

Focus: Jesus knows my name

Materials:

- Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest’s vestment) and Altar Cloth
- CD: Bible Songs for Kids Vol 1
- Bible: Children’s Everyday Bible
- Elmo picture
- Raindrop copies
- Crayons

Gathering (children sit on carpet/floor-“Criss-Cross Applesauce”)

Say: *Good Morning everyone, my name is _____. Last week the wise men who came to visit Jesus. God said that Jesus was his son. This week Jesus meets some new friends who will follow him and learn from him.*

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.

Dear Jesus, thank you for inviting us to be your followers. Help us to listen for your guidance in our daily lives. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen

Song/Movement

Praise Him, Praise Him All ye Little Children, track: 29, from Bible Songs for Kids Vol. 1

Play music, encourage children to stretch or move to the music (clapping, stamp feet march in place to the beat), turn to each other and shake hands, saying hello, etc.

Praise Him, Praise Him
All ye little children
God is love, God is love

Praise Him, Praise Him
All ye little children
God is love, God is love

Replace Praise Him, Praise Him for
verses 2-4 and repeat Praise Him on
the final verse.

Love Him
Serve Him
Thank Him
Praise Him

Memory Verse

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

This man is the Son of God.

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

Say: *Today’s gospel story takes place very early in Jesus’ ministry. Remember when we talked about John. He lived in the desert and ate bugs and wore animal skins. He had many people coming*

to him to be baptized so that they would be ready for Jesus. Some people stayed with him all the time.

This sentence is said by John today's Gospel story. He baptized Jesus. He was there when God said that Jesus was the son of God. John was a faithful follower of God and he believed what God had said.

He is telling his followers that he has prepared them to follow Jesus and that is the time that they should start being followers of Jesus. John has taught them a lot, but Jesus has much more to teach them.

Do you think it was hard for the men to leave John and follow Jesus? How do you feel when you get a new teacher? That is probably how the men felt too.

Gospel Story

Say: Today we are reading from the Gospel of John.

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: Children's Everyday Bible, pp. 226, *Jesus Meets Andrew and Peter*

After the reading say: The Gospel of the Lord

Children respond: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Discussion Starters:

- *Who did John say Jesus was?*
- *How did John know he was the Son of God?*
- *What did John tell his disciples?*
- *What did Andrew tell his brother about Jesus?*
- *What did Jesus do when he met Simon?*
- *What does the name Peter mean?*
- *Why would it be important to be like a rock? –Stand fast in our beliefs.*

Reflection on Reading:

Today's gospel is about listening to and responding to God's call. The first disciples are called to follow Jesus. They hear God's call and respond by following Jesus. He wants his disciples to listen and respond because they know God, not just because someone told them to do it. The disciples are invited to come and see who Jesus is. Jesus invites them to stay with him. The call of the first disciples in today's gospel reminds us that we too are called by name to know and follow Jesus.

Gospel Activity

Activity 1:

Who can tell me who this is? (hold up Elmo doll or picture) Right! This is Elmo. You know his name, but does Elmo know your name? Well yesterday I saw an Elmo doll at the toy store that can be programmed to say your name. When you squeeze Elmo's hand, he will say things like:

- Elmo loves you [your name]
- Elmo thinks you're great!
- Elmo thinks you're the best!
- [Your name], Elmo thinks...you're...special!

How about that! Elmo knows my name and he thinks I'm special!

In today's Gospel, Jesus changes Simon's name to Peter. Jesus knew that special things would happen to Peter and he would need to be strong and have great faith to these things. Jesus knew all about Peter and he gave him a special name.

The Bible tells us that God knows everything about you. He knows when you sit down... and he knows when you stand up... he knows what you are thinking... and he knows what you are going to say before you even say it... and he guides you with his hand.

Elmo doesn't really know your name. He has to be programmed to say your name. But God knows your name and he thinks you're special. How do I know he thinks you're special? I know because he sent Jesus, his only Son, to show us the right things to do so that that we can live with him forever in heaven.

Here is a little poem that will help us to remember that God knows our name:

*If you think that God doesn't hear you, then that is really a shame.
Not only does He hear you, but He knows you by your name!*

Dear Father, we are thankful that you know us by name and that you thought we were so special that you gave us your Son so we could have everlasting life. Amen.

Activity 2:

A few weeks ago we learned that John the Baptist used water to baptize people so they would change their ways and make good choices.

When we were young we were baptized with water to symbolize that we are a part of the community of Jesus. Our parents gave us the name we would use to show we are believers in Jesus and we belong to him.

During a baptism, the priest says: I claim you... --insert your first name--... for Christ in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Names are very important. We know who others are by their name. Jesus knows each of us and knows our name. He calls us every day, just like a shepherd calls his sheep, to be close to him and to follow him, just like he called the disciples in the gospel today.

Hand out the rain drops. Invite the children to draw their own faces/names and the faces/names of many other people (family, friends and neighbors) inside their water droplets.

As the children are working, ask: Why do you think we began with the water droplet? Why are we drawing all of these faces inside the droplets?

Reinforce that through the water of Baptism we become part of Jesus' community.

Invite the children to share whose faces they have drawn if there is time.

Let them bring them home to place on the dining table so they can remember to pray for our church community each day.

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

Closing Prayer

(Children respond: "I Believe!")

Ask: *Do you believe in God, who knows us each by name?*

Do you believe in Jesus, who is the Son of God?

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who helps us be followers of Jesus?

Sending Forth

Say: We can be good followers of Jesus by being kind and helpful. Think of something kind or helpful you can do for someone and keep it as a secret in your heart.

Prayer: "Dear Jesus, you know us by name and you know the secrets in our hearts. Help us live our secret this week with someone we know and love. Amen."

Lining Up/Closing Song

Play "To God be the Glory" track 31 from Bible Songs for Kids, Vol 1 while children put away any materials and lineup. 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.