

**Focus:** How God's Love Grows

**Gathering** (children find/sit on a carpet square)

Say: *Good Morning everyone, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. Last week we talked about how to listen to God and how the seed of God's word grows in our hearts when we do what he wants us to do. This week we will talk about how God's love grows.*

**Opening Prayer**

Together we make the Sign of the Cross (do in reverse so children can mirror).

Say: *Now let's put our hands together and bow our heads.*

*Let us pray.*

*Thank you, God, for helping us to grow. May our love for you grow stronger each day.*

*In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.*

*Amen.*

**Song/Movement (can hand out attendance stickers at this time)**

**"Trust and Obey" 25 Sunday School Songs**

When we walk with the Lord  
In the light of His word  
What a glory He sheds on our way  
When we do His good will  
He abides with us still  
And with all who will  
Trust and obey  
(chorus)

Then in fellowship sweet  
We will sit at his feet  
Or we'll walk by His side in the way  
What He says we will do  
Where He sends we will go  
Never fear only trust and obey  
(chorus 2x)

*Chorus*

Trust and obey  
For there's no other way  
To be happy in Jesus  
But to trust and obey

**Memory Verse**

Say: *Now let's take a moment together to learn a verse from the bible.*

When I am weak, I am strong in Jesus.

Have the children repeat the verse after you a couple of times.

Say: *When we have to make hard choices, Jesus is there to help us make the right choice.*

## Gospel Story

Say: *In the gospel today, Jesus tells a story about weeds and wheat. Listen to learn how Jesus wants us to grow. Have children make sign of the cross on their forehead, mouth and heart saying. "Lord, open my mind, my lips and my heart so that I may learn it, speak it and love it."*

**Read:** The Children's Bible Storybook, pages 250-251; The Difference Between Wheat and Weeds

After the reading say: *The Gospel of the Lord*

Children respond: *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ*

## Discussion Starters:

- *What does Jesus teach with this story about weeds and wheat?* That there is good and bad in the world and even when we are growing in God's word there are weeds that can sneak into our hearts and take our focus off what God wants us to do.
- *How does Jesus want us to grow?* He wants us to grow big and strong and make good choices. When the word is planted in good soil (our heart) deep down, we can become the good soil God wants us to be.
- *Why does God allow the weeds to grow?* God wants everyone to have the chance to make the right choice.

## Reflection on Reading:

To begin, provide each child with crayons and an outline of a simple flower. Invite the children to color and their flower. While they are coloring ask and discuss:

- *What helps flowers to grow?*
- *What keeps flowers from growing?*
- *What helps people to grow?* (Saying our prayers, go to church, listen to our parents, doing something kind for someone else)
- *What keeps people from growing as God's children?* (Temptation, like when we want to watch a show, but our parents want us to clean up our toys, we have to fight temptation and make the right choice.)

Allow time for discussion.

It is good to know that we are growing healthy and strong. Good choices help us to grow as God's children.

## Gospel Activity

### Red Light-Green Light

(Use the colored paper squares) Have children raise Red for a bad idea (STOP), Green for a good idea (GO).

These are just a few examples. Please make up some more of your own.

- You see a friend crying so you just walk right by.
- You hear your parents talking so you wait patiently before asking a question.
- It is very late and you are tired, so you cry loudly and complain about everything.
- You don't really like peas, but you eat two more bites for mom.
- Time for bed, so you stomp your feet and say, "NO!"
- It is morning and everyone is waking up. You still feel tired, but you give a big smile and a hug good morning to your mom and dad.
- (any other scenarios as time allows)

Complete the weekly bulletin as a group-let the children color them if there is extra time

**Closing Prayer**

(Children respond: "We Believe!")

Ask: *Do we believe in God, who wants us to be with him always?*

*Do we believe in Jesus, who teaches us how to grow God's love?*

*Do we believe in the Holy Spirit, who gives us the strength to keep growing God's love?*

**Sending Forth**

Say: *Now when you go back to church today try to take a special moment to think about God's message and try to remember to do the things God asks, so you can help God's love grow.*

**Lining Up/Closing Song**

Play "This Little Light of Mine" track 10 from 25 Sunday School Songs while children put away any materials and line up. Hand out weekly bulletins. Remind them it is important that they return to their family quietly so that we may all listen and pray together in church.

