



Date: _____
Series: Signs on Believers Hwy
Winter Year 4, Lesson 35

The Story You Can Believe In

Primary Scripture: Acts 26:4-23

Key Verse: Acts 26:22-23, “God has been helping me to this day so that I can stand and testify to important and unimportant people... that the Messiah would suffer and be the first to come back to life and would spread light to Jewish and non-Jewish people.”

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

Kids need something to believe in...a truth bigger than them. God offers his own Son as one who not only taught the truth, but also claims to be truth itself. Jesus' resurrection from the dead proves he is true, that truth changes lives. It changed the Apostle Paul when he encountered the risen Christ on the Damascus road. Paul used his own story and the reality of Jesus' resurrection to offer others something to believe in. Kids today need to encounter the resurrection of Christ and the power of his presence in their lives so they too have something to believe in.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us: Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, our sins are forgiven and we are connected with God.

Jesus in us: Jesus fills us through his Holy Spirit and daily we experience his resurrection.

Jesus through us: As Jesus' story becomes part of our story, we share his story.

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: one uncooked egg (a few back-up eggs may be helpful due to their delicate nature), a glass pitcher filled with water, small bucket with the egg and salt (up to one half cup), craft stick or drinking straw for stirring

Keep the egg and salt concealed in the bucket until you are ready to use them. Select a volunteer to help with a demonstration and bring him/her forward.

Set the pitcher of water on the table in front of the volunteer and say:

I challenge you to get this egg from the bottom of the water to the top of the water without getting your hand wet. You are not allowed to use a glove to get it out, or any tool, such as a spoon or tongs. But I WILL let you use this craft stick (or drinking straw) if you think it will help. Take a second to think about this and tell me if you think you can get this egg to the top of the water.

While he/she is thinking about a strategy, the rest of us will take a vote. Raise your hand if you think he/she can do it.

Count hands.

Okay, now raise your hand if you think it's impossible.

Count hands and turn to the volunteer.

What do you think? Can you do it?

Wait for a response.

Give your volunteer the craft stick or drinking straw and show him/her how to start stirring the water with it. As he/she stirs, take out the half-cup of salt and pour it in while the volunteer continues stirring. As the salt is poured, stirred and dissolved, the egg will rise to the top of the water.

You did it! Let's give a round of applause to our volunteer.

Sometimes "seeing is believing." We all need something to believe in that makes us feel excited. God gives us not only something to believe in, but someone to believe in. That someone is his Son, Jesus. A lot of people in Bible times didn't believe that Jesus was truly God's Son, or that he had the authority to forgive sins. But he proved it when he rose from the dead. Just like this egg floated to the top of the water when some people doubted it was possible, the people who had seen Jesus actually rise from the dead knew he was real.

Even though you have never seen Jesus face to face, you can believe the stories of the people who saw him after his resurrection. Those stories are written in the Bible. You can feel his power in your life after you believe in him and trust him. Let's worship him today. He's worth believing in.

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!

You may select music titles.

The Power of the Cross:

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

Supplies: an egg, clear bowl or empty pitcher from Attention Grabber demonstration

Visual demonstration

Hold the egg 12 inches over the bowl and prepare to drop it intending to let it break.

Boys and girls, have you ever made a mistake and wished that you could take it back? Let's say I wanted to be careful with this egg and not drop it, but it slipped and fell.

Drop the egg into the bowl.

Splat...drat! It's a broken egg! What can I do with it now? Can I put it all back together? Can I undo my mistake? No, I can't.

Discussion

Sometimes the wrong things we do can't be undone, just like the repair needed to fix this egg. It's impossible to fix it. When we say mean words to a friend, we cannot take them back once they have been said. Once we hurt someone, even though we say we're sorry, the hurt can still remain. Or maybe when we dishonor our parents or disrespect God's name, we feel badly afterwards, but the damage has already been done. What are we to do? Much of the time, people think they can ignore it and pretend they didn't make a mistake. But if you look at this broken egg, everyone can see that a mistake has been made. Others might try to fix it all themselves, but it would be hard to put that egg back together, wouldn't it?

Connection

What does God want us to do? He wants us to come to him and receive the power of Jesus. With Jesus, our sins can be forgiven so they are not held against us. Then we can still have a friendship with God. He will help us take our mistakes and turn them into something good. Do you still think this broken egg is useless? No. I can pick out the shell and make scrambled eggs. That might not be as good as an unbroken egg, but sometimes good things can happen in spite of our mistakes.

That was true of a man named Paul. He did a lot of bad things when he persecuted Christians, hunted them down and even had them put to death. But when he met the risen Christ, his life changed. He was forgiven for his sins but he could not undo them. Instead, God used his story to convince others that Jesus was real. When they knew Paul had once murdered Christians and now was one, they knew for sure that what Paul had experienced was real.

Let's give to God any of our mistakes or things we wish we could undo. In his forgiveness, he will find ways to use our mistakes so that more people might meet the power of Jesus. Let's pray.

Prayer application

Dear God, there are mistakes we make that we wish we could undo. We can't fix them but you can forgive them. For Jesus' sake, please forgive them and use them so that others can see how powerful you are to forgive us and change us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Song of Response:

Choose a song to help the children turn to Jesus. Or, you may want to 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: Clean bowl or pitcher from earlier demonstration.

When you believe in something strongly, it changes the way you live. Followers of Jesus believe in him so strongly that it changes how we spend money. We make sure to take part of the money we earn and give it to the Lord so others can hear the story of Jesus' resurrection and his power in their life.



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: masking tape, large stack of newspapers, kitchen timer, wet wipes to clean newsprint ink off hands

Stone Challenge

In advance, use tape to mark a play area into four adjacent square sections that can hold a team of five or six kids in each section. Players should be able to move freely within their square. Make the squares on the floor by crossing two strips of tape (or four strips of tape if you would like to have more than four teams play at a time).

Introduce two adults as the referees or judges. Divide kids into teams of five or six and assign them a section. Place in each square section a small stack of newspapers. When the game begins, students tightly wad up pieces of newsprint to make “stones.” Then they throw the “stones” into one of the other team’s squares. The kids in each square can then throw the “stones” back or into another square. After about five minutes, have kids step out of their squares and have the judges count which square has the most “stones,” and which team has the least amount of “stones.” The team with the fewest “stones” is the winner.

Warn kids of the possibility that their team could be disqualified if:

- they step over the line into another group’s square or
- they continue to throw wads after the timer bell rings.

After the game is played, gather the kids together for the Bible Presentation.

The text introducing the Bible Presentation below explains the connection between the game and today’s lesson.

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.

Did you know that in the early Church one of Jesus' followers, named Stephen was stoned to death by the religious leaders? Some of the leaders were the same people who put Jesus to death. One of those leaders was a man named Saul. People remembered how he had helped stone Stephen to death for being a Christian. He later encountered the resurrected Jesus and his life changed. Saul became a Christian, a follower of Jesus. Just like Saul (later Paul) experienced the resurrected Jesus who changed his life, when you talk to others, the truth that Jesus is alive becomes real.

Show the 30-minute video, from the series, *The Visual Bible for Kids: The Story You Can Believe In*, produced by Tommy Nelson. Order from http://www.thomasnelson.com/consumer/product_detail.asp?sku=0849959403. This video features singer, Nicole C. Mullen who gives Allyson something to believe in—a God who can change you. Featured in this tape is Saul's conversion experience on the Damascus road and Paul's defense of Christianity to King Agrippa.

Do you think Allyson in this story found something in Jesus to believe in? What do you think helped her believe? *(Hearing how God had changed Saul's life? Hearing how God had changed Nicole C. Mullen's life? Hearing how Jesus is alive and wants to live in our lives?)*



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.

Share a story about how God, through his power in your life, has helped you.

Let kids share stories. Conclude with:

When you see God working in your life, your story becomes “his story” and is the HISTORY of God working in your life. People need to hear these stories to help them believe.

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.

Options: (select one from the options below)

_____ **Prayer Line Option:** Kids line up and take turns stepping in front of the microphone to speak their prayers briefly.

_____ **Prayer Chair:** Adults or children with special prayer needs are invited to sit in the chairs. Kids gather around them, lay hands on their shoulders or knees and take turns praying.

_____ **Popcorn Prayer:** The leader moves through the crowd with a microphone and turns it toward kids who are raising their hands to pray. The kids speak their prayers into the microphone.

Lord's Prayer: Lead the children through the Lord's Prayer, phrase by phrase, or let them pray the entire prayer along with you.

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.

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.

Supplies:

Attention Grabber:

- one uncooked egg (a few back-up eggs may be helpful due to their delicate nature)
- glass pitcher filled with water
- small bucket with an egg inside
- salt (up to one half cup)
- craft stick

The Power of the Cross:

- egg
- clear bowl or empty pitcher from previous demonstration

Learning Game:

- masking tape
- large stack of newspapers
- kitchen timer
- wet wipes to clean newsprint ink off hands

Bible Presentation:

- *The Story You Can Believe In*, from the series, *The Visual Bible for Kids*, by Tommy Nelson—order from http://www.thomasnelson.com/consumer/product_detail.asp?sku=0849959403