



Date: _____

Series: The Early Church
Spring Year 1, Lesson 55

Be Ready to Talk About Jesus

Primary Scripture: 1 Peter 3:15

Key Verse: 1 Peter 3:15, "...But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,..." (NIV)

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

Kids need security. Spiritual security is received when one accepts Jesus who has done all that is necessary for us to have heaven and have a friendship with God. Once kids have received this security, they have certainty in their hope for the future—a certainty of heaven and a certainty for a friendship with God. But that is not where it ends. Kids need to know that once they have received this gift, they need to pass this gift along to others. Kids need to be ready to talk about Jesus.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us: Through Jesus' death and resurrection, the debt of our sins has been paid. His finished work gives us the full credit of his perfect life in our place. This gives us full security and the fullness of his love so we can share it with others.

Jesus in us: Since we know Jesus as our Savior, we want to follow him as our Lord. By the Holy Spirit, Jesus lives in our lives and we want to follow him in all we do.

Jesus through us: Like the early disciples, we can't help but talk about what Jesus has done for us. He works through our lives to bring other people the saving message of Jesus. Through us, others can receive a friendship with Jesus and the promise of heaven.

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.

The Bible says, "In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord." What does this mean?

Have everyone run in place for a time to get his heart rate up. Then have the children place a hand over their hearts and feel their hearts pulse.

You can feel your heart pump. It is at the very center of your body and keeps your body alive as it pumps blood.

When you speak of your heart in a spiritual way, like the Bible says today, it is that part of you that is the deepest inside. It is where your deep thoughts and your deepest desires are. God wants us to take our deepest thoughts and desires and say in the middle of those, "We want to follow Jesus."

To set apart Jesus as Lord means to think of him as our leader in all we do. The way we do that is by telling him we love him and we will follow him. That's what we are doing in worship today. Let's tell Jesus we love him and we will follow him. That means we are setting apart Jesus as Lord of our lives.

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!

Your choice of music

The Power of the Cross:

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

This confession addresses times we have failed to follow Jesus as our leader and we follow our own ways instead.

One of the closest friends Jesus had was Peter. Peter later became very bold in telling others about Jesus, the Son of God, who gave his life for us. But he wasn't always that way. As a matter of fact, he failed greatly one time.

Instead of being bold when Jesus was arrested, Peter denied even knowing him. Did Jesus forgive Peter and take him back as a friend? Yes, of course. And after that, Peter became a bold witness for Jesus.

Have you ever not taken the opportunity to tell someone else about Jesus? Let's all stop and close our eyes and see if we can remember any times we haven't spoken up for Jesus. Let's ask forgiveness in Jesus' name. We know we will receive it and God will give us the power to be ready to tell others about Jesus.

Following a silent prayer of confession:

Lord, you have heard our prayers and know about the times we missed chances to tell others about you. For Jesus' sake, please forgive us. Thank you that Jesus died on the cross and rose again for our forgiveness. Now help us be ready to talk about Jesus. In his 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.

Attach a large heart cut from poster board to the offering plate/basket. As kids bring their offerings forward, explain that this offering is one of the ways we can show God our true heart in giving to him first.



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.

Supplies: hula hoops for every sixth child,

Bring the children together in one large circle. If room size allows, make circles of 10 to 20 kids. Have children join hands. At every sixth child, place a hula hoop around a set of hands joined together.

The objective of the game is to make the hula hoops travel around the circle in the same direction without the children letting go of each other's hands. The circle must stay intact. To do this, a child, with the help of his attached partner, loops the hula hoop over his head. After the other side of the hoop falls to his feet, he steps through it and the hula hoop is passed on to the next child.

The game facilitator can comment or encourage the kids to see if they can make one hula hoop catch another one.

The hula hoops are like God's love. We must go all the way through God's love and experience it when Jesus comes to us and we know him as our Savior and Lord. God's love does not stop with just our experiencing it. We must pass it on to someone else. Every person who has experienced God's love *(the hula hoop passing over and around them)* must pass that love on to someone else.

Today we are talking about always being ready to pass on this hope we have. The hope we have is the message of Jesus and his salvation for us.

So let's say you have a friend who is ready to learn about Jesus. What do you say to them? How do you pass along your faith?

Large Group Presentation:

For this presentation you will need a teeter-totter, two boxes, some cardboard bricks (some weighted), a “Heaven” sign, a “Hell” sign, an empty backpack, and a Jesus name tag.

Though the teeter-totter board can be scaled to any size, the optimum length would be eight feet or more. It does not need to be strong enough to support the weight of two children. Rather it can be designed in such a way that it shows balance.

A box should be firmly attached or stapled on each end of the teeter-totter. The box on the right end should be labeled with a plus sign and the box on the left end should be labeled with a negative sign. A subtitle on the plus side would read “Good Things” and a subtitle on the negative would read “Bad Things.”

Place a sign that reads “Hell” on the floor at the end of the teeter-totter having the box with the minus sign. Place a sign five feet above it that reads “Heaven”. If the fulcrum of the teeter-totter is tall enough, the end of the teeter-totter will either point to “Hell” or to “Heaven.”

A set of cardboard bricks is needed and will be placed in the plus and minus boxes affecting the balance. In some of these cardboard bricks, place an additional weight so they will dramatically tip the balance.

The main points of the presentation are as follows. Each point is demonstrated on the balancing teeter-totter.

Point One

Refer to the Heaven and Hell signs while presenting the following:

There is a heaven and hell. Heaven is a very real place where God lives and it is perfect in every way. The best thing about heaven is being right there with God and enjoying his friendship face to face. Hell is a real place, too, but instead of happiness, there is pain. That is because hell is a place where God’s presence is not felt at all. It is a place where you are completely alone and a place that would feel like being in a dark room.

Point Two

We ask ourselves when we die if we will go to heaven or to hell. God has told us clearly how we go to heaven but some people think they can go their own way. We are going to show what many people think about how they go to heaven.

Point Three

Many people think that if they just do enough good things and not so many bad things, they can earn heaven. It is like having more pluses than minuses.

Demonstrate this by placing the cardboard bricks in the corresponding boxes as you describe good things (+) and then as you describe bad things (-). As you are doing this, try to keep the balance. Typical good things that might be listed are: being kind to your friends, going to church, obeying your parents, and so forth. Let the children offer examples as you fill the box.

At this point, the teeter-totter would be pointing to heaven, demonstrating what many people believe: If they just put enough good things in the box then they will go to heaven. Then add some of the bad things that people do in the other box. The objective here is to get the teeter-totter to balance once again. Bad things listed might be: being mean to your brother or sister, cheating at school, saying bad words and so forth. Take suggestions from the audience.

Point Four

Though many people believe they get to heaven because they are good, God says that to get to heaven based on what we do, we would have to be *absolutely perfect*. The Bible says that *all* of us sin and fall short of being perfect like God.

Place a loaded brick in the minus box. The teeter-totter sinks to the minus side.

The Bible says we do not get to heaven based on the things we can do right because we couldn't do enough right things to erase the things we have done wrong.

Point Five

God loves us so much that he sent his own Son to take all of our sin on himself and to earn the way to heaven for us. Jesus did this when he came to the world and died for us.

Have a participant from the audience come forward to represent Jesus, perhaps by putting a sign around his neck. Emphasize that the volunteer is just like the other kids, except for one key difference: Jesus lived a perfect life because he never sinned.

Show the kids an empty backpack – no sins inside. Put the backpack on the Jesus child and bring him to the teeter-totter. As you take the weights out of the minus box and place them in Jesus' backpack, say:

When we know Jesus as our Savior, he takes our sin out of the minus box and carries it on himself. Then he goes to the other side and stands on the teeter-totter for us.

Lead the “Jesus” volunteer to do this.

Jesus lived a perfect life and never sinned. As he stands in our place, all the good things he did count for us.

Point Six

How do we receive this gift of heaven? We receive it when we say to Jesus, “I want you to be my Savior and take my sin away. I want you to be in my life so I can live for you.” Even when we are very young, Jesus wants to be our friend and take our sin away. He is our “forgiver” and our leader. When we are baptized, he is saying to us, “I am your friend and I take your sin away.”

Presentation concludes with an invitation to the kids to take Jesus as their Savior (*their Forgiver*) and their Lord (*their Leader*). It means a confession of sin and trust in Jesus’ payment for sin—his death on the cross. The Holy Spirit convicts the heart and the declaration is the witness that Jesus is Savior (Romans 10:9). The child may pray out loud by following the presenter and repeating what is said.

For those who already know Jesus as their Savior, this is a good prayer to pray every day. For those that don’t know him as their Savior, this prayer shows that he has come into their lives as Savior and Lord.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank you for loving me. I admit I have done wrong things. I have sinned, and I can’t be perfect enough to earn heaven on my own. You died and rose for me. Take my sin away and come into my life. Let me follow you and do what you want. I love you because you love me so much. Amen.

Make sure those who prayed this for the first time know for sure they are going to heaven, as well as anyone who prays this and means it in their heart. Show them scripture they can claim when doubts come up. (Romans 10:9; John 3:16-18; 1 John 5:1-13.)

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.

This part of the presentation is to encourage kids to care enough about other people to share the gospel message with them.

Supplies needed: construction paper hearts, crayons, or markers

Review the Bible readings for the day:

1 Peter 3:15: “...But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...” (NIV)

Acts 5:40-42: “The council took his advice. They called the apostles, beat them, ordered them not to speak about the one named Jesus, and let them go. The apostles left the council room. They were happy to have been considered worthy to suffer dishonor for speaking about Jesus. Every day in the temple courtyard and from house to house, they refused to stop teaching and telling the Good News that Jesus is the Messiah.” (GW)

People shared the good news, not because they had to, but because it was so great they wanted other people to know it, too. It was because they really cared about other people. Let's practice caring about other people right now.

I would like everyone to think of someone who doesn't know the Good News of Jesus. Or, maybe it's somebody you're not sure knows Jesus loves them – a neighbor lady, a grouchy relative...

Write his or her name on the heart we will pass out to you. Then think about a time or place you might be able to tell them about Jesus. Maybe it's a playground or your backyard or their living room. Draw a picture or write a description of that place on the back of your heart.

Pass out construction paper hearts, crayons, or markers.

Now let's talk to God about these people. Let's ask that he would help you love these people more and love them enough that you

would be a good enough friend to talk to them about Jesus when the chance comes up.

Have a short prayer time.

Application:

Do the first role-play with adults to give a demonstration of this to the group. The setting is Any Neighborhood, USA.

When playing outside, your friend asks you if you saw the movie on TV Sunday morning. You said you didn't because you were at church. Your friend says, "What do you do at church?" Use this as an opportunity to talk about Jesus.

After two adults have role-played this situation, the witnessing adult is seated. Have a child come up and be the witnessing person in the same setting. The adult should ask the questions so the child has a chance to present the entire gospel.



Witness

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.

Ask students to share stories of their faith-sharing experiences. If they can't think of any, brainstorm together another situation where a child could witness his faith, then act it out.

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.

Have students pray for the people they intend to witness to, as well as other prayers.

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 songs so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God.

Supplies:

Learning Game:

- hula hoops (as many as are available)

Large Group Presentation:

- teeter-totter
- two boxes
- labels with + and - and “good things” and “bad things” (see script)
- Heaven/Hell signs (see script for how to mount these)
- cardboard bricks
- blocks for weighted bricks
- “Jesus” sign for around a child's neck
- backpack

Bible Presentation:

- paper heart for each child
- pencils, crayons, or markers

Safety and Security: Safety and security procedures are important for each church to carefully define and implement according to their unique needs. The security, safety, illness and accident procedures described in this curriculum are provided for example purposes only and may not be appropriate, applicable or adequate for every situation. Each church is responsible for determining whether any security, safety, illness and accident procedures contained in the curriculum are appropriate, applicable or adequate for its unique situation. The activities described in this curriculum require adult supervision and may not be suitable for each child and each situation. Each church is responsible for ensuring that adequate adult supervision is provided for all activities and for determining whether an activity is appropriate for each child and each situation. Kids Kount Publishing disclaims all liability for the implementation of any procedures or the performance of any activities described in this curriculum.