

Use Week of: **September 6**

Unit 25 • Session 1

Kingdom Parables

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Matthew 13

STORY POINT:

God's growing kingdom is more valuable than anything.

KEY PASSAGE:

Colossians 1:13-14

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

How does God care for His creation?
God loves and rules over His creation according to His perfect plan.

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(10–15 MINUTES)
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LEADER Bible Study

The Gospels record dozens of Jesus' parables. A *parable* is a simple story Jesus told to help people understand the kingdom of God. Each parable taught a lesson and revealed deep and often mysterious truths about God's kingdom for those who would understand. (See Matt. 13:10-15.)

In Matthew 13:31-33, Jesus tells two stories about the kingdom of God. In the first, He compares God's kingdom to a mustard seed. In those days, the mustard seed was the smallest seed planted in the region. Despite its size, the seed yielded a tall, tree-like bush with branches for birds to nest in. Jesus was teaching that although God's kingdom started out small—with Jesus and a few disciples—it grows and spreads. We still witness this growth today.

Then Jesus compares God's kingdom to leaven, or yeast, that is mixed into flour. In time, yeast causes a dense ball of dough to grow and rise. God's kingdom grows in a similar way, moving throughout the world and changing lives.

Then, in the parables of the hidden treasure and the priceless pearl, Jesus taught about the value of God's kingdom. A man came across a treasure buried in a field and sold all he had to buy the field. A merchant, finding a priceless pearl, sold all he had to buy it. Jesus taught that the kingdom of heaven is so valuable, we would be wise to give up everything in order to have it. Jesus emphasized this truth in His encounter with the rich young ruler. (See Matt. 19:16-22.)

As you teach kids, help them begin to grasp the truth about God's kingdom. The kingdom of God is growing in the world. This kingdom is valuable and worth giving everything for. While we wait for Jesus to return and fully set up His kingdom, we carry out the mission of telling others about King Jesus, who rescues sinners.

The **BIBLE** Story

Kingdom Parables

Matthew 13

One day, Jesus went out and sat by the sea. Large crowds of people gathered around Him, so He got into a boat and sat down. All the people stood on the shore. Then **Jesus told the people parables**, or stories, **to teach them about the kingdom of God.**

Jesus' disciples asked Him, "Why do you teach in parables?"

Jesus answered, "Not everyone will understand the hidden truths about the kingdom of heaven."

Jesus reminded them about some of the words spoken by the prophet Isaiah. Some people look, but they do not see. They hear, but they do not listen or understand.

Jesus made these prophecies come true. Jesus said, "You are blessed because you do understand."

Jesus told a parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a man planted in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but it grows taller than the garden plants. It becomes a tree, and the birds come and build nests in its branches."

Jesus continued, "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, or yeast, that a woman mixed into fifty pounds of flour. The leaven makes the dough rise."



Jesus told another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure, buried in a field, that a man found. He reburied it, and then he joyfully sold everything he had and bought that field.”

Then Jesus said, “The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls. When he found one priceless pearl, he went and sold everything he had and bought it.”

When Jesus finished teaching the crowds, He left that place and went to Nazareth.

Christ Connection: The kingdom of God is growing in the world. This kingdom is valuable and worth giving everything for. While we wait for Jesus to return and fully set up His kingdom, we carry out the mission of telling others about King Jesus, who rescues sinners.

Bible Storytelling Tips

• **Display props:**

Display or pass around props as you describe each parable (a jar of mustard seed, a jar of yeast or loaf of bread, a treasure box or plastic jewel, an artificial pearl).

• **Move around:**

To help kids distinguish between the four kingdom comparisons, stand in a different place as you tell each parable.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Kingdom Parables

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 13

STORY POINT: God's growing kingdom is more valuable than anything.

KEY PASSAGE: Colossians 1:13-14

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How does God care for His creation? God loves and rules over His creation according to His perfect plan.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to talk about what they would do if they were king or queen of a kingdom.

SAY • No matter how cool you think it would be to be in charge of a whole kingdom, none of our kingdoms could ever be perfect. Today, we will talk about God's kingdom and some of the things Jesus taught about it. Jesus is the perfect King. Let's learn more.

Activity page (5 minutes)

- "Growing Up" activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete the "Growing Up" activity page. Instruct the kids to assign each picture a number and a letter. Kids will assign *A* to the plant, *B* to the person, *C* to the duck, and *D* to the butterfly. Then kids will use numbers to indicate the order the stages should be in. For example, the egg will be labeled *C1*, as it is the youngest stage of the duck's growth.

SAY • Good job putting those different creatures in the order they'd grow up. Today we will learn about God's kingdom. It is always growing.

Session starter (10 minutes)**OPTION 1:** Seed, seed, tree

Instruct the kids to sit in a circle. Select a volunteer to be the “gardener” who will walk around the outside of the circle, gently patting kids’ heads, saying “seed” each time. She will select a kid and say “tree” when she pats him. He must stand and chase her around the circle. If he tags her, she must stand in the center of the circle and be the “shrub.” If the gardener reaches the tree’s seat before he tags her, she is safe. Either way, he will be the new gardener.

SAY • When Jesus taught about God’s kingdom, He used *metaphors*—word pictures that help us imagine something unfamiliar by comparing it to something familiar. Some of Jesus’ metaphors involved plants, specifically small seeds growing into huge trees.

OPTION 2: Find the treasure

Place a few plastic gems or plastic coins in a large tub. Fill the tub with dry beans or play sand. Allow the kids to take turns sifting through the beans to find the treasure hidden within. You may wish to prepare a tub for every two or three kids so that all kids may play at the same time.

SAY • Finding a buried treasure may sound to you like the start of a wonderful adventure story. Jesus explained that the kingdom of God is like a buried treasure. Entering God’s kingdom is the start of a wonderful adventure too!

- plastic tubs, 1 per two or three kids
- dry beans or play sand, enough to fill the tub(s)
- plastic gems or plastic coins, 5-10 per tub

Transition to teach the story

TEACH the Story



SESSION TITLE: Kingdom Parables

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 13

STORY POINT: God's growing kingdom is more valuable than anything.

KEY PASSAGE: Colossians 1:13-14

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How does God care for His creation? God loves and rules over His creation according to His perfect plan.

- room decorations
- Theme Background Slide (optional)

Suggested Theme Decorating Ideas: Decorate the room to look like an antique shop. Arrange old toys on shelves and hang vintage posters around the room. Place a table on the stage with a cash register prop. Use foam board to make props that look like old furniture.

Countdown

- countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

- leader attire
- dusty jewelry box
- costume jewelry

[Leader enters wearing casual clothing, carrying a dusty jewelry box filled with costume jewelry.]

LEADER • Well hey there, everyone! Welcome to my shop, Relics Redeemed. We specialize in selling old items that have been lost. We carry all kinds of old furniture, toys, dishware, and collectibles. Check out what I have here!

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

My neighbor was cleaning out his old storage space and found this box hidden away. He didn't have the key for it and offered to sell it to me at a great price, as long as I agreed to return anything valuable that might be trapped inside. I finally got the lock picked,

but I haven't peeked inside yet. Would you all like to see what's hidden in this old box? [*Allow responses.*]

[*Open box for kids to see.*] Wow! Look at that. It's like a treasure trove! I am so excited to call my friend and let him know what I have found. I almost wish I had paid more for the box and received permission to keep everything inside. But these pieces of jewelry likely belonged to his grandmother or someone, so they'll mean more to him than they would to me.

You know, finding a hidden treasure reminds me of a Bible story. Did you know that Jesus said the kingdom of God is like a lost treasure? He sure did. Let me tell you all about it!

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • As we get into our story, let's ask a big picture question to help guide our study. ***How does God care for His creation?*** That's an important question because the Bible tells us that all of creation is under God's rule. He is the King of the universe, so understanding the ways He takes care of everything under His rule helps us see that He is a good King. As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out the answer to our question.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

· Giant Timeline

LEADER • In the beginning, there was nothing. Then God created everything! Everything God created was good until Adam and Eve chose to rebel against God's perfect rule. Their sin caused everything to fall apart.

Thankfully, nothing happens apart from God’s plan, so He promised to send a Rescuer to fix what sin had broken. Thousands of years passed, and God’s people had many ups and downs in their struggle to obey God. Eventually, God kept His promise. Jesus was born and grew up. Jesus never sinned, and He traveled Israel teaching people and working miracles. One of the things He spoke about often was the kingdom of God and the ways it would come into the world. Our story today is called “Kingdom Parables” because Jesus used *parables*—stories with deeper meaning—to help people understand what the kingdom of God is like.

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Matthew 13. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Kingdom Parables.”

LEADER • For a second, I want you to imagine how silly you would look to your family and friends if you sold everything you owned just to buy a bit of land. It’s likely that people would think you had lost your mind. Land can be valuable, but selling everything is extreme! At least, it seems that way until you come back from your new land with a chest of treasure!

God’s growing kingdom is more valuable than anything the world can offer, but to people living in the world, it doesn’t always seem that way. When we give up things to follow Jesus and be in God’s kingdom, we might seem silly too. But what is sillier: giving up something that will eventually fall apart to gain something perfect that lasts forever; or holding

- Bibles
- “Kingdom Parables” video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Story Point Poster

onto something that won't last instead of chasing after something wonderful?

In addition to the value of God's kingdom, Jesus wanted people to understand that it will expand to fill the whole earth. Just as the mustard seed which grows into a tree that provides shelter for many, God's kingdom will grow and become a shelter for everyone who has faith. **God's growing kingdom is more valuable than anything.**

Christ connection

LEADER • The kingdom of God is growing in the world.

This kingdom is valuable and worth giving everything for. While we wait for Jesus to return and fully set up His kingdom, we carry out the mission of telling others about King Jesus, who rescues sinners.

That brings us to our big picture question. ***How does God care for His creation? God loves and rules over His creation according to His perfect plan.*** By sending Jesus to defeat sin, God was working out His plan to restore the whole earth.

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the "Unit 25, Session 1" questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about where God's kingdom is. Guide them to discuss what things will be like when Jesus returns.

• "Unit 25, Session 1"
Questions from Kids
video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

Play the "A Vision for More" missions video. Ask kids to listen for ways that Luis Soto is helping God's kingdom grow. After the video, ask a volunteer to find Utah on a map of the United States.

• "A Vision for More"
missions video
• map of the United
States

LEADER • God’s growing kingdom is more valuable than anything. That’s why missionaries dedicate their whole lives to telling others about Him. Luis Soto lives in Salt Lake City, Utah, in the United States. He works hard to be a part of God’s kingdom growth. Close in prayer, thanking God for Luis Soto and his work in Salt Lake City. Pray also for any missionaries your church supports.

Key passage (5 minutes)

• Key Passage Poster
• “Kingdom of the Son
(Colossians 1:13-14)”
song

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Colossians 1:13-14. Then sing the key passage song.

LEADER • Before coming to faith in Jesus, all of us are trapped in darkness—spiritual darkness. We cannot see the truth of God and we cannot obey Him. When God saves us, we become citizens of Jesus’ kingdom, which is a kingdom of light. In Christ, we can love and obey God.

Sing (4 minutes)

• “Jesus, Our Savior”
song

LEADER • Jesus is our perfect King, and He deserves all our praise. Let’s sing to Him together. Sing together “Jesus, Our Savior.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Lord, thank You for establishing a perfect kingdom. Thank You for inviting us into it. Use us in Your plans to grow Your perfect kingdom. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

APPLY the Story



SESSION TITLE: Kingdom Parables

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 13

STORY POINT: God's growing kingdom is more valuable than anything.

KEY PASSAGE: Colossians 1:13-14

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How does God care for His creation? God loves and rules over His creation according to His perfect plan.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

• Key Passage Poster

Instruct the kids to form a circle and squat down low to the ground. Lead the kids to say the key passage very quietly. Then, repeat the key passage multiple times, increasing in volume and standing a bit more upright each time. When you say the passage for the last time, stand on tiptoes with arms stretched overhead and shout the verses.

SAY • Paul wrote this key passage as part of his letter to a church in Colossae. Paul explained the change faith brings. When we have faith in Jesus, we move from a kingdom of spiritual darkness—a kingdom of sin and death—to Jesus' perfect kingdom of light, love, grace, and mercy. **God's growing kingdom is more valuable than anything.**

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

• Bibles, 1 per kid
• Story Point Poster
• Small Group Timeline and Map Set (005802970, optional)

Distribute a Bible to each kid. Help kids find Matthew 13. You may choose a strong reader to read a selection of verses, such as Matthew 13:31-32. Remind the kids that Matthew is part of the New Testament division called the Gospels. Ask what the other gospels are and what they tell. (*Mark, Luke, John; accounts of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection*)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. Who fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy about listening and not understanding? (*those who didn't understand Jesus' parables, Matt. 13:13-14*)
2. How is the kingdom of heaven like a mustard seed? (*It looks small but grows large and provides shelter, Matt. 13:32*)
3. How is the kingdom of heaven like a buried treasure? (*It is valuable and worth giving up everything to get, Matt. 13:44*)
4. Have you ever had to give up something to follow Jesus? *Guide kids to discuss situations they may have faced where they had to choose obedience over popularity, comfort, or another thing the world can offer. Be prepared to share your own experiences too.*
5. Would you give up everything to follow Jesus? *Help the kids think through the kinds of sacrifices some believers must make, such as missionaries or those living in places hostile to Jesus. Remind them that God may not tell them to give up everything, but they are called to be ready if necessary.*
6. How can you help God's kingdom grow? *Talk through ways kids can live on mission. Help them come up with ways to show love to others and creative ways they can share the gospel with friends and loved ones. Remind them that the Holy Spirit gives us wisdom and courage to know God's will and obey it.*

SAY • God's growing kingdom is more valuable than anything. We become a part of God's kingdom when we have faith in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. We can be a part of the kingdom's growth by living on mission to tell others about Jesus.

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

LOW PREP

- pennies, 1 per kid
- lidded jar

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment found in Teach the Story.

- paper
- markers or crayons
- green construction paper
- glue

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Small pennies, big noise

Distribute a penny to each kid in your group. Put one penny in a lidded jar and shake the jar. Then pass the jar around, asking each kid to add her penny to the jar, close the lid, and shake it.

SAY • No amount is too small to give to offerings. When we all bring gifts, they can add up to a big impact! That's a big part of why we give to missions. Churches all over the United States give to a missions offering that helps Luis and other missionaries start churches. When we give to missions, we are a part of helping God's kingdom to grow.

Close by telling your kids a little about the missions offering your church participates in and which ministries or missionaries that money goes to support.

OPTION 2: Kingdom trees

Distribute a sheet of paper to each kid. Instruct the kids to draw a simple tree shape without leaves on the branches. Tell the kids to write their name in the middle of the tree trunk and the name of the person who first told them the gospel at the base of the tree. Then, allow the kids to tear off bits of green construction paper and write the names of people they can tell the gospel to on each "leaf" before gluing it to the bare branches of their tree.

SAY • We use the image of a tree to help us think about our families. The base of a family tree is made up by your ancestors, like great-grandparents. The branches are your brothers, sisters, and eventually your children and children's children. In a way, this is also a good way to think about God's kingdom. Someone told

you the gospel, and you can tell other people the gospel. As people trust in Jesus, they become part of God's kingdom, which is also God's family! **God's growing kingdom is more valuable than anything.**

Reflection and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper to each child. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Whom can I tell about this story?

Make sure to send the sheets home with kids alongside the activity page so that parents can see what their kids have been learning.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray for your group.

- pencils and crayons
- paper
- Bible Story Coloring Page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.

Use Week of: **September 13**

Unit 25 • Session 2

Three Parables

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Luke 15

STORY POINT:

Jesus came to seek and save the lost.

KEY PASSAGE:

Colossians 1:13-14

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

How does God care for His creation?
God loves and rules over His creation
according to His perfect plan.

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(10–15 MINUTES)
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LEADER Bible Study

In Luke 19, Jesus went after Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector. Zacchaeus was not well liked, but his interaction with Jesus led him to repent of his wrongdoing. Jesus said to him, “The Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10).

Who are “the lost”? What does it mean to be lost? In Luke 15, Jesus told three parables to the crowd of tax collectors, sinners, Pharisees, and scribes. Jesus’ teaching brought gospel truth to the tax collectors and sinners—those whose unrighteousness separated them from God—and to the Pharisees and scribes—those whose relied on their own righteous efforts for salvation.

The first two parables are similar. In one, a man loses a sheep. He leaves his flock to find the missing sheep, and he rejoices when it is found. In the second, a woman loses a silver coin. The woman carefully searches until she finds it. Then she calls her neighbors and friends to celebrate with her. Heaven rejoices when even one sinner repents. Finally, Jesus told a parable about two sons. The younger son asked for his inheritance, wasted his money on immoral living, and decided to return to his father. Rather than rejecting his wayward son, the father embraced him. The older son, who had always been obedient to his father, reacted with anger.

As you read Luke 15, think about the crowd Jesus was speaking to. The focus is often placed on the younger son—the one with whom the tax collectors and sinners could identify—but Jesus also made a point about the older son. The older son was like the Pharisees and scribes, focused on his own morality and feeling entitled to his father’s favor.

Jesus taught what God is like. He seeks sinners who have wandered far from Him, and He seeks sinners who try to earn salvation by their good works. As you teach, help kids understand that being lost means not knowing Jesus as Lord and Savior. God loves us, and He actively seeks to bring sinners to Himself.

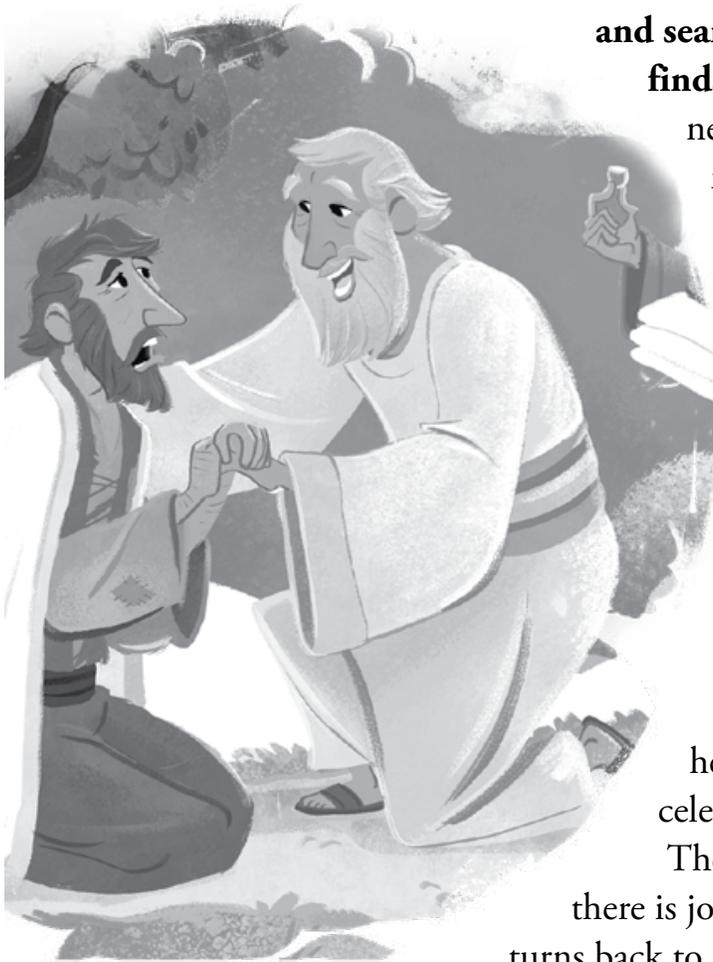
The BIBLE Story

Three Parables

Luke 15

Tax collectors and sinners came to listen to Jesus teach. The religious leaders complained because Jesus welcomed sinners, so **Jesus told them three parables to teach them about God.**

Jesus said, “If a man has 100 sheep and loses one, what does he do? He leaves the 99 sheep and searches for the lost sheep until he finds it. Then he tells his friends and neighbors, ‘Let’s celebrate! I found my lost sheep!’ In heaven, there is more joy when one sinner repents and turns back to God than for 99 people who did not wander off.”



Jesus also said, “If a woman has 10 silver coins and loses one of them, what does she do? She lights a lamp, sweeps the house, and searches carefully until she finds it. Then she tells her friends and neighbors, ‘Let’s celebrate! I found my lost coin!’”

Then Jesus repeated, “In heaven, there is joy when one sinner repents and turns back to God.”

Jesus told a third story. “A man had two sons. The younger son said, ‘Father, give me my inheritance today.’ So the father gave his son his share. The younger son left home. He wasted his money and lived foolishly. There was a famine, and the people in

that country did not have enough food. The son got a job feeding pigs. He was so hungry, even the pigs' food looked tasty.

“The younger son made a plan. He would go back to his father and admit he was wrong. He would ask to work for his father like the servants.

“So the younger son headed home. He was still a long way away when his father saw him coming. His father ran to him, threw his arms around him, and kissed him. The son began to apologize. ‘I have sinned against God and against you,’ he said.

“But the father told his servants, ‘Let’s celebrate with a feast! Bring the best robe and put it on my son! Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. This son of mine was lost, and now he is found!’

“At this time, the older son came from the fields and heard music at the house. ‘What’s going on?’ he asked one of the servants.

“‘Your brother is here,’ the servant said. ‘Your father is celebrating.’

“The older brother was angry! He refused to go to the feast. The father asked him to come inside. The older brother said, ‘I never disobeyed you! But you never threw a party for me.’

“‘Son,’ the father said, ‘everything I have is yours. We have to celebrate. Your brother was lost and is found.’”

Christ Connection: The religious leaders complained that Jesus welcomed sinners. Jesus told these parables to teach about God’s forgiveness. God sent Jesus so sinners can be forgiven. As Savior, Jesus seeks sinners. He paid the ultimate price—His own life—to save people from sin.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Use sound effects:** Play sound effects as you tell the story, such as sheep baaing, coins jingling, or pigs oinking.
- **Draw pictures:** As you tell the story, draw simple pictures on a dry erase board or large sheet of paper. Consider drawing sheep, some coins, and a father with two sons.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Three Parables

BIBLE PASSAGE: Luke 15

STORY POINT: Jesus came to seek and save the lost.

KEY PASSAGE: Colossians 1:13-14

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How does God care for His creation? God loves and rules over His creation according to His perfect plan.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to tell about a time they lost or misplaced something that was very important to them. Did they ever find it? Where was it?

SAY • It can feel very scary or frustrating to lose or misplace items that are important to us. But the joy we feel if we finally find it again is very special. Today we will learn about three stories Jesus told about people finding what they had lost. These stories will help us understand God's love for people.

Activity page (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the "Shepherd's Roundup" activity page. Challenge the kids to find and circle 10 sheep hidden in the picture.

SAY • Today we will learn about three stories Jesus told about people finding what they lost. One person was a shepherd who lost a sheep. This shepherd went to great lengths to find his sheep. What would you do to find a lost sheep?

- "Shepherd's Roundup" activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Coin collecting

Before the session, hide 10 plastic coins in the room.

During the session, invite the kids to find the lost coins.

You may choose to time them and see how quickly they are able to find all 10.

SAY • Great job finding those coins! Have any of you ever lost money? It can be very frustrating to misplace money. Today we will hear about a story Jesus told in which a woman searched her whole house to find just one missing coin out of ten. How would you feel if you found a lost coin?

LOW PREP

- plastic coins
- stopwatch (optional)

OPTION 2: Sheep toss

Place a plastic cup on the floor. Instruct the kids to line up about five feet from the cup. You may use tape to mark a line for kids to stand on when taking their turn. Give kids a cotton ball and allow them to take turns tossing their cotton ball to land in the cup. You may award points, such as one point for hitting the cup and three for landing the cotton ball inside the cup.

- plastic cup
- cotton balls, 1 per kid
- tape (optional)

SAY • Those cotton balls are soft and fluffy, almost like sheep. Today we will learn about a shepherd in a story Jesus told. He didn't toss his sheep away but went out in search of a single lost sheep even though he had 99 others that were not lost! Would you do the same to find a lost sheep?

Transition to teach the story

TEACH the Story



SESSION TITLE: Three Parables

BIBLE PASSAGE: Luke 15

STORY POINT: Jesus came to seek and save the lost.

KEY PASSAGE: Colossians 1:13-14

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How does God care for His creation? God loves and rules over His creation according to His perfect plan.

Countdown

· countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

· leader attire

[Leader enters wearing casual clothing.]

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

LEADER • Hey, friends! I'm glad you could make it back this week. You know, if you look around my shop, you might get the feeling that I have no real system of organization. You'd be right! I always mean to get things put in order and take a thorough inventory, but I just never quite get around to it. Sure, there's a bit of method to my madness, but it's nowhere near what I wish it would be.

So it's unsurprising that I tend to misplace things a lot. Take yesterday for example. I had a customer who called to see if we happened to have any antique toys from the Mutated Adolescent Samurai Frogs line. I knew we had two, one of which is a Friedman figurine, but I couldn't remember if the second was Hayek or Keynes.

I had to practically turn the shop upside-down

searching through all the clutter to find the second action figure. Turned out, I would have been wrong either way. The second toy I had in stock was Locke! I felt silly, but thankfully the customer really appreciated the effort.

The whole experience had me thinking about our Bible story this week. Jesus told three different parables about people finding lost things. I'd like to tell you all about it.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Let's start by remembering our big picture question and answer. ***How does God care for His creation? God loves and rules over His creation according to His perfect plan.*** We will see that clearly in Jesus' parables. When things go wrong in creation, God is there to comfort us. His plan was never to leave us alone in sin. Instead, God's plan was to send Jesus and restore the world from all the damage sin causes. That includes His saving us through Jesus!

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

• Giant Timeline

LEADER • When Jesus was on earth, He traveled all over Israel performing miracles and teaching people about God. Jesus spent a lot of time teaching people about God's kingdom. **God's growing kingdom is more valuable than anything.** Jesus also spent time explaining what God is like and how He loves. Jesus used *parables*—stories with deeper meaning—to

help explain how God feels toward those who do not know Him. Our story is called “Three Parables.”

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Luke 15. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Three Parables.”

- Bibles
- “Three Parables” video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Story Point Poster

LEADER • Jesus came to seek and save the lost. The lost are any people who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus. It is important for us to know that God loves the lost, because it helps us understand God’s incredible love. Because God is perfect and holy, He would be just to leave us alone in sin. Instead, He sent Jesus to save us.

How did you feel about the older brother in Jesus’ parable about the lost son? When I was young, I sometimes read the story and thought the older brother was right. It seemed unfair to me that the younger brother would get a party after the mistakes he had made.

It can be tempting to believe that if we behave in the right ways, we deserve better treatment or more love from God. That’s what the religious leaders in Jesus’ day thought! Thankfully, God’s love for us does not depend on how we behave. That’s a good thing because it means that God also doesn’t love us less when we misbehave and make sinful choices.

Christ connection

LEADER • The religious leaders complained that Jesus welcomed sinners. Jesus told these parables to teach about God’s forgiveness. God sent Jesus so sinners

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

can be forgiven. As Savior, Jesus seeks sinners. He paid the ultimate price—His own life—to save people from sin.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 25, Session 2” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about what they would do if a bully from school showed up at church. Guide them to discuss how the way we treat people shows what Jesus is like.

· “Unit 25, Session 2”
Questions from Kids
video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

Print the “Soto Family Ministry” printable and cut apart the captions. Display the photos from the printable. Invite kids to work together to match each caption with a picture.

· “Soto Family
Ministry” printable

LEADER • Many of the people in Utah have heard of Jesus, but they do not know the truth about Jesus found in the Bible. **Jesus came to seek and save the lost**, so Luis knows that Jesus wants the people in Utah to hear about Him.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Colossians 1:13-14. Then sing the key passage song.

· Key Passage Poster
· “Kingdom of the Son
(Colossians 1:13-14)”
song

LEADER • As soon as we have faith in Jesus, we are rescued from darkness. We immediately become citizens of God’s perfect kingdom. In God’s kingdom, Jesus is our perfect King. He loves us and helps us to glorify God with our lives. When we tell others about Jesus and God’s kingdom, we are part of Jesus’ mission to save the lost.

• “Jesus, Our Savior”
song

Sing (4 minutes)

LEADER • **Jesus came to seek and save the lost.** Let’s worship Him for His mercy and love.
Sing together “Jesus, Our Savior.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Father, thank You for sending Your Son to rescue us. We know that we cannot find Jesus on our own by our good works. Instead, Jesus seeks us out to draw us near. Help us be a part of Your mission in the world. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

APPLY the Story



SESSION TITLE: Three Parables

BIBLE PASSAGE: Luke 15

STORY POINT: Jesus came to seek and save the lost.

KEY PASSAGE: Colossians 1:13-14

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How does God care for His creation? God loves and rules over His creation according to His perfect plan.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- dry erase board or chalkboard
- marker or chalk
- sticky note
- pen

Before the session, write out the key passage, omitting a single word. Write that word on a sticky note and hide it somewhere in the room. During the session, challenge the kids to identify the word that is missing. Then instruct them to find the word somewhere in the room. When the kids find the sticky note, place it on the board to fill in the blank. Read the key passage a few times together.

SAY • When it comes to spiritual things, there are two kingdoms. We are all born as slaves to sin in the kingdom of darkness. Only Jesus can rescue us and bring us into His perfect kingdom. Once Jesus finds us and rescues us, we can be part of His mission—telling others about Him so they can be saved, too.

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster
- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (005802970, optional)

Distribute a Bible to each kid. Help kids find Luke 15. Ask the kids how many total chapters are in Luke. (24) Ask the kids how they can find Luke if they don't know where it is in their Bibles. (*Use the table of contents.*) Then ask how chapters and verses within a book are marked. (*The large numbers mark chapters; the small mark verses in a chapter.*)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. What did the Pharisees and scribes complain about? (*Jesus' welcoming sinners, Luke 15:2*)
2. How did the three characters from the parables react when what they lost was found? (*by rejoicing and celebrating; Luke 15:6,9,32*)
3. Why was the older brother angry at the end of that parable? (*He felt his father was treating him unfairly, Luke 15:29-30*)
4. Do you ever feel like running away from God to live your own way? *Guide kids to think about the choices they make. Help them think through times when it may feel like obeying God is a burden, such as when a seeing popular movie or playing a popular video game dishonors Him. Encourage kids to speak openly about when it is hard to obey God.*
5. Do you ever feel like it's unfair for God to love people who disobey Him? *Help kids see that all people are sinners. We often try to rank our sin or compare it to other people's sin to justify why we chose to sin. Help kids understand that all sin deserves death.*
6. How should we react to a person becoming a believer in Jesus? *Direct kids to remember how God reacts to sinners' repenting. Discuss the fact that God welcomes sinners and loves them. Help them see that we should respond like God does, with joy and celebration, not with doubt or skepticism.*

SAY • Jesus came to seek and save the lost. God loves when sinners turn from sin toward Jesus. We can rejoice in God's goodness to sinners—including ourselves—and celebrate when people come to faith. God's love is endless.

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

LOW PREP

- “Soto Family Ministry” printable
- index cards
- pencils
- tape

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment found in Teach the Story.

- craft sticks
- cotton balls
- fabric samples
- plastic coins
- yarn
- chenille stems
- glue or tape
- markers
- scissors
- other craft supplies
- small plastic bags

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: The Soto family

Allow the kids to spend a few minutes reviewing the photos and captions from the “Soto Family Ministry” printable. Give each kid an index card. Encourage the kids to write or draw pictures on their cards to help them remember ways they can pray for the Sotos this week. Help the kids tape their cards next to the pictures. Consider displaying these pictures and cards for the remainder of the unit.

SAY • Luis and Betty Soto know that many people in Utah are lost; they do not know Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior. Our prayers help strengthen their work to share with as many people as possible about salvation through Jesus. **Jesus came to seek and save the lost**, and we can be a part of Jesus’ mission by showing His love, praying for missionaries and the people they serve, and telling others about Jesus.

OPTION 2: Parable puppets

Provide craft sticks, cotton balls, fabric samples, plastic coins, yarn, chenille stems, glue or tape, markers, and other craft supplies. Help the kids make small stick puppets they can use to act out the parables.

For example, a cotton ball glued to the end of a stick could be a sheep. Two sticks in the shape of a cross with a face drawn on the “head” and a bit of cloth cut to look like a robe could be the lost son. Yarn used for hair could change the figure into the woman with the lost coin, or a chenille stem in the shape of a shepherd’s crook could mark the shepherd. Encourage kids to be creative. Provide small plastic bags for kids to take their puppets home.

SAY • Jesus came to seek and save the lost. He told three different parables to help us understand God's love for people who do not know Him. With these puppets, we can be a part of Jesus' mission to save lost people! You can use these puppets to tell the parables Jesus told to people you meet.

When we live on mission by showing Jesus' love and telling others about Him, we glorify God and help grow His kingdom. That is why we are here on earth, to glorify God and lovingly obey Him. He does not want anyone to remain in the kingdom of darkness. [*See 2 Peter 3:9.*]

Reflection and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper to each child. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Whom can I tell about this story?

Make sure to send the sheets home with kids alongside the activity page so that parents can see what their kids have been learning.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray for your group.

- pencils and crayons
- paper
- Bible Story Coloring Page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.

Use Week of: **September 20**

Unit 25 • Session 3

Jesus' Hard Teachings

BIBLE PASSAGE:

John 6

STORY POINT:

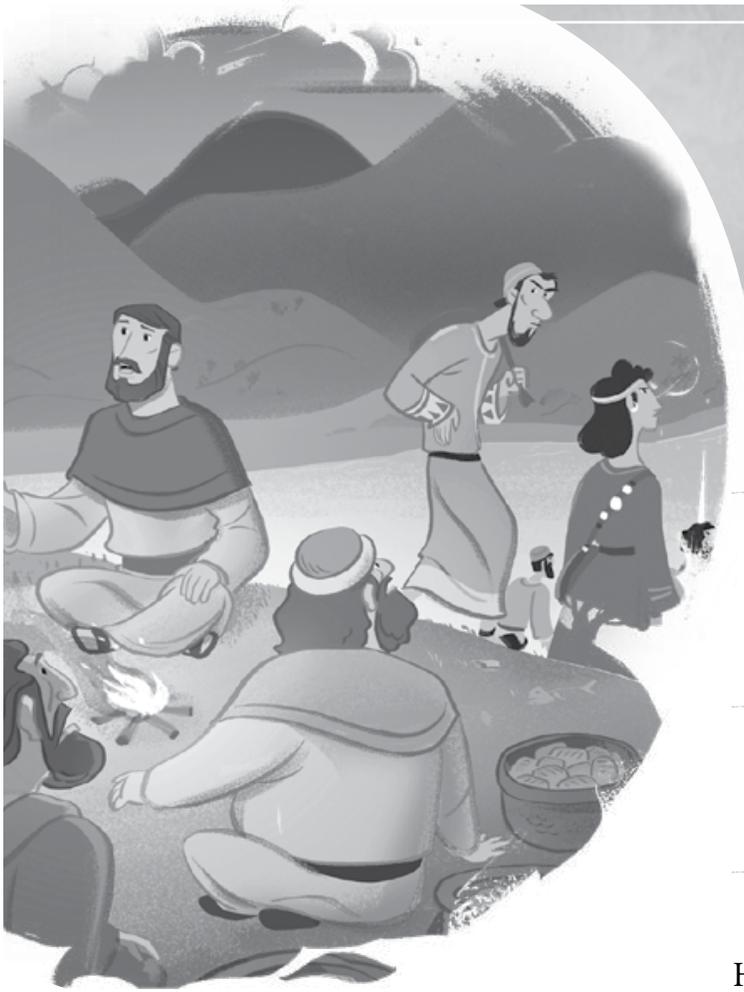
Many people misunderstood Jesus' teaching.

KEY PASSAGE:

Colossians 1:13-14

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

How does God care for His creation?
God loves and rules over His creation according to His perfect plan.



INTRODUCE THE STORY
(10–15 MINUTES)
PAGE 42



TEACH THE STORY
(25–30 MINUTES)
PAGE 44



APPLY THE STORY
(25–30 MINUTES)
PAGE 50



Leaders, grow on the go! Listen to session-by-session training every week on Ministry Grid, Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or LifeWay's Digital Pass:
ministrygrid.com/gospelproject | gospelproject.com/podcasts

LEADER Bible Study

On the heels of His miraculous feeding of the five thousand, Jesus encountered crowds who erroneously concluded He was worth following because He could use His power to fill their empty stomachs. But Jesus recognized their motives and challenged them to go after something greater—not to work for food, which does not last long, but to receive eternal life by believing in Him.

Over and over again, people misunderstood Jesus' words. They asked what they could do to get the food that lasts forever. Eternal life is a gift that God gives—not to those who perform certain deeds, but to anyone who believes in Jesus. Then the crowd asked for another sign. If Moses had provided bread for 40 years, couldn't Jesus do that too? Jesus pointed out the bread didn't come from Moses; it came from God. The crowd was so determined to get bread to eat that they didn't recognize that God had now provided true bread from heaven by sending His Son.

3

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life." Jesus didn't want just to fill people's stomachs, He wanted to give them true life. Jesus continued, "If anyone eats of this bread he will live forever" (John 6:51). As you teach, emphasize to kids that God invites us to come and eat. We partake in the bread of life by believing in Him.

The Jewish leaders struggled with Jesus' teaching. How could this man, whom they knew as the son of Joseph, be the Son of God? Furthermore, Jesus talked about giving His flesh and blood. To the Jews, this didn't make any sense. Jesus' teachings were hard to understand. When Jesus talked about His flesh and blood, He was talking about His death and resurrection.

Many people stopped following Jesus because they could not accept His teachings. Yet Peter, one of the Twelve, grasped the truth: "You have the words of eternal life. ... You are the Holy One of God" (John 6:68-69). When we trust in Jesus, He gives us the gift of eternal life.

The BIBLE Story

Jesus' Hard Teachings

John 6

A crowd of people went looking for Jesus. They had seen Him perform miracles, like feeding more than five thousand people. **They went to Capernaum and found Jesus on the other side of the Sea of Galilee.**

“Teacher, when did You get here?” they asked Jesus.

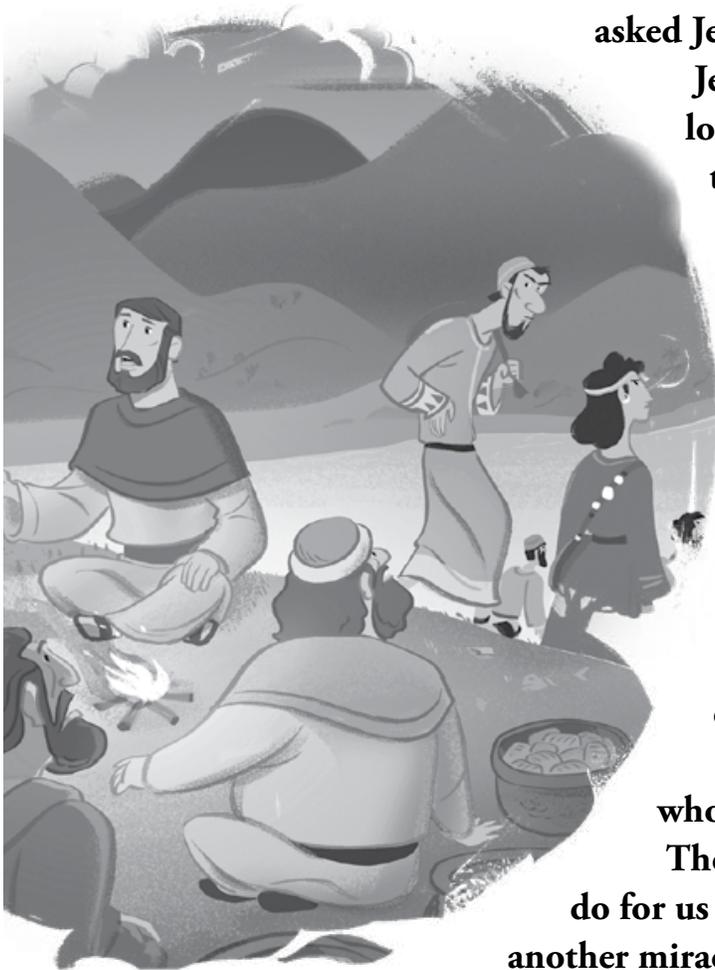
Jesus answered, “Why are you looking for Me? Did you want to find Me because I can do miracles, or were you looking for Me because I gave you food? If you’re seeking food, remember that food on earth will perish. Search for food that gives eternal life. The Son of Man will give it to you. This food never goes bad.”

The people asked, “What does God want us to do?”

Jesus said, “Believe in the One whom He has sent.”

The people said, “What will You do for us to make us believe? Will You do another miracle?” The people wanted bread from heaven like Moses and the Israelites received in the wilderness.

Jesus said, “God the Father gives true bread from heaven. I am the bread of life. No one who comes to Me will ever be hungry, and no



one who believes in Me will ever be thirsty again.” Jesus explained that the Father had sent Him to do God’s plan. God’s plan is that everyone who sees Jesus—God the Son—and believes in Him will have eternal life.

The Jews began complaining because Jesus said He came from heaven. **“Isn’t this the son of Joseph?”** they asked.

Jesus said again, **“I am the bread of life. I came from heaven. Unless you eat My flesh and drink My blood, you will not live forever.”**

When Jesus said this, many of His followers said, **“This teaching is hard. Who can accept it?”**

Many of the people who had followed Jesus turned away from Him. Jesus asked His twelve disciples, **“Do you want to go away too?”**

Peter answered, **“Lord, where would we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that You are the Holy One of God.”**

Christ Connection: Jesus wanted to do more than fill people’s stomachs; He wanted to give them true life. Jesus’ teachings were hard to understand. When Jesus talked about His flesh and blood, He was talking about His death and resurrection. When we trust in Jesus, He gives us the gift of eternal life.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Display art:** Show the Bible story picture and point to different items and people as you tell the story.
- **Make eye contact:** Draw in kids by making eye contact as you tell the story.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jesus' Hard Teachings

BIBLE PASSAGE: John 6

STORY POINT: Many people misunderstood Jesus' teaching.

KEY PASSAGE: Colossians 1:13-14

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How does God care for His creation? God loves and rules over His creation according to His perfect plan.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to share about a time they had trouble understanding something a parent or teacher was explaining.

SAY • We all have trouble understanding new ideas sometimes. Today, we will learn about a time Jesus said some things that were really hard to understand. Some people even stopped following Jesus because they did not understand these hard teachings.

Activity page (5 minutes)

- "Hard but Good" activity page,
- 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete the "Hard but Good" activity page. Instruct the kids to change one letter at a time to transform the word *hard* into the word *good*. Remind kids to use the pictures as clues if they get stuck.

SAY • Little by little, you transformed the word *hard* into the word *good*. In a way, that's like our story today. We will learn about some teachings of Jesus that were really hard to understand, but they were still good, like all Jesus' teachings.

Session starter (10 minutes)

**LOW
PREP**

OPTION 1: Favorite foods

Instruct the kids to sit in a circle. Kids will take turns saying a food they love to eat. Each kid must name a different food. If a kid says a food that has already been named, he must perform some challenging task, such as doing 10 push-ups or standing on one foot for 30 seconds. He may rejoin the game after completing the task.

SAY • I noticed none of you included flesh or blood in your favorite foods. Would it shock you to know that Jesus said His disciples must eat His flesh and drink His blood?! Today, we will learn what that meant, and why many people struggled to understand it.

OPTION 2: Do you understand?

Invite the kids to gather in the center of the room, with enough space around them to sit and stand without bumping their neighbors. Ask questions about natural occurrences. Kids will stand if they understand how it works and sit if they do not.

Suggested questions:

- What makes the sky look blue?
- What causes the northern lights?
- How do plants make food with sunlight and air?
- How do birds avoid getting lost when migrating?

SAY • Those are some difficult to understand topics. Some people may spend their whole lives trying to fully understand stuff like that. Today, we will learn about some of Jesus' teachings that were difficult to understand. What do you think they were?

Tip: Spend some time researching the basic answers to these questions so you can explain them to the curious kids in your ministry.

Transition to teach the story

TEACH the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jesus' Hard Teachings

BIBLE PASSAGE: John 6

STORY POINT: Many people misunderstood Jesus' teaching.

KEY PASSAGE: Colossians 1:13-14

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How does God care for His creation? God loves and rules over His creation according to His perfect plan.

Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

• leader attire
• old book

[Leader enters wearing casual clothing and carrying a tattered old book.]

LEADER • Hey there, friends! Look at this—I bought this old book at an estate sale yesterday. It's a first edition printing of *The Definitive Complete Works of Wallace Jiggliestick*. This particular book is from the early 1870s, but Wallace Jiggliestick was a writer about 500 years ago!

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

The first time I read his work, I barely understood any of it. Although technically he wrote in English, it was so long ago that the language has changed a ton. As you can imagine, that leads to a lot of misunderstandings of his work!

Anyway, I'm thankful to have a copy of this old collection of his even older poems and plays. I'm still trying to decide if I want to keep it for my personal collection or sell it in my store; that way someone

else might have a chance to read and misunderstand his works all over again!

You know, in a way it reminds me of a Bible story. Jesus' teachings were also difficult to understand at times. I'll tell you all about it.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Let's review our big picture question and answer.

Who can say it from memory? [*Allow responses.*]

Great job! ***How does God care for His creation?***

God loves and rules over His creation according

to His perfect plan. God's perfect plan all along was

to send Jesus. Jesus lived a perfect life before dying

on the cross for sin and rising again. As a result of

Jesus work, sin's hold over the earth has been broken.

Jesus' kingdom has arrived! Someday, Jesus will

return and fully set up His kingdom, restoring the

earth to be perfect again. That's how God loves and

cares for creation—including you and me!

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

• Giant Timeline

LEADER • Part of Jesus' ministry was teaching people about

God and God's kingdom. Jesus often did this using

parables—special stories with deeper meanings. Jesus

used parables to teach that **God's growing kingdom**

is more valuable than anything. And it was through

parables that we learned **Jesus came to seek and save**

the lost. This week, our story doesn't have parables

exactly, but it does contain a message that doesn't

mean exactly what it sounds like it means.

- Bibles
- “Jesus’ Hard Teachings” video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Story Point Poster

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to John 6. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Jesus’ Hard Teachings.”

LEADER • Oh my! I can understand why people were confused. **Many people misunderstood Jesus’ teaching.** Let’s work together to make sure we don’t make that same mistake.

Jesus called Himself the bread of life. On another occasion He said that He gives living water. In both those situations, Jesus used non-literal language. That just means “words that mean more than they seem to.” Jesus wasn’t talking about physical bread and water. He was talking about the salvation and satisfaction we get from faith in God. Just as our physical bodies need food and water to live, our souls need Jesus and the Holy Spirit to love and obey God.

When Jesus talked about eating flesh and drinking blood, He was really hinting at what would soon happen to Him. He would be killed, and He would bleed to provide salvation from sin to everyone who believes. When we consume the Lord’s Supper, it helps us remember Jesus’ sacrifice. A lot of the people didn’t understand what Jesus meant, and they decided they didn’t want anything to do with Him anymore.

I love Peter’s response though. When understanding and obeying Jesus seemed very hard, Peter knew that there was nowhere else to go. No one but Jesus could speak the words of God. Only Jesus offers eternal life. I pray we respond the same way when following Jesus is hard.

Christ connection

LEADER • Jesus wanted to do more than fill people’s stomachs; He wanted to give them true life. Jesus’ teachings were hard to understand. When Jesus talked about His flesh and blood, He was talking about His death and resurrection. When we trust in Jesus, He gives us the gift of eternal life.

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 25, Session 3” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about parts of the Bible that are hard to understand. Guide them to discuss who they could study the Bible with to help them understand it.

• “Unit 25, Session 3” Questions from Kids video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

Play the “Intro to Salt Lake City” missions video. Ask kids to describe places they saw in Salt Lake City that they might like to visit or things they might like to do.

• “Intro to Salt Lake City” missions video

LEADER • Just as **many people misunderstood Jesus’ teaching** in our Bible story, many people still misunderstand Jesus’ teaching today. That’s why missions work is so important. Missionaries help lost people understand the Bible so they can have saving faith in Jesus.

Missionaries Luis and Betty Soto serve in Salt Lake City, Utah. They help Spanish-speaking people understand how to know Jesus and what He taught us. When we live on mission, we can help others understand more about Jesus too.

• Key Passage Poster
• “Kingdom of the Son (Colossians 1:13-14)” song

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read

together Colossians 1:13-14. Then sing the key passage song.

LEADER • Some of Jesus' teachings are hard to understand, but when we are part of His kingdom, the Holy Spirit lives with us and helps us understand the truth. That's just one of the many benefits that come with living in God's kingdom. Some others are mentioned in the key passage: redemption and forgiveness of sins. *Redemption* is when one thing is exchanged for another, like Jesus' life for ours.

Sing (4 minutes)

• "Jesus, Our Savior"
song

LEADER • Jesus is our perfect King. He died to give us life. Let's praise Him.
Sing together "Jesus, Our Savior."

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Lord, thank You for Jesus. He alone has the words of life. Help us to find life in Him and lovingly obey His teachings even when we struggle to understand them. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

APPLY the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jesus' Hard Teachings

BIBLE PASSAGE: John 6

STORY POINT: Many people misunderstood Jesus' teaching.

KEY PASSAGE: Colossians 1:13-14

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How does God care for His creation? God loves and rules over His creation according to His perfect plan.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- bubble solution
- bubble wands

Ask the kids to gather near the center of the room. Select a volunteer to blow bubbles. The rest of the kids should take turns saying the key passage word-by-word, popping one bubble with each word said. Play multiple times, allowing other kids to have a turn blowing the bubbles. Then allow volunteers to say the key passage from memory. Thank the kids for their efforts and encourage all the kids to continue working on the key passage.

SAY • Everyone who has faith in Jesus is a part of God's kingdom. God's kingdom is a kingdom of light, where Jesus is our perfect King. We may not always understand all Jesus' teachings perfectly, but we can trust His goodness and obey Him out of love as we grow in faith.

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster
- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (005802970, optional)

Distribute a Bible to each kid. Help kids find John 6. Ask kids to tell you the books that come right before and right after John. (*Luke before, Acts after*) You may use the New Testament Israel Map to point out Capernaum, the location where today's story happened. (C6)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. What did Jesus say God wants people to do? (*believe in Him, John 6:29*)
2. Who will have eternal life? (*everyone who believes in Jesus; John 6:40*)
3. Why did many of Jesus' followers go away from Him? (*His teaching was difficult to understand and accept, John 6:60-66*)
4. How can we eat Jesus' flesh and drink His blood? *Remind the kids that Jesus was not speaking literally. Guide them to think about the way Jesus' body would be killed and His blood spilled to make the way for us to be saved. Discuss how believers consume the Lord's Supper to remember Jesus' sacrifice for us.*
5. Who can help you understand the Bible? *Direct the kids to pastors, elders, deacons, their parents, and so forth. Remind them that God has sent the Holy Spirit to live within believers. He helps us understand God's Word with the help of other believers.*
6. How can we help people who don't know Jesus come to understand and believe in Him? *Guide kids to practical steps they can take, like offering to read their Bibles with friends or inviting them to church. Remind the kids that only the Holy Spirit can make other people understand the truth, but we should try to give them the opportunity to hear it. Talk about what living on mission means and how it accomplishes that goal.*

SAY • Many people misunderstood Jesus' teaching. Even today, many still do not think the Bible makes sense. When we live on mission, we can try to help people understand God's Word and pray that God gives them faith and understanding.

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

LOW PREP

- dry erase board or chalkboard
- dry erase marker or chalk

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment found in Teach the Story.

- large bag clips, 1 per kid
- markers
- adhesive jewels (optional)
- other craft supplies (optional)

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Share the gospel always

Ask the kids in your group to tell you about things they think are special about the city they live in. Encourage them to think of places tourists might enjoy visiting, such as museums, amusement parks, scenic areas, or sporting events. Write their ideas on a dry erase board or chalkboard. Then brainstorm ways Christians could share the gospel with visitors at those locations.

SAY • Utah is a state that has many tourists. Christians who live there find ways to share the gospel so that visitors can hear about Jesus. As Christians, we can share God's love anytime and anywhere. The ideas we came up with are great ways to tell others about Jesus. When we love others as Jesus does and tell them about Jesus, we are part of His mission on the earth, spreading His kingdom.

OPTION 2: Bread of life clips

Provide each kid with a large bag clip that could be used to keep bread sealed. Help the kids write *Jesus is the bread of life* along the clip. Allow the kids to decorate their clips with markers, adhesive jewels, or other craft supplies.

SAY • **Many people misunderstood Jesus' teaching.** Jesus called Himself the bread of life. He said that people must eat His flesh and drink His blood. Jesus did not mean that He is literally bread or that people should literally eat Him. Jesus was teaching that He is the source of life. He is all we need. He fills us spiritually and gives us life. Anyone who does not allow Jesus to satisfy his heart will not be free from sin or live with God in His kingdom.

You can take these bag clips home and remember that Jesus is the bread of life, who satisfies our spiritual hunger. Normal bread can go stale or grow mold, especially if you don't take steps to keep it fresh. Jesus is always all we need, and the life He gives lasts forever.

Reflection and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper to each child. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Whom can I tell about this story?

Make sure to send the sheets home with kids alongside the activity page so that parents can see what their kids have been learning.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray for your group.

- pencils and crayons
- paper
- Bible Story Coloring Page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.

Use Week of: **September 27**

Unit 25 • Session 4
**Jesus Raised
Lazarus**

BIBLE PASSAGE:

John 11

STORY POINT:

Jesus has power over death.

KEY PASSAGE:

Colossians 1:13-14

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

How does God care for His creation?
God loves and rules over His creation
according to His perfect plan.



INTRODUCE THE STORY
(10–15 MINUTES)
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TEACH THE STORY
(25–30 MINUTES)
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APPLY THE STORY
(25–30 MINUTES)
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LEADER Bible Study

Jesus received word that His friend Lazarus was sick. Lazarus was the brother of Mary and Martha. They lived in the town of Bethany, which was about two miles away from Jerusalem. Mary and Martha sent a message to Jesus, likely expecting Him to come right away.

Jesus loved Mary, Martha, and Lazarus; yet He stayed where He was, and Lazarus died. Why would Jesus do such a thing? Jesus said that Lazarus' sickness was "for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it" (John 11:4). He said that He was glad He wasn't there when Lazarus died so that the disciples may believe. (John 11:15) Jesus' timing is always perfect, and He acts—or doesn't act—so that God will be glorified.

By the time Jesus arrived in Bethany, Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days. Martha went to meet Jesus. She said to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother wouldn't have died." Jesus had shown His power to heal people who were sick. Even still, she believed He could do a miracle.

Jesus told Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). Jesus is the source of life—eternal life that cannot be destroyed by death. Believers do not need to fear death because physical death is not the end. (See John 11:25-26.) Jesus endured death for us so that when we die and are absent from our physical bodies, our souls are with the Lord. (See 2 Cor. 5:8.)

Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. His messiahship was clearly on display, and it was Jesus' claims to be the Son of God that would lead to His death on the cross. Jesus interrupted Lazarus's funeral knowing His would soon follow.

Emphasize to kids that when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He showed that He has power over death. Jesus died on the cross for our sins and rose from the dead. He gives eternal life to those who trust in Him.

The BIBLE Story

Jesus Raised Lazarus

John 11

Jesus and Lazarus were friends. Lazarus lived in the town of Bethany, in Judea, with his sisters, Mary and Martha. **One day, Lazarus got sick. Mary and Martha sent a message to Jesus. “Lord, Your friend Lazarus is sick,” they said.**

Jesus told His disciples, “Lazarus’ sickness will not end in death. This sickness will bring glory to God and to the Son of God.” **Jesus stayed where He was for two more days. Then Jesus said, “Let’s go back to Judea.”**

By the time Jesus arrived in Bethany, Lazarus had been in a tomb for four days. Martha hurried to meet Jesus, but Mary stayed home.

Martha said, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother wouldn’t have died.”

Martha knew Jesus could do a miracle though. “I know God will give You whatever You ask,” she said.

Jesus replied, “Your brother will rise again.”

Martha believed that Lazarus would rise from the dead in the future—on the last day. But **Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me, even if he dies, will live. Everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die—ever. Do you believe this?”**



“Yes, Lord,” Martha said. “I believe You are the Messiah, the Son of God.”

Martha went back to her house. She told Mary that Jesus wanted to see her. So Mary left the house, and all the people who had come to comfort Mary and Martha followed her.

Mary fell at Jesus’ feet and said, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died!” Mary was crying. Jesus wept too.

Mary led Jesus to the tomb where Lazarus was buried. It was a cave, and a huge stone covered the opening. “Remove the stone,” Jesus said.

So the stone was moved aside. Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank You that You heard Me.” Then Jesus shouted, “Lazarus, come out!”

Lazarus came out of the tomb, wrapped in linen and cloth. Jesus said, “Unwrap him and let him go.”

Christ Connection: When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He showed that He has power over death. Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life.” Jesus died on the cross for our sins and rose from the dead. He gives eternal life to those who trust in Him.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Move around the room:** As you tell the story, start at one side of the room and move to the other as you tell of Jesus’ journey to Bethany and to the tomb.
- **Use pauses for emphasis:** Set the tone for the story by pausing after dialogue. Build suspense after Jesus calls Lazarus out of the tomb.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jesus Raised Lazarus

BIBLE PASSAGE: John 11

STORY POINT: Jesus has power over death.

KEY PASSAGE: Colossians 1:13-14

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How does God care for His creation? God loves and rules over His creation according to His perfect plan.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to discuss what they would do if they woke up in a dark, smelly cave.

SAY • If you woke up in a dark, smelly cave, you might feel afraid. Today, we will learn about a time Jesus brought a man back from the dead after the man had been buried in a cave-like tomb for days! Do you think coming back from the dead might feel like waking up from a long nap?

Activity page (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the “Unwrap Laz” activity page. Guide kids to follow the pathway through the winding bandages around Lazarus.

SAY • In Jesus’ time, when a person died, family members would wrap the body in strips of cloth, often with fragrant spices and oils. Today we will learn about a man whom Jesus raised from the dead. When he came out of the tomb, he was all wrapped up!

- “Unwrap Laz” activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Session starter (10 minutes)**OPTION 1: Good friends**

Direct the kids to sit in a circle. Select a kid to start by saying one thing about herself that she believes makes her a good friend. Go around the circle, allowing each kid to share something about himself that makes him a good friend. End the game by asking the kids what about Jesus makes Him a good friend.

SAY • Jesus is the best friend we could ever have. Today, we will hear a story about a time when one of Jesus' friends got sick and the friend's sisters asked Jesus to come heal him. Jesus didn't go right away but waited until the friend died! Do you think that something like death can stop Jesus from being a good friend? No way! We'll learn more soon.

OPTION 2: Emotions charades

Invite volunteers to take turns acting out emotions. Challenge the other kids to try and guess what emotion the kid is pretending to feel. Make sure to end the game by acting out sadness.

SAY • Usually you can tell how a person is feeling by looking at facial expressions and actions. In our story today, we will learn about something that made Jesus cry. What do you think might cause Jesus to feel sad and cry?

Transition to teach the story

TEACH the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jesus Raised Lazarus

BIBLE PASSAGE: John 11

STORY POINT: Jesus has power over death.

KEY PASSAGE: Colossians 1:13-14

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How does God care for His creation? God loves and rules over His creation according to His perfect plan.

Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

• leader attire
• vase
• padding or cloth

[Leader enters carrying a vase wrapped in multiple layers of padding or cloth.]

LEADER • Hey, friends. Though this currently looks like a wad of laundry, it's actually a really valuable vase. I keep it all wrapped up because it's fragile, and I don't want it to break. Supposedly this vase was the last of its kind made by a famous glass-blower named Marvin Puntty.

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

But now it's time to unwrap it so I can put it on display. I have a feeling it will sell fast. I just hope whoever buys it after me is careful to protect it like I have been. When someone does purchase it, I'll be sure to pack it carefully again so the new owner can get it home safely.

You know, all this talk of wrapping and unwrapping actually makes me think of a Bible story. However, the one wrapped up wasn't a vase, but a

friend of Jesus named Lazarus. He was all wrapped up because that's what people did with the bodies of people who had died back then. What happened to Lazarus was quite the miracle!

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • As we get into the story, I want you to think about our big picture question. ***How does God care for His creation? God loves and rules over His creation according to His perfect plan.*** In the beginning, when God created the universe, death was not part of creation. Today we will learn about a small glimpse Jesus gave people into the way God's kingdom will function when He returns to fully set up His rule on the earth. Death will not happen. Pain and sickness will end, and all evil will be destroyed. God's plan for creation is perfect.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review. ·Giant Timeline

LEADER • While on earth, Jesus traveled Israel teaching people about God and His kingdom. Jesus taught that **God's growing kingdom is more valuable than anything.** God's kingdom grows as lost people put their faith in Jesus. **Jesus came to seek and save the lost.** But not everyone believed Jesus. **Many people misunderstood Jesus' teachings.** However, Jesus' miracles proved that He is God and His teachings are trustworthy. Today we will learn about that. Our story is called "Jesus Raised Lazarus."

- Bibles
- “Jesus Raised Lazarus” video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Story Point Poster

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to John 11. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Jesus Raised Lazarus.”

LEADER • I wonder if Jesus’ disciples felt confused when they learned that Lazarus had died. Jesus said that Lazarus’ sickness *wouldn’t* end in death. Was Jesus wrong? Jesus is never wrong, and everything He says is perfect and true. Lazarus’ sickness didn’t end in death because **Jesus has power over death!**

What happened with Lazarus is just a small picture of what life in God’s eternal kingdom is like. Everyone who has faith in Jesus will live with God forever. God’s perfect design never included death. Sin brought death and destruction into the world, but God’s perfect plan would defeat death. Although we all will face physical death someday, we can be sure that Jesus’ death and resurrection made the way for us to be resurrected, too. When Jesus returns, He will resurrect us, and everyone who has faith in Him will live with God forever. We will live even if we die.

Jesus came to earth to die the death we deserve and rise again. By rising from the dead, Jesus defeated death and took away sin’s power. Everyone who believes the truth about Jesus and has faith in Him will gain life with God forever in His kingdom.

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Christ connection

LEADER • When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He showed that He has power over death. Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life.” Jesus died on the cross for our sins and rose from the dead. He gives

eternal life to those who trust in Him.

Our life with God starts as soon as we trust in Jesus. We gain hope, joy, and peace. And beyond that, even after our physical bodies die we will be alive with God in heaven. When Jesus returns, He will raise us from the dead forever and fix everything sin has broken.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 25, Session 4” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about why death is sad. Guide them to discuss how believers have hope even in sadness.

• “Unit 25, Session 4”
Questions from Kids
Video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

Teach the kids the Spanish translations of “The Gospel: God’s Plan for Me” phrases.

- *Dios reina*—God rules.
- *Hemos pecado*—We sinned.
- *Dios proveyó*—God provided.
- *Jesús dio*—Jesus gives.
- *Respondemos*—We respond.

LEADER • Today we learned that **Jesus has power over death**. This is something that missionaries like the Sotos are teaching people. The Sotos often teach about Jesus in Spanish. Even though their church is in Utah in the United States, God is using them to share the good news of Jesus with Spanish-speaking people in Utah. Now you know some phrases that can help you share the gospel in Spanish too!

Close by sharing about missionaries your church supports and what languages the people they share the gospel with speak. Then pray for them and the Sotos.

Tip: To hear the pronunciation of Spanish words, seek help from a native speaker or use an online language tool.

- Key Passage Poster
- “Kingdom of the Son (Colossians 1:13-14)” song

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Colossians 1:13-14. Then sing the key passage song.

LEADER • All people are born dead in sin. We cannot save ourselves from the kingdom of darkness. Thankfully, Jesus is the resurrection and the life. He can rescue us from sin, give us new life, and make us citizens of His eternal kingdom.

Sing (4 minutes)

- “Jesus, Our Savior” song

LEADER • **Jesus has power over death.** There are many reasons to praise Him. Let’s sing together. Sing together “Jesus, Our Savior.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • God, we praise You for being good, loving, kind, and powerful. Only You can undo death. Only You can turn sad things into beautiful pictures of peace and joy. Help us trust You always. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

APPLY the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jesus Raised Lazarus

BIBLE PASSAGE: John 11

STORY POINT: Jesus has power over death.

KEY PASSAGE: Colossians 1:13-14

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How does God care for His creation? God loves and rules over His creation according to His perfect plan.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- marker
- sticky notes

Write each word or phrase of the key passage on a separate sticky note. Allow volunteers to say the key passage from memory. If no one can say the verses from memory, display the sticky notes one at a time until at least one kid can say the passage. Praise each kid's effort and encourage the group to continue working to memorize the passage.

SAY • Jesus came to earth to save people from sin and begin setting up God's kingdom on earth. Although His kingdom is not here completely, it has already begun. Everyone who has faith in Jesus is part of God's perfect kingdom. Someday, Jesus will return and fully set up His kingdom here. The world will be restored to perfection and all evil will be destroyed.

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster
- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (005802970, optional)

Distribute a Bible to each kid. Help kids find John 11. Select a strong reader to read John 11:25-26. Ask the kids which division of the New Testament John is in, and what that division tells us about. (*the Gospels; accounts of Jesus life, death, and resurrection*) Consider displaying the New Testament Israel Map to point out Bethany. (15)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. How long had Lazarus been in the tomb when Jesus arrived in Bethany? (*four days, John 11:17*)
2. Who did Martha say Jesus is? (*the Messiah, the Son of God; John 11:27*)
3. What happened when Jesus told Lazarus to come out? (*Lazarus obeyed, John 11:44*)
4. How can we know Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God? *Guide kids to think about what Jesus said about Himself, what others said about Jesus, and what Jesus' actions communicated. Remind the kids that only God has power over death. Jesus is God the Son, and we can trust what the Bible says about Him.*
5. What does it mean to live even if you die? *Direct kids to think about the new life we receive through Jesus. Help the kids think through both the abundant life we receive as soon as we become Christians and the resurrection and eternal life we are promised in the future. Eternal life starts right away.*
6. How do you feel when you think about death? *Help kids process the complexity of grief. Remind kids that sadness about death is normal and healthy. Explain that death was not part of God's original design for creation. Point out that Christians have hope even in sadness because we know that death is not the end for those in Christ. All believers who die are reunited with God and live in His perfect kingdom forever.*

SAY • Jesus has power over death. Our bodies still get sick and die because we live in a world broken by sin. Someday, Jesus will fix all that sin has broken. We have hope even in sadness because of Jesus.

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

- Spanish storybook Bibles
- paper
- pencils, markers, or crayons

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment found in Teach the Story.

LOW PREP

- bathroom tissue, 1 roll per team

Tip: Three to five kids per team works well.

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Language is no barrier

Distribute Spanish storybook Bibles. Help the kids flip open to a page at random. Ask if they can determine the story by the pictures alone. Then provide paper, pencils, and markers or crayons. Encourage the kids to draw pictures that could help them tell the story of Jesus without using words.

SAY • The Sotos are from Puerto Rico. They speak both Spanish and English. The Sotos are the perfect couple to reach other Spanish-speakers with the gospel. If you don't speak the same language as someone else, communicating may feel impossible. Thankfully, God has given us lots of ways to communicate besides just language. Our facial expressions, body movements, and tone of voice can all communicate love, even if the person who sees or hears us can't understand our words. We can use pictures and art to communicate some basic messages, too!

Learning a new language is a great way to prepare yourself to spread the gospel, but it's not the only way. When we live on mission, God can use any and all of our efforts to bring Himself glory and spread the truth of the gospel.

OPTION 2: Wrap him up

Form two or more teams of kids. Provide each team with a roll of bathroom tissue. Explain that the teams must select a volunteer to wrap tightly with the bathroom tissue. When you say go, give the teams a few minutes to wrap their volunteer. Ensure no kids have tissue wrapped in a way that

could be dangerous, such as around their necks or covering their nose and mouth. At the end, award titles to the teams, such as “Fastest Wrapping,” “Neatest Wrapping,” or “Most Tissue Used.” Allow the wrapped kids a chance to break free.

SAY • In Jesus’ day, when a person died, he would be wrapped tightly in cloth. Since the person was dead, no one had to worry about wrapping the person comfortably or making sure he could get out—a dead person wouldn’t need to get out!

When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, Lazarus came out all wrapped up and needed help getting unwrapped! It was a true miracle. **Jesus has power over death.** Everyone who has faith in Him will live forever with God. Even after we die, we have hope for the end of time. Jesus will return, raise believers from the dead, and fully set up His kingdom.

Reflection and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper to each child. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Whom can I tell about this story?

Make sure to send the sheets home with kids alongside the activity page so that parents can see what their kids have been learning.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray for your group.

- pencils and crayons
- paper
- Bible Story Coloring Page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week’s *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.