

The Sacraments

Holy Baptism: John 3:5; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 8:36,38

Holy Sealing: John 3:5; Acts 8:14-17; Acts 19:1-6

Holy Communion: Luke 22:19-20; John 6:53-57; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, 21; 11:23-28

Memory Verse

“No one can enter God's kingdom without being born through water and the Holy Spirit.”

--John 3:5

Message

The Kingdom of God is waiting for you.

Talk About It

Read together the lesson and help your child to understand each of the Sacraments. Share with your child how special it was on the day they were baptized and/or sealed. Then talk about how blessed we are to be able to have Holy Communion so often. God knows that we are not perfect, but he allows us to come to Him each service and ask for his forgiveness. We get a second chance to do what is right and good in His eyes. Actually we get lots and lot of second chances. We always want to come to Him with a humble heart, and realize that we need His strength and forgiveness in our lives.

Talk with your child about the things that happened this week in your family. Take this opportunity to ask each other for forgiveness and prepare your hearts for Holy Communion on Sunday. Pray together and thank our Heavenly Father for your family and for being given the opportunity to be there for each other. Talk about it.

The Ministries of the Church of Christ

Ephesians 4: 11-12; Acts 9:17; Matthew 28:19-20

Memory Verse

"I will place shepherds over them who will take good care of them." --Jeremiah 23:4

Message

Our ministers are here to help us.

Additional Lesson Content

Ministries	Functions/Responsibilities
<u>Apostle Ministry:</u> Chief Apostle, District Apostle, Apostle	As commissioned by Jesus: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- To proclaim the pure teachings of Jesus Christ- As the light of the world to spread the bright radiance of godly truth.- To establish and preserve order in the congregations- To baptize with water.- To forgive sins- To dispense Holy Communion- To seal souls with the Holy Spirit- To govern the Church- To ordain the required ministers- To proclaim Christ's return- To gather and lead the elect to the Lord Jesus and His bride.
<u>Priestly Ministries:</u> Bishop, District Elder, District Evangelist, Elder, Shepherd, Evangelist, Priest	As commissioned by the apostle: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- To carry the souls entrusted to them on hands of prayer- To care for the souls and provide comfort- To conduct divine services- To baptize with water,- To pronounce the forgiveness of sins- To dispense Holy Communion- To make family visits and visit those who are ill
<u>Deacons</u>	As commissioned by the apostle <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To support the priest• To be a witness to the truth• To be an example• To maintain a dignified atmosphere in the divine services.

Talk About It

Help your child to understand this week's lesson about ministers. Talk with your child about a minister that is/was special to you and why. Maybe they always were there for you when you needed someone to listen. Maybe it was just the way they made you feel each time you had a conversation together. Perhaps they share a special Bible verse with you that gave you strength when you were feeling weak. Ministers can be very special people in our lives. They do many things for us because of the love they have for our souls.

When you pray together remember all of your ministers. Pray that they can have special strength and wisdom so that they may continue to care for God's children. Talk about it.



The Development and Spread of Christianity

See "Lesson Content" (below)

Memory Verse

*"The believers studied what the apostles taught. They shared life together.
They broke bread and ate together. And they prayed."*

--Acts 2:42

Message

Each congregation must work toward Health, Growth, and Completion.

Lesson Content

The Development of the Congregation in Jerusalem

(Taken from *God's Ways* Vol 2)

Apostle Peter's Pentecost sermon was so powerful that 3000 people decided to have themselves baptized (cf Acts 2:41). These were added to the approximately 120 faithful upon whom the Holy Spirit had previously been poured out (cf. Acts 1:15; 2:1-4) In connection with this a few exceptional features of congregational life at that time are emphasized. This account ends with the phrase, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). A little later, already about 5000 believing men belong to the congregation (cf. Act 4:4).

In Acts 6:7, it says further, "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly..."

The congregation in Jerusalem consisted of Semitic-speaking Jews from Palestine, and Hellenists (i.e. one who used the Greek language but was not Greek and who had lived in Diaspora¹.)

The differences between the two groups were not only confined to language. Due to varied cultural backgrounds, their religious thinking and practice had also been formed differently. At times, this resulted in tension among the faithful. That is why the Hellenistic Jews, for example, complained that their widows had not been adequately considered at the distribution of food, clothing, and money.

Tackling these kinds of problems would have taken time away from the Apostles' main task of proclaiming the gospel. That is why they appointed seven Deacons to assist them. They were to lend a helping hand with commonplace matters in the congregation.

Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables."³ Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business;⁴ but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." Acts 6:2-4.

One of these seven men was Stephen, a man "full of faith and power," who performed great wonders and miracles (cf Acts 6:8).

Stephen's critical words about the temple and the law evidently aroused the hatred of the Hellenistic Jews in Jerusalem. At first, they tried to refute him. Then they falsely accused him. Stephen was arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin (cf Acts 6:9-15).

Lesson Content - *continued*

There he made a speech in his own defense, which turned more and more into a harsh reprimand. This enraged his listeners. And when he still had the cheek to exclaim, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God,” they were so incensed that they drove him out of the city and stoned him. His last words were, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin.” (Acts 7: 56, 60)

Stephen’s murder was the signal to persecute the faithful in Jerusalem, and many fled the city. Since the refugees talked about their faith when they resettled, their flight led to the spreading of the gospel, also outside of Jerusalem. With it, what Jesus Christ had said to the Apostles began to fulfill itself, “...you shall be witnesses to Me^[a] in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (cf Acts 1:8)

A Brief History of Rome and the Roman Empire

According to legend, Rome was founded in the year 753 BC, and ruled by kings. In 510 BC – a date, which also has not been verified historically – the kingdom was transformed into a republic which now was governed by two annually elected consuls, a Senate and popular assemblies.

The Romans waged numerous wars on their neighbors, until all of the central and southern Italy was under their control in 270 BC. During the centuries that followed, the Romans took possession of the entire Mediterranean coast, and all European countries west of the Rhine River and south of the Danube River. At the beginning of the second century BC, the Roman Empire reached its greatest expansion.

The continuing expansion of the empire made it necessary to construct a road system branching out in all directions. Already in 312 BC, construction of the first of the great Roman roads, the Via Appia (Appian Way), commenced. It ran southeast from Rome in a perfectly straight line.

In the year 44 BC, General Gaius Julius Caesar had himself proclaimed dictator. Following his assassination one month later and battles that lasted for years, Octavian, who had been honored with the title Augustus (i.e. the exalted, the venerable) since 27 BC, established the Roman Empire. During his reign from 30 BC to 14 AD the Roman Empire experienced a period of peace and prosperity called Pax Augusta and the Golden Age of Rome. At the borders of this great empire, though, there were constant clashes with neighboring peoples, also during this time.

Caesar Augustus had many public buildings, magnificent temples and numerous statues of gods erected (“I found a city made of brick, and turned it into a city made of marble”). The Romans expected the population of the conquered areas to worship their emperor as a deity, but otherwise brought no influence to bear on the various religions in the Provinces.

The Romans settled retired soldiers (i.e. veterans) in the conquered areas. These settlements were called colonies, and later received the right to self-government, whose seat became the quasi district capital of the area.

A Roman citizen enjoyed special privileges throughout the empire – above all, civil rights in the city of Rome. Without having been sentenced he could be neither bound nor scourged, could not be crucified, and, during legal proceedings, could appeal to the emperor, who then made the final decision. Apostle Paul, for example, had special legal protection because he had inherited the right to Roman citizenship from his father.

After Caesar Augustus, many other emperors followed. Under Diocletian (284-304 AD), stabilization of the political and military structures was achieved. The decline of the Roman Empire began during the 4th century, in the course of peoples’ migrations. In the year 395, the Roman Empire split into the Western and Eastern Roman Empires.

Talk About It

Read today's lesson together and help your child to understand the history behind the development and spread of Christianity. Share with your child how it is that you have your faith? Were you born into a family that was already actively following the Lord? If this is so, share what you know about your family history. Maybe your parents or grandparents started your family coming to church and following the teachings of the Lord Jesus. Maybe you found your faith as an adult. Share your life experiences with your child. Let him know what your faith means to you. How has your belief in God and His teachings helped you in your life?

Pray together and thank our Heavenly Father for helping you to find faith in your life. Pray that your child would also be able to find the value of faith and believing in Him as they grow. Talk about it.



The Apostles of Jesus Christ

Luke 6:12-16; Acts 1:25-26; 13:1-4 & 14:14; Romans 16:7; Galatians 1:19

Memory Verse

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” --Matthew 28:19

Message

The apostle ministry came from the Lord Jesus and is still active today.

Additional Lesson Content

Note: This lesson is a discussion on the Apostle ministry which will incorporate the following biblical references. The presentation of the material as a story is not applicable. The lesson should build and outline the commission of the Apostle ministry.

The twelve Apostles appointed by Jesus:

¹² On one of those days, Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray. He spent the night praying to God. ¹³ When morning came, he called for his disciples to come to him. He chose 12 of them and made them apostles. ¹⁴ Simon was one of them. Jesus gave him the name Peter. There were also Simon's brother Andrew, James, John, Philip and Bartholomew. ¹⁵ And there were Matthew, Thomas, and James, son of Alphaeus. There were also Simon who was called the Zealot ¹⁶ and Judas, son of James. Judas Iscariot was one of them too. He was the one who would later hand Jesus over to his enemies. (Luke 6:12-16)

Additional Apostles of the first church:

²⁵ Show us who should take the place of Judas as an apostle. He gave up being an apostle to go where he belongs." ²⁶ Then they cast lots. Matthias was chosen. So he was added to the 11 apostles. (Acts 1:25-26)

¹ In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers. Among them were Barnabas, Simeon, and Lucius from Cyrene. Simeon was also called Niger. Another was Manaen. He had been brought up with Herod, the ruler of Galilee. Saul was among them too. ² While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit spoke. "Set apart Barnabas and Saul for me," he said. "I have appointed them to do special work." ³ The prophets and teachers fasted and prayed. They placed their hands on Barnabas and Saul. Then they sent them off. ⁴ Barnabas and Saul were sent on their way by the Holy Spirit. They went down to Seleucia. From there they sailed to Cyprus. Acts 13:1-4 *with* But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out (Acts 14:14)

⁷ Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. (Romans 16:7)

But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. (Galatians 1:19)

Additional Lesson Content – Continued

The Commission and Authority of the Apostles

Apostle means ambassador or envoy. Jesus Christ, who was sent by His Heavenly Father for the salvation of man, is referred to as an Apostle in Hebrews 3:1. He commissioned his Apostles: *“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore^[c] and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”* (Matthew 28: 18-20)

According to the commission, *“Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you...”*, the Apostles’ teaching firstly comprises what Jesus himself taught. In addition, the Lord announced to his Apostles that the Holy Ghost would provide further revelations, saying, *“I have much more to say to you. It is more than you can handle right now. ¹³ But when the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own. He will speak only what he hears. And he will tell you what is still going to happen. ¹⁴ He will bring me glory by receiving something from me and showing it to you.”* (John 16: 12-14)

To enable the Apostles to fulfill their commission, Jesus Christ gave them the authority to baptize (cf. Matthew 28:19) and forgive sins. *“If you forgive anyone’s sins, they are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”* (John 20:23). With this authority, the Apostles are able to reconcile man with God (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:20).

Someone who has authority, Acts in the name of the one who gave him the authority. Everything done by the authorized representative, is as valid as if the one granting the authority were doing it himself.

God and his son Jesus Christ are almighty (i.e. they have power and omnipotence in heaven and on earth). Jesus, for example, acted with divine authority when he healed the sick, raised the dead, or drove out unclean spirits. The authority Jesus also conferred on his Apostles, which showed itself, for example, when Apostles Peter and John healed the lame beggar at the entrance to the temple. The rulers, elders and scribes of the people of Israel asked them, *“By what power did you do this?” they asked. “And through whose name?”* (Acts 4:7). Apostle Peter then explained that he had acted in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

The Apostles of the End Time

In the year 1832, in England, John Bate Cardale was called as the first Apostle of the end time through prophecy. Currently, there are 346 Apostles, including the Chief Apostle.

The Apostles of the end time are equipped with the same commission, power and authority as the first Apostles. The Apostles’ responsibility is to gather a congregation for the Lord, to lead it, and prepare it for the union with Jesus Christ.

Talk About It

Read today’s lesson together and help your child to understand the Apostle ministry. The Apostles today are ambassadors of the Lord Jesus. They continue to teach, to baptize with water and the Holy Spirit, and prepare us for the day of the Lord. Apostles spend much of their time traveling and away from those they love in order to continue the work of the Lord Jesus and help gather the souls for His return. When you pray together, remember these men of God and all of our ministers as they work to fulfill their ministries. Talk about it.

Apostle Peter

Matthew 16:18-19; John 21:15-17; Luke 22:32; Acts 10; Acts 11:16-18; Acts 15: 10-11, 22-29

Memory Verse

***“But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ
we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”***

--Acts 15:11

Message

God’s word and grace are for everyone.

Talk About It

Help your child to understand the events of Peter’s life. Peter continued to tell others about the Lord Jesus, long after His death. He also followed what the Lord Jesus told Him and did not pass judgment on those he encountered. How would you measure up to Peter? Talk with your child about this. Is it so easy to share our love for the Lord with others? Do we never pass judgment on those around us? We want strive to follow the example of the Lord Jesus. Pray together and ask our Heavenly Father to help your family grow to become more like Him. Talk about it.



Apostle Paul

Romans 12:2

Memory Work

*“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind,
that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”*

--Romans 12:2 (NKJV)

Message

Commit yourself to the Lord.

Additional Lesson Content

RI Students: Below is a set of notes for you to be familiar with before class starts. Please read through them and if any Bible verses are listed, be sure to read that as well.

Paul's Life

- Born in Cilicia around 10 AD.
- Parents belonged to the tribe of Benjamin
- Was a Roman citizen because his parents were Roman citizens.
- Paul actually had two names, Paul was his Latin name and Saul was his Hebrew name. Paul exclusively used the name “Paul” after his Christian conversion.
- Was a tent-maker until 18 to 20 years old.
- When he was about 18 he went to Jerusalem to be a student of Gamaliel a famous teacher of Jewish religious law (Mosaic Law)
- Eventually, Paul became a Pharisee. Pharisaism is a sect of the Jewish religion. These devout men were known for their strict adherence to Jewish law.
- Paul was zealous at persecuting the first Christians – he was present at the stoning of Deacon Stephen. (Acts 8:1-3)
- Paul was converted to Christianity after a remarkable encounter with Jesus (Act 9:1-19).
 - Saul was actually on his way to Damascus to persecute more Christians when Jesus intervened.

Paul's Ministry

- A few days after Paul was converted and baptized he started to preach that Jesus is the Son of God. (Acts 9:20-22)
- Paul stayed around Jerusalem for 10-15 years. Then started travelling abroad on missionary journeys.
- Paul wrote many letters to the Christian congregations and his friends and fellow disciples. These works of inspiration and guidance are called epistles.

Additional Lesson Content – Continued

Paul's Missionary Journeys

- Paul took a total of three missionary journeys. Look at the map at the following link: <http://www.christianityoasis.com/DailyBread/Acts/paulsjourneys.jpg>
- In total it took about ten years for Paul to take three missionary journeys. He was about 60 years old when he was done with the third journey.
- Many congregations were established through Paul and many believing souls experienced the teachings of the Lord Jesus.
- Paul's final journey took him to Rome where it is not known what happened to him. It is assumed that he was executed in Rome.

Talk About It

Help your child to become familiar with the events of Paul's life. Paul went through some very difficult times in his life, but as a result of his experiences he became even more committed to the Lord.

Talk with your child about what it means to make a commitment. We make commitments when we join a team or music group at school. We commit to attending the practices, practicing at home, and doing our best for our team. We also make commitments in relationships in our lives, making a promise to a person to be in an exclusive relationship with them.

Look up James 5:12 together in your Bible ("My brothers and sisters, don't take an oath when you make a promise. Don't call on heaven or earth or anything else to back up what you say. Let your "Yes" be yes. And let your "No" be no.") On confirmation day, you make a promise to be committed to the Lord all the days of your life. Talk with your child about this commitment. Some days will not be easy, just as they were for Paul. But we can always turn to our Heavenly Father for guidance and strength. Pray together. Talk about it.

Christ and His Congregation

1 Corinthians 12:4-13; Colossians 1:18

Memory Verse

“There are different kinds of gifts. But they are all given by the same Spirit.”

--1 Corinthians 12:4

Message

Use your gifts for the Lord!

Talk About It

Read with your child the verses from the Bible for today’s lesson. There are many ways that we can serve the Lord. Talk with your child about his personal gifts or talents. In what ways can he use those gifts to serve the Lord? Remind your child that not only do we serve God in order to show our love for Him, but we also need God’s blessings in our life. Talk about it together. When you pray together, remember to ask our Heavenly Father to help your family find more ways to serve Him each day. Talk about it.



Bible Skills Review

This lesson does not have a Bible text since the purpose is to review and build Bible skills.

Memory Verse

“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true.”

--2 Timothy 3:16 (NLT)

Message

The Bible is there to help you...use it!

Lesson

The Old Testament

The first book of the Bible is the book of Genesis and it is in the **Old Testament**. The Old Testament is broken down more, in a way that is easy to understand. *(Have the children repeat after you: “Five, twelve, five, five, twelve...five, twelve, five, five, twelve”)*

The Old Testament is divided into 5 parts:

1. **5 books of law** – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Number, and Deuteronomy. They are called the books of law because they contain the laws of God to His people, the Ten Commandments, etc. They talk about the creation, Noah and the flood, Abraham, Moses and more.
2. **12 books of history** - Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. They tell the History of Israel from the Promised Land to the return to Jerusalem. They cover Joshua, Caleb, the judges like Sampson, Saul, David, etc.
3. **5 books of poetry** - Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. They are written largely in a poetry form.
4. **5 books of Major Prophets** - Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel.
5. **12 books of Minor Prophets** - Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

The difference between major and minor prophets is mostly the length of the books, with the Major Prophets books being longer than most of the Minor Prophet books of the Bible.

HINT: When you think “Old Testament” – think “5 – 12 – 5 – 5 – 12”.

The Apocrypha

There was a period of time that passed between the Old and New Testaments. There were about 400 years that went by for which the Bible is silent. There are writings from that period, but they have never been included in many Bibles. If they are included, they are called “the Apocrypha”. They are factual with history, but they are not considered either Old Testament or New Testament books.

Then, after about 400 years, the events of the New Testament started to unfold, beginning of course with the birth of Jesus.

Lesson - Continued

The New Testament

The New Testament is divided into 5 parts:

1. 4 gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. “Gospel” means good news, or truth, and the gospels are four versions of the same things including Jesus’ life, teaching, death and resurrection. Each version is written from a different perspective.
2. 1 book of history – Acts. It traces the history of the church from the ascension of Christ to the arrival of the apostle Paul in Rome. It is written by Luke, and combined with the book of Luke, he wrote more than half of the New Testament. Events such as the Pentecost, the call of Saul, etc. are in this book.
3. 13 letters from Paul – Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. These books are letters that were all written by Paul. He wrote to churches and individuals, instructing them on how they might live out their faith more completely.
4. 8 letters from others – Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2, and 3 John, and Jude. They are letters written by people other than Paul. The authors are James, John, Jude, Peter, and one unknown. We do not know who wrote the book of Hebrews.
5. 1 book of prophesy – Revelation. This is the last book of the Bible and it is the only book of prophecy in the New Testament. It tells us about the events leading up to the end of time. It was written by John.

Talk About It

Help your child review the books of the Bible. Can he say them in order? See how far he can get and have fun with it. Remind your child how important the Bible is in our lives today. The Bible is a tool that we have to help us know God’s Truth. It is important to spend a few minutes each day reading in it and learning more about Him and His ways. Talk about it.