

5th Sunday of Easter

April 22, 2024 -
April 28, 2024

SCRIPTURE: John 15:1-8

THEME: The Living Lord Produces Active Faith

SONG: CW21 595 - Fruitful Trees, the Spirit's Sowing

VISUAL: A branch from an apple tree or another fruit tree (or any tree branch), poster board, markers

OBJECT LESSON

Show a branch that you have removed a tree (ideally, a fruit tree). Tell the children, "I'm going to wait for this to grow apples (or another type of fruit) for me!" Let them think about that for a moment, and then ask why that won't work. Point out that the same is true for vines that grow fruit, like grapevines. If we just cut off a branch from the vine, that branch is not going to grow grapes for us. Tell the children that in today's Bible reading, they are going to hear about a vine and its branches.

BIBLE TRUTH

Tell the children that for the next few weeks, they are going to be hearing things that Jesus told his disciples the night before he died on the cross. Read Jesus' words from John 15:1. Ask who Jesus said is the vine. (Jesus). Who is the gardener? (God the Father)

Read verses 2-4. Ask who the branches are. (Christians; Jesus' followers; us) Ask what we need to do in order to produce fruit. (remain in Jesus)

Continue by reading verses 5-8. Ask what we can do without Jesus. (nothing) Point out that without Jesus, we are like dead branches that get cut from a tree or vine and burned. But when we stay connected to Jesus, we can produce much fruit.

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

Draw a large vine on poster board, and label it "Jesus." Draw branches coming off it, and write on the branches the names of some of the children. (Optional: Allow volunteers to draw branches and write their own names on the branches.) Ask the children what "fruits of faith" are. (good things we do because we love Jesus) Ask children to name some of those. For each good action named, draw a circle onto a branch.

Remind the children that Jesus died and rose for them. Because he saved us and because we have been given faith in him, we are God's children. Faith in Jesus is how we are connected to him. As Jesus' followers, we can now produce fruits of faith, and God is happy when we do. But to keep producing fruits of faith, we need to stay connected to the vine, Jesus. Ask how we can do that. (We can hear/study his Word often, because the Holy Spirit uses God's Word to strengthen our faith and connection to Jesus.)

Encourage the children to thank Jesus for saving them by staying connected to him and producing fruits of faith.

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, thank you for dying on a cross and rising from the dead in order to save us! Lead us to hear and learn your Word often so that we stay connected to you always. Give us a strong faith that leads us to want to produce fruits of faith in everything we do. Amen.



HEART IMPRINTS

6th Sunday of Easter

April 29, 2024-
May 5, 2024

SCRIPTURE: John 15:9-13, 17

THEME: Jesus' Business Is Love; Therefore, So Is Ours

SONG: CW21 726/ CW93 490 - Love in Christ is Strong and Living

VISUAL: A heart cut from red construction paper with the words "Pay It Forward" written on it

OBJECT LESSON

Show the prepared construction paper heart, and ask the children if they know what "Pay It Forward" means. (It means that when someone does something for you, instead of paying that person back directly, you pass it on to another person instead.) Ask for three volunteers to stand in a row. Hand a child on one end the paper heart, and ask everyone to imagine that child is an adult going through a fast-food drive-through. "What loving and kind thing could this person do for the person in the next car (indicate the next child)?" (The first person could pay for the next person's order.) Have the first child pass the paper heart to the next child.

Say, "Let's imagine that this person (the child holding the heart) is very thankful. They soon go to a grocery store, and they see that the person checking out in front of them (indicate the next child) is just a little short on the money they need for their groceries. What loving and kind thing might the first person do?" (Give the person the money they need.) Pass the heart onto the next child. Say, "Now this person is very thankful. When they get home, they see a crying child in the neighborhood looking for a lost dog. What loving thing might this person do?" (help look for the dog)

Explain that today's Bible passage talks about love that is being passed from one person to the next—just like "paying it forward."

BIBLE TRUTH

Remind the children that they are hearing things that Jesus told his disciples the night before he died on the cross. Read Jesus' words from John 15:9. Ask who Jesus said loved him. (God the Father) Ask who Jesus said he loves in the same way his Father loves him. (his disciples, which includes us)

Read verses 10-13 and 17. Ask what Jesus commanded us, his followers, to do. (love one another) Point out that Jesus said we are to love others just as he has love us. We are to "pay forward" the love we have received from Jesus, just as Jesus has passed on the love he received from the Father. Ask, "What did Jesus say is the greatest love anyone can show to their friends?" (to be willing to die for them)

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

Ask the children to name some of the loving things Jesus did for people that he met while he lived on the earth. (He taught people God's Word, healed them, provided food for them, calmed storms, and more.) Ask what the most loving thing Jesus did for all people was. (He suffered and died to save us.) Point out that Jesus showed us the greatest love possible when he died and rose again for us. Now he wants us to "pay it forward" by showing love to one another. Ask the children to name some specific ways that they can show love for to another, as well as to parents, teachers, and other people in their lives.

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, thank you for showing amazing love for us by suffering and dying for our sins! Teach us to look for ways we can pass your love along to everyone we meet. Just as you loved us enough to die and rise for us, we want to love one another. Amen.



HEART IMPRINTS

7th Sunday of Easter

May 6, 2024-
May 12, 2024

SCRIPTURE: John 17:11-16

THEME: We Will Overcome This Broken World

SONG: CW21 446/ CW93 167 - Jesus Christ, My Sure Defense

VISUAL: Two houses built from LEGO® or similar building blocks; signs saying “Home on Earth” and “Home in Heaven”

OBJECT LESSON

Ask for a child volunteer to take off their shoes. Position the child and two labeled houses made from building blocks in the front in this order: child, house with “Home on Earth” sign, house with “Home in Heaven” sign. Explain that right now we live on Earth, but someday we will live in heaven. Ask whether we will have any troubles in heaven. (no) Then ask whether we have troubles now, on earth. (yes) Have the children name some, and each time a trouble is named, remove one building block from the “Home on Earth” and drop it on the floor until you have blocks scattered all over the floor by the “Home on Earth” sign.

Ask the volunteer whether they would like to close their eyes and walk through the broken building blocks on the floor to get to the “Home in Heaven” house. Ask, “What if I would help you and make sure you wouldn’t step on any blocks?” Point out that you could help the child overcome the “troubles” on the floor by leading the child safely through. (Demonstrate, if the child is willing.)

BIBLE TRUTH

Remind the children that they are hearing things that Jesus told his disciples the night before he died on the cross. Read Jesus’ words from John 17:11,12. Point out that Jesus was saying that he was no longer going to be in the world. Ask why he was concerned about his disciples. (They would still be in the world.) Ask, “Who had been protecting Jesus’ disciples until that night?” (Jesus had.) “What did Jesus now ask his Father to do?” (protect them)

Read verses 13-16. Point out that Jesus said he would be coming to his Father. Ask what Jesus meant when he said he and his disciples were not of this world. (Jesus’ real home, and his followers’ real home, is in heaven.) Ask, “How do people

who love this world often feel toward Jesus and his followers?” (They hate Jesus and his followers.) Point out that Jesus asked his Father to protect his followers while they were still in this world. Ask, “Who, especially, did Jesus say would want to hurt his followers?” (the evil one, the devil)

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

Ask, “Which place did Jesus say is our real home: this broken world (point to the blocks on the floor) or heaven?” Explain that right now we need to stay in this broken world. Ask, “Why do we call it a broken world?” (This world is full of sin and troubles, and the devil works hard to hurt us and lead us away from God while we are in this world.) Ask, “But who helps us overcome this world and leads us safely to heaven?” (God does.) “Why do we get to go to heaven?” (because Jesus died and rose for us) Encourage the children to thank and praise God for sending Jesus to save us and for making it possible for us to overcome this broken world and travel safely to heaven.

PRAYER

Dear God, thank you for loving us so much that you sent your own Son to suffer and die so that we can go to heaven someday. Please protect us from the devil, and help us overcome this broken world. We look forward to living with you in our heavenly home. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.



HEART IMPRINTS

Pentecost

May 13, 2024–
May 19, 2024

SCRIPTURE: John 16:4-7

THEME: Christ Has Not Left Us Alone

SONG: CW21 593/ CW93 183 - Holy Spirit, Light Divine

VISUAL: A board game for elementary school-aged children, cookies, and a TV or picture of a TV

OBJECT LESSON

Ask the children to think of their favorite baby-sitter—who could possibly be their grandparents. For older children, ask them to think of someone who might stay with them if their parents go out of town. Ask the children what their baby-sitters or grandparents let the children do when they stay with them, and what their sitters do with them. Cue by showing a board game, cookies, and a TV or picture of one. Point out that sometimes when parents need to leave you for a while, they have someone special stay with you.

BIBLE TRUTH

Remind the children that they are hearing things that Jesus told his disciples the night before he died on the cross. Read Jesus' words from John 16:4-6. Point out that Jesus was saying that he was going to return to the one who sent him. Ask who sent Jesus to earth to save us. (God the Father) Remind the children that Jesus was going to go back to his home in heaven with his Father. Ask, "How did the disciples feel because Jesus was leaving them?" (very sad)

Explain that in the next verse, Jesus told his disciples some good news to cheer them up. Read verse 7. Ask, "Why did Jesus say that it was good that he was going away?" (Because if he didn't leave, he would not be able to send the Advocate [or Counselor, depending on the Bible translation you use] to the disciples. Ask, "Who do you think Jesus meant by the Advocate (Counselor)?" (the Holy Spirit) Ask who the Holy Spirit is. (He is God, the third person of the Trinity.) Emphasize that the Holy Spirit is God, just as God the Father is God and God the Son, Jesus, is God. All three Persons of the Trinity are equal; none is more important than the others.

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

Point out that when Jesus was leaving, he sent someone special to stay with his disciples—and with us! Ask where the Holy Spirit lives. (He lives inside God's children.) Ask the children to raise their hands if they have the Holy Spirit living inside them. (All hands should be raised.) Ask the children to share what they've learned about the work the Holy Spirit does. Possible answers:

- He gives us faith.
- He makes our faith stronger every time we hear God's Word.
- He makes it possible for us to show our love for God by doing the things he wants us to do.

Encourage the children to remember that the Holy Spirit comes to them and work in them only through the Word and baptism and (when they're old enough) the Lord's Supper. Encourage the children to remember throughout every day that they have the Holy Spirit living inside them. Ask how that might affect their day. (They might feel less alone, more able to resist the devil's temptations, more eager to hear God's Word and show love for God, etc.) Encourage them to be thankful that Jesus didn't leave them alone, but sent the Holy Spirit to live in each of them.

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, thank you for sending the Holy Spirit to live in our hearts. Holy Spirit, thank you for giving us the gift of faith in Jesus! Please help us show our love for God by all that we do. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.



HEART IMPRINTS