

Focus: Being part of the Body of Christ

Materials:

Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest's vestment) and Altar Cloth
CD-Toddlers 20 Favorite Bible Songs
Bible: The Bible for Children
Helper Flash Cards

Gathering (have children sit on the floor-“Criss-Cross Applesauce”)

Say: *Good Morning everyone, my name is _____. Last week we talked about Jesus' first miracle of changing the wine into water at the wedding. This week we will hear a story about Jesus and how he wants us to act.*

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.

Good and loving God, thank you for all the people who teach us about God's word and stand up for what is good and right. Help us to be caring and kind.

In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

Song/Movement

Isn't He Wonderful?, track: 9, from Toddler 20 Favorite Bible Songs

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. Have children sit on their carpet squares when finished.

Isn't He wonderful, wonderful,
wonderful!
Isn't Jesus my Lord wonderful!
Eyes have seen, ears have heard

It's recorded in God's Word
Isn't Jesus my Lord wonderful!
Repeat all

Memory Verse

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

The Spirit of the Lord is on me.

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

Say: *God is three persons together as one: God, our heavenly Creator, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit. Jesus is always with his heavenly Father and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit represents life, energy and the power of God's truth and justice. We see the power and energy of the Holy Spirit in all that Jesus did.*

Gospel Story

Say: *Today we are reading from the Gospel of Luke.*

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 Bible for Children, pp. 230, *Trouble in Nazareth--End at top of 2nd column. "before your very eyes."*

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

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

Discussion Starters:

- *Where did Jesus teach?*
- *What did the people of Nazareth say about his teaching?*
- *Why didn't they think he could teach about God's Word?*
- *What does Jesus say about why he came to be with us?*
- *Who can be his helper and do Jesus' work now that he is back in heaven with God the Father?*

Reflection on Reading:

In today's Gospel Jesus tries to tell his neighbors that he was sent by God. The people listen to Jesus but they are unable to believe what he has to say. Jesus is turned away in his hometown. They remember who they thought he was and can't believe he is someone else.

This Gospel story reveals that sometimes it is difficult to do what is right. Jesus spoke the truth even when the people did not accept what he had to say. Jesus was brave and he went on his way continuing to do God's work.

As children of God and followers of Christ we are called to do what is right even when it is difficult. We are all asked to do this. By our baptism we have the power of the Holy Spirit living in our hearts. Just as the Holy Spirit is with Jesus, the Holy Spirit is also with us. Helping us to be good followers of Jesus.

Gospel Activity

Activity 1:

Helpers are All Around

In today's Gospel story we hear how Jesus came to take care of the weak and the sick and those that can't take care of themselves. We are all called to be God's helpers.

There are helpers all around us. (Use the flash cards to talk about different kinds of helpers and what they do to make sure we are healthy, safe or know how to read etc.)

After each card is discussed, put it on the prayer table. Discuss the cards as time permits.

When discussion is finished say the following prayer:

Dear God, please bless these helpers as they do their work. We also ask that you bless us and show us how to be the best helpers we can be. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Activity 2:

That's What It's All About!

Discussion Theme: Each church member is an important part of the body of Christ.

(Be very demonstrative and ask the children to join you in the motions)

I am sure that all of you probably know the song and dance called "The Hokey Pokey." It goes like this:

*You put your right hand in, You put your right hand out.
You put your right hand in, And you shake it all about.
You do the Hokey Pokey And you turn yourself around,
That's what it's all about.*

After your right hand, you put your left hand in, then your right foot, then your left foot, then your head, until finally, you put your "whole-self in!" What a fun song!

Can you imagine what would happen if you were doing the "Hokey Pokey" and your left hand refused to do the "Hokey Pokey" because it wanted to be the right foot?

What if the right foot said, "Since I am not the left hand, I am not part of the body so I refuse to do the 'Hokey Pokey?'"

The next thing you know, the head might say, "I don't need any of you, I can 'Hokey Pokey' all by myself!"

What do you think? Would this work? This would be a big problem. The hands, the feet, the head...they are all part of the "whole-self." You need them all of the parts to do the Hokey Pokey.

This might seem a bit silly, but it is a good picture of the church. The Bible teaches us that the church is the body of Christ and that it is made up of many members. Each member is different and each has been given different gifts.

Some have been given the gift of preaching and teaching while others have been given the gift of healing. Some people are good leaders and have been given the gift of seeing that everything runs smoothly while others may have been given the gift of helping others.

Just as God gave us hands, feet, head, eyes, and ears to meet the needs of the whole body, God has given the church different members with different gifts to meet the needs of the whole church.

And just like the song says, "That's what it's all about!"

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we are thankful that you have given each of us special gifts. Help us to remember that each of us is an important part of the body of Christ. Amen.

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, whose word gives us joy and strength?*

Do you believe in Jesus, who came to bring us Good News to those who are poor, oppressed and blind?

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who fills us with new life, so that we can do what God asks of us?

Sending Forth

Say: Be a helper this week. How many of you have helper lists in your classroom? Ask mom or dad to make helper lists at home. One night you feed the animals, one night you help set the table. If you make a chart it will remind you what to do. And remember...always do your job right away with a big smile.

Lining Up/Closing Song

Play "*Father, We Thank Thee*" track 13 from Toddler 20 Favorite Songs 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.