God’s Good Work in Us

**Bible Verse:** “And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6 ESV). (Rosa Young’s confirmation verse)

**Objects:** A piece of poster board made to look like time travel/computer; cotton field photo; boll weevil picture; Rosa Young picture.

**Lesson**

Today we are going to go on a trip. You don’t need to pack any bags. We’ll be back in time for church!

We’re going to set our computer to the right coordinates.

We are traveling to Alabama—that’s in the South of course. And it’s about _____ miles from here.

The year is 1915. That’s how many years ago? 101.

So let me put this into the computer … 101 years … _____ miles.


Okay. Fasten your seatbelts! (Pantomime fastening a seatbelt and make sound: “click”)

Let’s go! (Pantomime “flying” right then left then right again). Ah, here we are. (Then everyone “bumps” (forward and back movement quickly)

Let’s look around.

I see some fields over there. Do you see them? But there’s nothing growing. I thought cotton grew in Alabama in October.

Let me ask the computer. (Pretend to hit some buttons and “read” the screen.)

According to our computer, that is supposed to be a cotton field. In fact, cotton plants are supposed to be ready to harvest now.

I don’t see any cotton plants. Here’s what they look like. Do you see any? (Show photo of cotton plant or field from “computer.”)

Let’s see if the computer knows what is going on. Ew. Now THAT’s an UGLY bug. (Show picture of boll weevil.)

The computer says it’s a boll weevil. According to our data, the boll weevil ate the entire cotton crop in Alabama in 1915. It also says that in this part of Alabama, cotton is all farmers grew. So they lost everything.

Look over there. I see a building. I think it’s a school, let’s go see. But it’s October and no students are here. I wonder why?

There’s a young woman, probably the teacher, sitting at a desk and writing. Let’s look over her shoulder and see what she’s writing …

To Rev. C. F. Drewes
The Lutheran Church
St. Louis, Missouri

Dear Friend,

I am writing you concerning a school I have organized. I began teaching here in 1912 with seven pupils in an old hall where the cattle went for shelter. I have bought with money collected in the community five acres of land and erected a four-room school house, bought 45 seats, five heaters, one school bell, one sewing machine, one piano, a nice collection of useful books, and 150 Bibles and New Testaments.

I am writing to see if you will take our school. We will give you the land, the school building and all its contents … I hope you will see your way clear to help us.

Yours Humbly, Rosa J. Young.
Rosa J. Young. I wonder who she is. Let's ask the computer.

Rosa Young was born in Rosebud, Ala. (where we are now) in 1890, the fourth of 10 children. From the time she was a child, she wanted to be a teacher. In 1912, she built a school in Rosebud so she could teach children their subjects and about Jesus. When the boll weevil destroyed the cotton crops in 1914 and 1915, she had to close her doors. But she didn't give up her dream.

I think we need to jump ahead a little bit and see what happened after she mailed the letter. If you steady yourselves we'll just jump ahead a few months to January 1916.

Wow. Now look! Her school is full of people of all ages. It has a new name, too: Christ Lutheran Church and School.

I hear someone talking. “It is such a great joy to be here, sharing God's Word with you. Most of us have met, but if you don't know, I am Rev. Nils Bakke and I have come at Miss Young's invitation to share the Gospel of salvation with you.”

I see someone familiar inside. Do you see her? Yes! It’s her, Rosa Young. She looks so happy! So the Lutherans did agree to come help her with her school in Rosebud.

Oh, here is the rest of her biography … Lutheran pastors worked with Rosa Young to start more than 35 Lutheran churches and 30 schools serving African Americans in rural Alabama. Now there are over 100,000 black Lutherans in the Missouri Synod, with 65 black pastors and 300 congregations, and a teacher’s college named Concordia College Alabama in Selma. Most of these are connected to the mission and ministry of Dr. Rosa Young.

God's Word really spread. Remember that ugly bug that destroyed the cotton crop? It reminds me of how ugly sin is. When we hurt others, say mean things, make fun of others … that's bug ugly! But God forgives our ugly sins in Jesus. And through willing faith-filled people like Rosa Young, He can do great things.

Listen … now they are singing. That’s one of my favorite hymns, What a friend we have in Jesus. Let's sing a little bit with them.

What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer!

Let's pray: Precious Lord, thank You for heroes of faith like Rosa Young who help us see Your good work of salvation in Christ. Thank You for forgiving our bug ugly sins and offering us new life in Jesus, our everlasting Savior. In His name we pray, Amen.

Activities

Write a letter
There are many people who give of their time in love of Jesus here and around the world. Let's choose someone to whom we can write a letter of encouragement … It could be a Sunday school teacher, the pastor, your youth director, or one of the many missionaries our church supports.

What are some things we could say?

Word Search (attached)
Crossword puzzle (attached)
Boll Weevil
Word Search: Rosa Young

ALABAMA
BOLLWEEVIL
BUG
CHURCH
COTTON
CROP
FAITH
LETTER
LUTHERAN
MISSIONARY
POSSIBLE
ROSA
ROSEBUD
SCHOOL
TEACHER
Name: ________________________________

Rosa Young S.S. Lesson
Complete the crossword below

Across
2. How did Rosa communicate with the Lutheran church?
7. What bug destroyed the cotton crop?
8. What month is cotton harvested in Alabama?
9. How many brothers and sisters did Rosa have?

Down
1. What was the name of the Lutheran church?
3. What community was the first school built in?
4. What book of the Bible is our memory verse from?
5. What is an important crop in Alabama?
6. What state did we read about today?

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNODE