

Leader Bible Study *Younger Children's Lesson*

Flower gardens are beautiful when the gardener has taken time to till the soil, plant the seeds, and water the plants. If the gardener does not skillfully take care of the plants the garden will resemble more of a plant graveyard than a vibrant garden. The problem is that people love the produce of a garden... the pretty flowers, the vegetables, fruits, etc. They love the harvest, but do not care much for the process of maintaining the garden. The harvest is wonderful because the gardener is given a front row seat to the product of the hours of labor in maintaining the garden. Scripture refers to God as the Lord of the harvest. The Holy Spirit is the only one to bring about the harvest of salvation for the unsaved. He brings those who are dead in sin to life in Him. God is gracious because He uses Christians as His vessels to plant the seeds of salvation in the lives of those around them.

This lesson, primarily found in Matthew 9:35-38, depicts a general overview of the ministry of Jesus. It tells of Him proclaiming the good news of the gospel and healing the sick. It shares His great compassion and burden for the lost. The story ends with Jesus instructing the disciples by saying, "The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few. Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest" (CSB). This verse is one of many in the Bible that commissions those who have been saved to go and share the good news of the gospel (Isaiah 6:8; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Romans 10:14-15) with those around them. Our children need to know this commission applies to them as well. Use this lesson to encourage children to share the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ with those in their homes, in their schools, and in their spheres of influence. Help them think of practical ways they can do this!

Another aspect of this lesson is the mission emphasis on the Reach Texas State Offering and the encouragement for children to participate. This offering goes above and beyond our tithes to ensure people hear about the gospel. If your children did not bring money to give today, help them make a plan to do so later.

Be sure to look through this entire guide and pick a few of the application activities to complete in your class. You can edit the order and flow of the lesson to fit your class. We can't wait to hear how your children are reaching their friends and neighbors for Jesus.

Introduction Activity: “Tell Me Something Good” (10 minutes)

Materials Needed: paper, markers, or crayons

Preparation: Place a piece of paper and a variety of markers/crayons at every seat around the classroom tables.

Welcome children to class by name. Instruct them to find a seat at the table and draw a picture of a good thing that happened during the week. Share with them something good that happened to you during the past week. Set a timer for 3 minutes as they draw/color. When the time is up, instruct children to share their good news with someone at a different table than them. Once children have shared their good news, instruct them to have a seat back in their chairs.

Say, “It sounds like we all had some good news to share today! We love to share with other people the good things in our lives, and God has been good to give us so many good things to share! Today I want to share with you about the best news of all and why it is important that we share it!”

Ask, “Does anyone know what the word gospel means?” Give time for responses. Thank children for answering.

Say, “The gospel means good news! When we read about the gospel or the good news in the Bible, it is talking about Jesus dying on the cross for our sins and then being raised from the dead so that we can have a relationship with God! The good news is that we can have a relationship with Him! When something good happens, we love to share it with other people. In the same way, we can share with those around us the best news of all... the truth that God loves us!”

Bible Story: Matthew 9:35-38

Materials Needed: Bibles for every child

Instruct children to turn in their Bibles to Matthew 9:35-38. Help children find the Scripture. Instruct kids to point to verse 35 in the Bible.

Say, “God’s Word is absolutely true all of the time. What we are going to read today really happened!”

Read aloud Matthew 9:35-38.

Say, “Jesus modeled for us what it means to proclaim the good news! He went to the towns and the villages. He shared the good news by speaking. He healed people from their sickness. He had compassion for the people he met along the way.”

Ask, “What do you think compassion means?” Give time for answers. “Compassion means to care for other people. To treat them with kindness. To help them with their needs.”

Say, “The Bible teaches us to share the good news with everyone we meet. We want people to know God loves us and wants to have a relationship with us. Some of the best ways to do this is by helping others, showing kindness, and making friends. Jesus shared His love with all people even those who were sad, lonely, poor, and needy. In the same way, there are people that you see every single day at school, at the baseball/softball fields, in art class, even in the grocery store that need to know God loves them!”

Pray, “Thank you God for the good news of Jesus. Please give us boldness to share the good news with those we see at school, at baseball/softball, in art class, and even in the grocery store! We love you, Jesus. Amen.”

Give Activity: “The Great Giving Challenge” (10 minutes)

Materials Needed: Hillcrest Baptist Church - Disaster Relief video (sbtexas.com/resource/reach-texas-missions-offering-2022-2023), a container labeled Pray, Give, Go (to collect offerings), Bibles.

Play the video for the children. Say, “This is just one of the ways that this special offering goes to share the good news of Jesus! The money raised by churches helps to send people to meet the needs of those who have been devastated by storms or other disasters. It also helps to build new churches, and send people on mission trips.”

Read aloud Philippians 4:14-20. Say, “Paul wrote this letter to a church that had given him what he needed to share the good news of Jesus on his mission trips. The Lord will use any gift that is given, just like this offering, to meet the needs of people so that they might come to know Him as their Savior and King.” Instruct the children to give as they feel led. Encourage them to continue to bring their gifts throughout the week for this offering. Allow the children to drop their offerings into the container labeled Pray, Give, Go.

Move Activity: “Growing and Going” (15 minutes)

Materials Needed: styrofoam cups, soil, flower seeds, markers, crayons

Preparation: Fill cups with soil.

Ask, “What do you think the word harvest means?” Give time for answers. Explain, “The harvest is when the crops are ready to be gathered, when the vegetables in the garden are ready to be pulled, and when the flowers are ready to be picked.” Say, “The Bible shares with us that God is the Lord of the harvest. This means that God is the only one that can help people realize their need for Him. However, He does use us to share the good news! He uses us to minister to the needs of those around us, like we learned about in the video!”

Ask, “What do plants need to grow? (Food, water, sunlight, good soil, etc.)”

Say, “Just like seeds need to be planted and cared for before they bloom, it is important that we minister to the needs of those around us by sharing God’s love with them.”

Ask, “How can minister to those around us?” For example, being a friend to someone who does not have many friends, helping someone in need, etc. Give time for responses.

Instruct the children to plant the seeds in the soil.

Say, "When you see this plant and as you take care of it, ask the Lord to help you find ways to minister and share the good news with those around you!" Allow the children to take the new plants home. Explain to the children the plants will need some water and lots of sunlight.

Memorize: "The Lord of the Harvest" (15 minutes)

Materials Needed: dry erase marker, white board, beach ball

Preparation: Write Matthew 9:38 on the white board.

Instruct children to stand in a circle. Toss the beach ball to a child. Once a child catches the ball, instruct them to say the next word in the memory verse (using the board for reference) and then pass it to the next person. Continue as needed to fill time.

Closing Review Questions

1. What are ways that Jesus shared the good news?

Teaching and healing

2. The Bible says that when Jesus saw the crowds He had _____ on them.

Compassion

3. What does compassion mean?

To show kindness and help others

4. Today, we read a passage of Scripture from Philippians, what did Paul thank the church at Philippi for?

Giving to his mission trip

5. What is one way that the Reach Texas Missions Offering uses the money donated to share the good news of Jesus?

Disaster relief, mission trips, church plants

6. What is one way that you can share the good news with those around you?

Telling others about Jesus, meeting their needs, being kind

Closing

"When we think of missionaries, it is easy to think of missionaries that go across the world to tell people about Jesus. Though that is one kind of missionary, did you know that you can be a missionary too? There are people who you see every day that need to know the good news of the gospel! Ask God this week to show you one person that you can tell about the love of Jesus!"

Pray and dismiss.