Ezekiel mentions hearing the rattling of dry bones; Luke mentions in Acts that they heard people speaking in tongues; and Jesus says, “The words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.”

Outline

1. I brought these glasses today [hold up glasses]. If I put them on someone, they will give you super hearing. [Put glasses on volunteer; whisper softly to see if the children can hear you. When they say *no*, ask, “What is the purpose of glasses?”]
2. [Now show the megaphone and ask if they know what it is. Have they seen cheerleaders use them at sporting events? Say a few sentences using the megaphone (e.g., Jesus loves you). Allow children to tell that the device amplifies your voice.]
3. [Show the photo of the hearing aid and see if they know what it is. Then explain that, unlike the megaphone, which is a large device for amplifying sounds, this is a very small device that fits inside the ear to help a person hear.]
4. Even people who are born deaf can learn to communicate by sign language. They can share the word of God by using their hands to speak. [Hold up your hand, making the “I love you” sign.] This means “I love you” in sign language. [Have audience duplicate this sign.]
5. Sometimes sounds can be bad for us, like when there is loud thunderclap, it can scare us, or if music is too loud, it can damage our ears. Can you think of other loud noises that are bad? [Allow for responses.] Other sounds can be soothing, like when a mother sings a lullaby to help put a young child to sleep. What are other sounds that you enjoy?
6. This Bible [hold up Bible] needs someone to read it, to give it sound, to articulate the words of God. Some might read the word of God very loudly, like when they shout it from a pulpit, or it might be read very softly near a bedside. Words from the Bible can even be made into songs.

Conclusion

The most important thing about sharing God’s Word is that people hear it. Invite your friends and neighbors to Sunday school and church over the summer so they too will hear how much Jesus loves them and what He did for them.

Prayer

Dear heavenly Father, thank You for the gift of sound. Send us to those who need to hear about You. Give us the power and the desire to tell others about Jesus. Amen.

LS

Week of June 3 Time to Worship

Scripture: Deuteronomy 5:12–15; 2 Corinthians 4:5–12; Mark 2:23–28 (3:1–6)
Texts: Deuteronomy 5:12–15; Mark 2:28
Songs: “This Is the Day” *AGPS* 241; “O Holy Spirit, Enter In” *LSB* 913
Visuals: A regular clock; a clock illustration with several “time” periods: play, study, sleep, read, watch TV, clean room, worship, etc.

Introduction

What time is it? One of the important things to learn is the time of day. We look at the clock and we learn when it’s time for school to start, a class to begin, recess, lunch, etc. As we think about our summer schedule, we might imagine an activity clock. This summer there will be a number of time periods for each day and week. You will have time to sleep, play games, help your parents, etc.

Outline

1. Moses and God’s people had traveled together through the desert for almost 40 years (a long time!). They were about to go into the land that God has promised them. It was time to review God’s plan for them. God wanted to remind them of the times He had been with them and how they were to use their time in this new place.
2. There would be time to explore, time to build houses, time to fight enemies, time to play and work. God had an important message for them as to how they were to use their time: “Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord.” They were to take time to worship God.
3. This school year we’ve learned many things about Jesus. He came from heaven (where there is no time) to earth. There were times He ate, slept, performed miracles, taught His disciples. There was the time He died on the cross. There was the time He rose from the dead. Because He is our Savior, we take time to worship Him in school, in our homes and in church.

Conclusion

What are you going to do this summer? [Review clock of activities.] We remember today that it is God’s command to us that we take time to worship Him.

Prayer

Jesus, You are the Lord of time. Thank You for all the times You are with us. Thank You for the times we’ve been together in school this year. Bless our family time this summer. Bless our times to worship You. Amen.
RR

Week of June 10 Promises

Scripture: Genesis 3:8–15; 2 Corinthians 4:13–5:1; Mark 3:20–35
Text: Genesis 3:8–15
Songs: “Promise Fulfilled” *AGPS* 202; “Hark the Glad Sound” *LSB* 349
Visuals: A poster listing summer promises that a parent might make: “I promise to take you to the park, movie, shopping, etc.; paint your room; build you a _____; buy you a _____.”

Introduction

Have your parents made any promises about what you might do this summer? Maybe they’ve promised that you’re going on a special vacation or that you’re going to some special activity together. Will your parents keep all those promises? Do you keep all your promises? [Share examples of promises you may have broken.]

Outline

1. Satan came slithering into the Garden of Eden, and he made promises to Adam and Eve. He promised that if they listened to him and ate the fruit of the tree, they would be like God. Did Satan keep that promise? The devil is called the “father of lies.” He cannot tell the truth. He is not able to make and keep promises. What happened to Adam and Eve when they disobeyed God? We call this story “The Fall.” Adam and Eve fell into sin and fell away from God.
2. God finds Adam and Eve hiding. Because they disobeyed Him, they would have to leave the Garden. God tells them how difficult their life will be. Because we are descendants of Adam and Eve, we also are separated from God. We listen to Satan’s temptations and don’t keep our promises to God and to each other.
3. God comes immediately to Adam and Eve and makes a promise to them. It is the first promise in the Bible that God would crush the power of Satan. From Adam and Eve’s family, a Savior would be born. This promise is made throughout the entire Old Testament. It is made to Adam and Eve’s family: Abraham, Isaac, David, Isaiah and many others. God makes a promise to Mary that she would be the mother of Jesus. The Bible is God’s book of promises. God kept every promise.

Conclusion

God keeps every promise. Because of Jesus, He promises to forgive our sins, to take care of us, to be with us always, and to take us to heaven. Our parents love us very much, and sometimes they can’t keep their promises because they forget or they don’t have the time or money. God keeps every promise all the time. Remember His promises this summer.

Prayer

Jesus, You kept every promise that Your heavenly Father made to the world and to us. We praise and thank You that we know You will continue to keep every promise and that the promise of heaven is certain. Help us to believe Your promises and share Your promises. Amen.

RR



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