



Date: _____

Series: The Early Church
Spring Year 1, Lesson 57

Serve Where God Sends You

Primary Scripture: Luke 9:1-6, 10-17; 1 Corinthians 1:26-27; John 3:17-18

Key Scripture: 1 Peter 3:15b, “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. “ (NIV)

How does this address a need in our kids' lives?

Kids need to see themselves as real “players” in God’s Kingdom. They are not only the church of the future but also the church of today. As such, the church today is wherever God sends believers to be his witnesses in the world. Kids need to know they represent their Savior throughout the week and their faith life is not just reserved for Sunday mornings. God will use anyone who is willing to be used by him and God will send him or her into everyday activities to share his love.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us: Jesus was sent to the world as our savior so that we would be forgiven and freed to serve him.

Jesus in us: Jesus gives us the power of his love that makes us open to be used by him in any circumstance.

Jesus through us: Jesus sends us and accompanies us in our journeys so it is literally he that works through us.

Stamp of Excellence:

Remind the kids what excellent worship looks like. We are in God's presence to honor him. Put on your best manners. This might include wearing your name tag, participating eagerly at all times, listening when the leader is talking, raising your hand to speak, not distracting others, playing the learning game with cooperation, singing enthusiastically, and praying reverently. Offer rewards or positive reinforcement to those who worship with excellence.



Worship

Invocation:

Let kids bring forward the worship symbols such as the cross, candles, Bible, and offering plate. Invite God's presence and call by name Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Attention Grabber:

Capture the children's attention and help them focus on the worship theme for the day.

Supplies: wrapped candy, writing pen

Kids, let's have a very quick scavenger hunt. This is what I'm looking for. See if you can find it. Look in your pockets or purses for anything on you that might be used by God to serve others.

For example, in my pocket is a piece of candy. I could use that to serve God by sharing it with someone who had a hard day and needed an act of kindness shown to them. Also in my pocket is a pen. How could I use a pen to serve God? If I were to write a note to someone telling him or her I was praying for him or her, do you think that would be something that would serve God? What can you think up?

The purpose of this scavenger hunt is to think of ways you could serve God with the small things you have around you.

Only spend a minute looking and about two minutes letting children tell what they found. Then read 1 Corinthians 1:26-27.

"Brothers and sisters, consider what you were when God called you to be Christians. Not many of you were wise from a human point of view. You were not in powerful positions or in upper social classes. But God

chose what the world considers nonsense to put wise people to shame."

And verse 30, *"You are partners with Christ Jesus because of God."*

This implies that God even chooses small people or little things to be used by him. You kids can be partners with Christ. God can use you to share the good news with others. Let's think of God using us today when we give him our worship and praise.

Songs of Worship:

Choose two or three songs. Briefly introduce songs so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God!

The Power of the Cross:

Jesus has given his life for us that we might have forgiveness and power to live for him.

Show a note, like an official note used at school.

Kids, have you ever received a note at school to let you out of class at a certain time, maybe to go to a doctor or dentist appointment? I'm going to read from the Bible about someone who had more than just a note to get out of class, but whose job was to be sent to a whole different world. Who do you think it is?

Let's read John 3:17 *"God sent his Son into the world,..."* Who was sent? Yes, God's Son, Jesus. Sent by his heavenly Father for what purpose?

Let's read on. *"...not to condemn the world, but to save the world."* To condemn the world means to punish the world. To save the world means to rescue the world. Was he sent to punish the world? No, he was sent to save the world.

How did he do that? He did it when he died on the cross for the sin of the whole world. He took our punishment on himself. But listen carefully. Who will receive that gift? I'll read in verse 18. *"Those who believe in him won't be condemned."*

Does that mean they are saved? Yes. Does that mean that they won't be punished for their sin after they die? Yes. But let me read the other portion as well. *"But those who don't believe are already condemned because they don't believe in God's only Son."* What happened to them? They were condemned. That means that if they don't believe in Jesus here on earth, after they die, they will be punished.

So this passage describes two kinds of people: those who believe in Jesus and those who don't believe in Jesus. Those who believe will be saved and those who don't will be condemned. Which one are you?

Every day we can come to Jesus and trust him. We can tell him about our sins and know that he takes them away. We can be the ones that believe in him. Let's pray together.

Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus into our world to be our Savior. We want to be those who believe in Jesus and are saved, not one of those who don't believe in him and are condemned.

Jesus, we trust that you will take away our sin and fill us with your love. Right now in our hearts, we want to tell you anything that might be bothering us or tell you about any wrong things we've done so that you will forgive us and fill us with your love. Pause as the kids pray silently. Thank you for your forgiveness. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Song of Response:

Choose a song to help the children turn to Jesus. Or, you may want help them celebrate what God has done by singing a song of praise.

Offering:

Teach the importance of giving and talk about the mission activities they are supporting.

Supplies: string or hula hoop

Have the children come forward to place their offerings in the basket. Talk about how these offerings are a way we can say, "I love you, God" and he can use these offerings to serve and help people all over our town or city... even around the world. In a way, it's just like a little of ourselves being sent out as an offering.

Use a string or hula hoop on the floor in front of the offering basket, explaining that money is not the only thing we can offer God.

We can offer God our lives. He can use our talents and abilities to help lots of people. He will even send us to help friends or people at school or in the neighborhood or... even maybe people we've never met.

God can send you to help others if you're willing. So let's think of our offering time today as stepping inside a super-sized offering plate and

saying, “I’m willing that you would send me to help others.” If you’d like to make that offering, just come and stand in this “super-sized offering plate” for just a second as a way to tell God that you would like to be an offering used by him.



The Word

Learning Game:

Some churches dismiss children from the adult service at this time to join Kids Church. The learning game provides a fun kinesthetic activity to help kids connect with each other. The learning point will help reinforce the theme of the day.

Super-sized Kid Conveyor Belt

If the weather is nice, play this game outside over a surface that is not hard such as grass. The object of the game is for the entire group to have success in transporting kids down a “kid conveyor belt.”

Explain that a conveyor belt is something that is used to roll objects along and move them from one place to another. We will make a conveyor belt that will move people along.

Have kids form two lines facing each other about three feet apart. Each child should have a partner facing them with whom they will lock wrists so that each pair has a firm grasp of their partner. Next, have everyone making the conveyor belt move close together so that each child’s shoulder is touching another shoulder. Next, have the conveyor belt go to its knees. All children kneel while holding each other’s arms.

Place an adult both at the loading end and at the receiving end. When kids are loaded on the conveyor belt, they must keep their bodies as straight and stiff as possible with their arms locked tightly to their sides and chins tucked to their chests. It is important that they not bend at the waist.

A child is then loaded head first, placing their back on the conveyor belt. The conveyor belt then passes the child down the row by picking up portions of the child and moving him/her down the line.

Once a child moves down the belt, adults can let the first two “conveyor belt” kids leave their positions at the beginning of the belt to be loaded next. Any child that doesn’t want to be passed down the line may walk around the “belt” and walk to the end of the line to help the conveyor belt progress. When children are passed down to the end, the adult prevents the child from falling when exiting.

Because of the adding and subtracting of “belt” members and passengers, the belt will tend to move. Be aware of any obstacles or safety hazards.

The teaching point:

God sends us into the world to serve other people. One way we serve the world is for our church to show us how to go out and do what God wants. The different kids in the conveyor belt line represent the worldwide church and its service to others.

Bible Presentation:

Help children pay attention by giving them a word or concept to listen for as you read. Consider letting a child read who could do so with excellence.

Part One: Luke 9:1-6

Supplies: trash can, walking stick, lunch box, duffle bag with money

Open your Bible to the above verses. As you do so, you will read how Jesus told the disciples not to bring items like a walking stick, food, clothes or money. Use real objects as you tell the story. Place these items in the trashcan as you read to illustrate what Jesus meant when he said not to take these items.

Ask the kids:

Why might Jesus tell you to go on a short-term mission trip and to take these things? How could it help you not to have anything?

Let children answer with specific responses. If no answers come forth, ask this question:

If one person brought all these things on their trip and another one didn't, which one of these people would probably have to trust God more to provide for everything they need? *(The one without all the accessories.)*

Jesus will later let the disciples take things with them on other mission trips, but he wanted them to learn to trust him for everything they would need. Their one job was to trust Jesus and go where they were sent to tell the Good News that God's Son, Jesus had come. They even performed miracles, curing sick people as a way to show how God was taking care of them.

Part Two:

Tell the following story before reading the story of how Jesus fed the 5,000 in Luke 9:10-17.

Eric and the Super-size PBJ Storytelling

Needed: peanut butter and jelly sandwich

Eric loved going to baseball games. He loved the crowds, the big lights and the thousands and thousands of people cheering for his favorite team. But tonight was going to be special. He and his dad were going to the game and they had seats right by the dugout... right where the players went in and out. He guessed he even might be able to hear what the coaches were saying to the players.

Eric had been saving all his money to buy his ticket so there wasn't any money left over for snacks or food. His dad said he would take him to the game if Eric could save the amount needed to buy his own ticket.

"That's okay," he thought. "I have my ticket and I have a ride. I like peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and don't need stadium food." So he asked his mom to help fix the sandwich.

She asked him, "Would you like me to super-size this PBJ sandwich?"

"What do you mean, Mom?" Eric asked.

"PBJ stands for peanut butter and jelly sandwich and maybe I can super-size it for you," replied his mom.

"Super-size it? It's just a regular sandwich," said Eric.

"Oh, I was just teasing. I hope it will be enough. Now run along and enjoy the game," she responded.

When Eric and his dad got to the ball game, it was getting close to the starting time. The halls were crowded and full of people. People were waiting to get food at the concession stands. There were places to buy popcorn, cotton candy, hot dogs and ice cream. But the funny thing was they seemed to be serving no food at all. Everyone was simply waiting in line.

Eric didn't think of it again. He had his sandwich, his dad and a seat. He was set to watch the game. They were no sooner seated than the

game began. By the second inning, Eric heard people around him complaining that there was no food at the concession stands.

One man seemed to be very angry. "The best part of the game is enjoying my hot dog and Coke. I can't believe they have no food," he said.

In the third inning, people were shouting. Many were upset and yelling, "We want food, we want food, we want food."

By the fourth inning, people were really getting angry and loud. They couldn't understand why no food was being served. Soon after that the announcer said, "Ladies and gentlemen, we apologize for the inconvenience, but none of the food trucks arrived today. We don't understand why. We just know that no food was delivered. We're sorry that we cannot serve you. We do not have any hot dogs, pop corn, candy corn, pretzels or ice cream."

Eric reached down to pick up his lunch sack with his PBJ sandwich. At least he had food. He felt sorry for everyone else. Besides, it seemed that no one wanted to watch the game anymore. All they were concerned about was not having food. They kept chanting over and over, "We want food."

Then the umpire stopped the game. He walked over to the coach right in front of Eric. Players gathered, too. It seemed that no one was watching the game.

A man in a gray suit came over and called the umpire and the coaches together. Eric strained his ears to listen.

"No one is watching the game. What can we do?" asked the man.

The coach said, "You give them something to eat."

"But there is no food. The trucks didn't arrive," responded the man.

"Well, what do we have," asked the coach?

At that, Eric stood up in his seat and hollered, "I've got this peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Will that help?"

The coach smiled at Eric. He walked over and took the lunch bag as Eric handed it to him. He looked inside and brought it over to the man in the gray suit and the umpire. He took his hat off, bowed his head and seemed to whisper some words. He put his hat back on, looked at the man in the suit, handed the man the sack and said, "Use what you've got. Give them some food."

The man shrugged his shoulders and stepped off the field and into the stands. He reached into the bag to tear off a portion of sandwich and gave it to a person. Then, he tore off another bit and handed it to another. Soon they were passing bits of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches down the aisles. It seemed that the more they passed, and the more they reached into the bag, the more they had. Before long he had helpers passing out pieces of peanut butter jelly sandwiches. It was the best peanut butter and jelly sandwich that people had ever eaten. At first, it was hundreds of people and then it was thousands and then, ten thousands of people eating peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.

The people had been complaining about having no food but were now delighted to receive the tastiest peanut butter and jelly sandwiches they'd ever had.

The one man behind Eric said that it was even better than his favorite hot dog. Another said it was better than pretzels or even cotton candy.

When all were through eating, all the leftover sandwiches were gathered. There were bags full. Eric had never seen anything like it nor had anyone else there. Thousands ate because one little boy shared his lunch. It was REALLY THE BIGGEST SUPER-SIZED PBJ ever made!

Discussion:

Well, boys and girls, what event in the Bible does this remind you of? It was about the boy who shared his lunch with Jesus and five thousand (5,000) people. Now do you think this story of Eric's really happened? No, it didn't. But do you think the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000 was true? Yes. Do you think people were surprised? Yes. Can you imagine what it would be like if you were at that huge stadium with thousands of people and everyone got fed from one sandwich? Quite amazing!

What can we learn from this? One thing is that God can use simple things to make a big difference. He will use us just as we are and with what we have to do wonderful things, if we give it to him.

Let's read the Bible event.

Read the Bible portion (*Luke 9: 10-16*).

Option: show the Bible event from the video series Animated Stories of the New Testament: *Miracles of Jesus* from Nest Family Entertainment. Order from http://www.nestfamily.com/store/product_detail.asp?productID=MJD.

Application:

Serve Where You Are Sent

Supplies: Have four signs printed “Who,” “Where,” “What,” and “How.”

God wants to send each one of us to places where we can serve. But that doesn't mean we have to go to foreign countries or even travel out of our city. It means he will use us in places we go every day, like our school, our neighborhoods, our clubs and sports... and even in our family. The Bible says, “*Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.*” (NIV)

Here are the questions we must ask ourselves to see how God uses us.

Show the signs as you discuss the points:

WHO—Who will God send? God will send anyone who is willing to be used by him, just like Eric in today's story. Or, like the real little boy in the Bible who shared his two fish and five small barley loaves.

WHERE—Where will he send you? He will send you wherever you are. Whether it is a long way from home or right at home. The important thing to remember is that wherever you are is the place that God has sent you and you can serve him there.

WHAT—What does he want you to share? He wants you to share what you have so that it might help others know of God's love in Jesus. Just like Eric when he shared his peanut butter and jelly sandwich, we can share what we have. We might have time to share and be someone's friend. We might have special words that can encourage others. We might have understanding of who God is and how he sent Jesus. That is the most important thing we can share with others.

HOW—How will God use you? He will use you by helping you do and say the right things. It is important to remember to ask him to use you and trust that he will. He does wonderful things with willing hearts. That is why he trained his disciples by sending them out without money or other supplies.



Witness and Tell:

Give children opportunities to share how God is working in their lives. It is best to use a microphone to ask children interview questions around the theme for the day.

Give examples of how children can share or help others using what they have. Then let them come up and tell situations of how God has used them to share his love.

Prayer:

Let the kids pray out loud. If you are using a microphone, invite children to form a prayer line and speak their thanksgivings or requests. If you have portable microphones, you can roam the audience. Kids can also go to prayer stations set up for specific types of prayer.

Blessing:

Speak a blessing prayer over the children. Personalize this to your setting. Use a special scripture verse or blessing around the theme of the day.

Song of Sending:

Choose one song. Briefly introduce song so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God.

Supplies:

Attention Grabber:

- wrapped candy
- writing pen

Offering:

- string or hula hoop

Bible Presentation:

- Bible
- Trash can
- walking stick
- lunch box
- duffle bag with money
- peanut butter and jelly sandwich
- video *option*: The Animated Stories from the New Testament: The Miracles of Jesus from Nest Family Entertainment—order from http://www.nestfamily.com/store/product_detail.asp?productID=MJD

Application:

- signs: “Who”, “Where”, “What”, and “How”

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