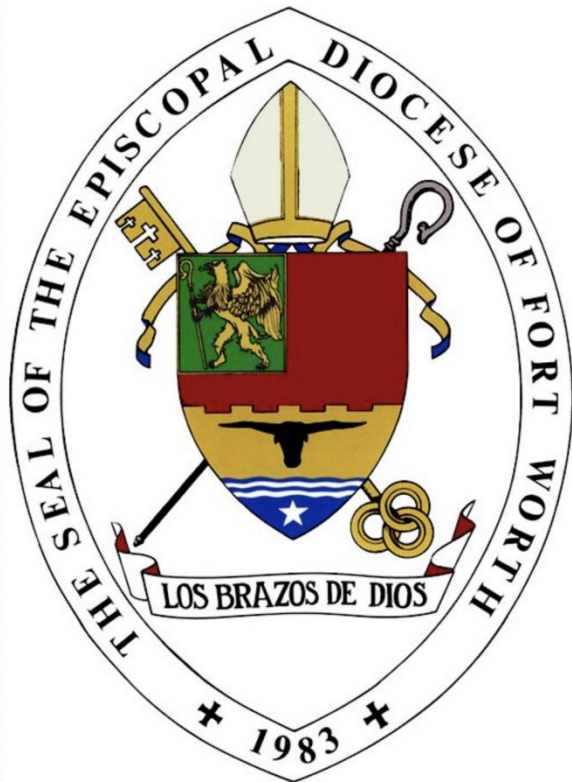


EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

A lectionary-based Sunday school curriculum for Pre-K through High School



**FIFTH
SUNDAY OF
EASTER**

Year A

A free resource created by the Christian Education Commission
of the Anglican Diocese of Fort Worth

Sunday School Curriculum

for the Fifth Sunday of Easter, Year A

Lectionary Texts:

Acts 17:1-15

Psalm 66:1-11

1 Peter 2:1-12

John 14:1-14

Acts 17:1-15

17 ¹Paul and Silas passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia. They came to Thessalonica. A Jewish synagogue was there. ²Paul went into the synagogue as he usually did. For three Sabbath days in a row he talked about the Scriptures with the Jews. ³He explained and proved that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am telling you about is the Christ!" he said. ⁴His words won some of the Jews over. They joined Paul and Silas. A large number of Greeks who worshiped God joined them too. So did quite a few important women.

⁵But the Jews were jealous. So they rounded up some evil fellows from the market place. Forming a crowd, they started all kinds of trouble in the city. The Jews rushed to Jason's house. They were looking for Paul and Silas. They wanted to bring them out to the crowd. ⁶But they couldn't find them. So they dragged Jason and some other believers to the city officials. "These men have caused trouble all over the world," they shouted. "Now they have come here. ⁷Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all disobeying Caesar's commands. They say there is another king. He is called Jesus."

⁸When the crowd and the city officials heard this, they became very upset. ⁹They made Jason and the others give them money. They wanted to make sure they would return to the court. Then they let them go.

Paul and Silas Are Sent to Berea

¹⁰As soon as it was night, the believers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. When they arrived, they went to the Jewish synagogue.

¹¹The Bereans were very glad to receive Paul's message. They studied the Scriptures carefully every day. They wanted to see if what Paul said was true. So they were more

noble than the Thessalonians. ¹² Many of the Jews believed. A number of important Greek women also became believers. And so did many Greek men.

¹³ The Jews in Thessalonica found out that Paul was preaching God's word in Berea. So they went there too. They stirred up the crowds and got them all worked up.

¹⁴ Right away the believers sent Paul to the coast. But Silas and Timothy stayed in Berea. ¹⁵ The men who went with Paul took him to Athens. Then they returned with orders that Silas and Timothy were supposed to join him as soon as they could.

Psalm 66:1-11

For the director of music. A song. A psalm.

¹ Shout to God with joy, everyone on earth!

² Sing about the glory of his name!
Give him glorious praise!

³ Say to God, "What wonderful things you do!
Your power is so great
that your enemies bow down to you in fear.

⁴ Everyone on earth bows down to you.
They sing praise to you.
They sing praise to your name." Selah

⁵ Come and see what God has done.
See what wonderful things he has done for his people!

⁶ He turned the Red Sea into dry land.
The people of Israel passed through the waters on foot.
Come, let us be full of joy because of what he did.

⁷ He rules by his power forever.
His eyes watch the nations.
Let no one who refuses to obey him rise up against him. Selah

⁸ Praise our God, you nations.
Let the sound of the praise you give him be heard.

⁹ He has kept us alive.
He has kept our feet from slipping.

¹⁰ God, you have put us to the test.
You put us through fire to make us like silver.

¹¹ You put us in prison.
You placed heavy loads on our backs.

1 Peter 2:1-12

2 ¹So get rid of every kind of evil. Stop telling lies. Don't pretend to be something you are not. Stop wanting what others have. Don't speak against each other.

² Like babies that were just born, you should long for the pure milk of God's word. It will help you grow up as believers. ³ You can do it now that you have tasted how good the Lord is.

The Living Stone and a Chosen People

⁴ Christ is the living Stone. People did not accept him. But God chose him. God places the highest value on him.

⁵ You also are like living stones. As you come to him you are being built into a house for worship. There you will be holy priests. You will offer spiritual sacrifices. God will accept them because of what Jesus Christ has done.

⁶ In Scripture it says,

“Look! I am placing a stone in Zion.
It is a chosen and very valuable stone.
It is the most important stone in the building.
The one who trusts in him
will never be put to shame.” ([Isaiah 28:16](#))

⁷ The stone is very valuable to you who believe. But to people who do not believe,

“The stone the builders did not accept
has become the most important stone of all.” ([Psalm 118:22](#))

⁸ And,

“It is a stone that causes people to trip.
It is a rock that makes them fall.” ([Isaiah 8:14](#))

They trip and fall because they do not obey the message. That is also what God planned for them.

⁹ But God chose you to be his people. You are royal priests. You are a holy nation. You are a people who belong to God. All of this is so that you can sing his praises. He brought you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people. But

now you are the people of God. Once you had not received mercy. But now you have received mercy.

Living Godly Lives Among People Who Don't Believe

¹¹ Dear friends, you are outsiders and those who wander in this world. So I'm asking you not to give in to your sinful desires. They fight against your soul. ¹² People who don't believe might say you are doing wrong. But lead good lives among them. Then they will see your good deeds. And they will give glory to God on the day he comes to judge.

John 14:1-14

14 ¹“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God. Trust in me also.

²“There are many rooms in my Father's house. If this were not true, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³ If I go and do that, I will come back. And I will take you to be with me. Then you will also be where I am.

⁴ “You know the way to the place where I am going.”

Jesus Is the Way to the Father

⁵ Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don't know where you are going. So how can we know the way?”

⁶ Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you really knew me, you would know my Father also. From now on, you do know him. And you have seen him.”

⁸ Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father. That will be enough for us.”

⁹ Jesus answered, “Don't you know me, Philip? I have been among you such a long time! Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. So how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

¹⁰ “Don't you believe that I am in the Father? Don't you believe that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. The Father lives in me. He is the One who is doing his work. ¹¹ Believe me when I say I am in the Father. Also believe that the Father is in me. Or at least believe what the miracles show about me.

¹² “What I’m about to tell you is true. Anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. In fact, he will do even greater things. That is because I am going to the Father.

¹³ “And I will do anything you ask in my name. Then the Son will bring glory to the Father. ¹⁴ You may ask me for anything in my name. I will do it.

Overview of the Texts:

One theme that can be seen throughout the readings this week is the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as the way to the Father. In Acts we see those jealous Jews who go to great lengths to stop Paul and Silas, going so far as to follow them to another city. They are trying to hinder the message of Jesus as the Messiah. Despite this, Paul and Silas still managed to find more followers who believed.

In the reading from the First Letter of Peter, the focus becomes Jesus as the chief cornerstone and echoes the actions and attitudes of the Jews from Acts. Jesus is a stumbling block for them because they refuse to understand the scriptures and believe what has been written concerning Jesus. Peter makes it very clear that it is belief in Jesus that will preserve believers from being put to shame. With Jesus as the cornerstone, the foundation, we are to be built into a spiritual house.

Continuing with the building metaphor Jesus, in the Gospel of John, describes the Kingdom of God as a house with many dwellings where He is going to prepare a place. When the disciples state that they don’t know how to get there Jesus tells them that He is the way, the truth, and the life. Jesus then explains the consubstantial nature of Himself and the Father; “I am in the Father and the Father is in me.”

PreK-Kinder / Pre-Reader Lesson Plan

Opening Prayer: Lord’s Prayer

Supplies & Preparation:

Supplies: Shoeboxes/small cardboard boxes (diorama style) or small squares of paper (approx 6”x6”) for each student, tape to connect the boxes or a poster board or butcher paper large enough to fit all of the squares, craft supplies or coloring supplies.

Preparation: None

Discussion:

- Ask your students if they have ever had company stay at their house or if they have ever stayed with someone else.
- Talk about the kinds of things that have to be made ready. *Beds made, bathroom clean, fresh sheets and towels, extra room at the dinner table, etc.*
- Read verses 1-7 of the Gospel lesson.
- Discuss how Jesus has a place prepared for us in heaven.
- Ask your students what is one important thing to do before going to stay with someone. *After any number of answers, lead them to say that we have to let them know we are coming.*
- Discuss the ways in which we let Jesus know that we are coming to stay with Him. *We believe in Him, we pray to Him.*
- If we are going to stay with someone we also have to know how to get there and Jesus tells us that He will show us the way to get to his Father's house. When we listen to Jesus and follow His ways we are on our journey to heaven.

Activity:

Have each student create their own "dwelling place" by either creating it in the cardboard boxes with craft supplies or by drawing them on the squares of paper. Have them be as complex and creative as time allows. In the final minutes of time for class, combine all of the dwelling places into one by stacking and taping them together or placing them together on the poster board/butcher paper. Talk about how the kingdom of heaven has room for everyone and that Jesus has a place prepared for all of us.

Closing Prayer: Lord's Prayer

Elementary Lesson Plan

Opening Prayer: Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary, Glory Be

Supplies & Preparation:

Supplies: 100 small card stock squares (approx. 2"x2"), 50 with "x"s on them and 50 blank.

Preparation: Try out the activity to make sure you understand.

Activity:

Begin with this game. Take the card stock squares and arrange them facedown in an 8x8 or 9x9 grid (try the first layout below then make them harder until you end with the second layout). The students (in pairs or a small group) will turn over the cards trying to find a path with no x in the way. Each student can turn over cards until they turn over one with an x, then their turn is over and the next player begins turning over cards. Each card turned over must be adjacent to the last (although each turn can begin in a different place as needed). Moves can be made forward or left and right, but not diagonally. The point of the game is for the students to get from one side to the other without hitting an "x." The first player to get to the other side is the winner. You will play the game several times and progressively get harder, beginning with the first configuration having several relatively direct paths and ending with a configuration that has only one possible path to take. Feel free to make the game as big as you want. If you have the space, feel free to use the floor, just make sure the cards can't be seen through.

First board example:

			X			X	
	X	X					
					X		x
X				X	X	X	
		X		X			X
		X		X			
	X					X	

Final board example:

			X	X	X	X	
	X	X					
X				X	X	X	x
X		X	X	X	X	X	
X				X			
	X	X		X			X
		X		X			
X	X	X		X	X	X	X

Discussion:

- Discuss with your students why the boards got harder and harder. *There were less "safe" pathways to take each time.*
- Ask your students how many different ways they can take to get to their home. Is there more than one way they can go?
- Discuss that many times in life we can reach a destination by any number of different ways. We can figure out math problems in different ways (counting on our fingers, using pencil and paper, doing it in our head, using a calculator), we can communicate in different ways (phone, text, face to face, gestures), and typically, the more different ways we know how to do something the easier it is to do.

- Read the Gospel lesson.
- Reread verse 6.
- Ask your students if reaching heaven were one of the game boards they played earlier, would it be one of the easy ones or the hard ones.
- Talk about how Jesus makes it very clear that he is the only way to the Father, the only way to reach heaven. So in that sense, the Christian life is much more similar to the final, most difficult board than any of the easier ones. Yes, we will be called to do all kinds of different things, but in the end, it is only through believing in and following Jesus as our Savior that we will reach heaven. Jesus is our only path and no matter how many times we run into the “x”s, we have to turn back and find the right way to go.

Closing Prayer: The Collect of the Day

Junior/Senior High Lesson Plan

Opening Prayer: Lord’s Prayer, Apostles’ Creed, Hail Mary

Supplies & Preparation: None

Discussion:

- Ask your students how someone gets to heaven. If they are bright, they may give just one answer, which is through Jesus Christ. If this is the case ask what other people might think is the right answer. Maybe by being a good person, by doing good things, by not doing bad things, by believing another religion.
- Read the Gospel lesson
- What does Jesus say is the way to the Father? *Himself.*
- If Jesus is clear about how to get to the Father, why would people, even Christians, think there are other ways? *Maybe we don’t want to think non-believers aren’t going to heaven. Or we want to believe being a good person should be enough to get someone into heaven. Or Jesus wouldn’t want to keep people out of heaven. It doesn’t seem fair, etc.*
- What is wrong with this? *It assumes that we can, through our own actions, be good enough to get into heaven. It is a denial of the uniqueness of Christ.*
- If we believe what Jesus says, what does this mean for us? *It means that we have to be active in trying to introduce people to Jesus. We have to be accepting and loving but unwavering in our own belief. We have to pray constantly for unbelievers.*
- At this point it may be appropriate to have a discussion about the nature of God’s grace. Some students may bring up the valid argument about those who have never heard of Christ. First and foremost, such a question would be an opportunity to

stress the importance of missionary work to places that are unreached by the Gospel. But, it is also important to stress that we have such a limited view of the grace of God that we can't be certain about the final destination of any soul. We can only operate with what has been revealed to us and that is salvation through Jesus. Imagine that you discover that someone is giving away a million of dollars to any number of people as he chooses. You can definitely get your million dollars if you show up and ask for it, but he may also just send some in the mail to random people. Would you be sure to show up and get yours or would you just hope that you may be one of the random people who gets a check in the mail. Of course you would show up and you would make sure to bring all of your friends with you. What we have in Jesus is something so much more valuable than any amount of money, so why would you leave your salvation or that of others to chance. It may be possible that God will save someone outside of belief in Jesus and through baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but we just don't know so it's our job to stick with what works.

- Discuss with the students that we live in an increasingly relativistic society when everyone has their version of truth and that claiming the absolute Truth of Jesus Christ is becoming more and more unpopular. We live in a world where people are afraid of absolute truth because it means that they might be wrong, that their version of the truth is actually a lie and that there is something bigger than their opinion.

Closing Prayer: The Collect of the Day