

FIRST STEPS

OF FOLLOW-UP FOR NEW
BELIEVERS

Leader's Guide

A 6-week small-group study for children
who are just beginning to follow Jesus

With lessons to use with children
ANYWHERE around the world

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Originally created by a global of thirteen writers and editors for use in children's ministries around the world.

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Reproducible Student Booklet

Photocopy one lesson at a time or copy all pages to make one large workbook. Booklets are NOT necessary for lessons. Leader may enjoy a copy for lesson reference, even if students don't have booklets. Avoid booklets for non-readers.

LESSON 1: Your New Life with Jesus
LESSON 2: Talking with Jesus
LESSON 3: Learning about Jesus
LESSON 4: Growing with God's Family
LESSON 5: Jesus' Plans and You
LESSON 6: Becoming Like Jesus

Sample Letters, Notes & Masters

Small-Group Invitations (Blank)
Parent Invitation Letter (Sample)
Journal Cover
Mailbox Series (Correspondence Course)
Instructions, Cover Page
Certificate of Completion (Blank)

First Steps of Follow-up

Welcome!

Welcome to a unique and exciting curriculum tool to help you give young believers a strong start in their new life with Jesus.

This manual contains six lessons to be presented with individual children or in small groups. In these lessons, children will not only learn the importance of prayer, God's Word and fellowship, but they will also begin to grow in their own relationship with Jesus. The emphasis is less on a brand-new list of "dos and don'ts" leading to a legalistic beginning for children, but more on a relationship with Jesus that is vibrant, real and growing.

The parable of the sower reminds us that many seeds may be planted, but not all grow to maturity and produce a harvest. Around the world, millions of children have responded to Christ, only to find that they do not have the encouragement, support and relationships around them to help them move forward in their life with Jesus. *First Steps of Follow-Up* is designed as a flexible tool to help you connect with children in a wide variety of follow-up situations, to give them the best possible chance of growing strong in Christ.

Whether you present this in a small group, work through it with one individual child, give booklets to parents to work through with their own children, use it as preparation for baptism, or use it as your own follow-up correspondence course, we hope that it will be a great resource for helping kids grow a lasting relationship with Jesus for a lifetime.

May God give you the courage, grace and wisdom you need as you work with new believers and their families.

Leader's Guide

What Makes this Program Unique?

Designed for use ANYWHERE

First Steps of Follow-Up is designed for use ANYWHERE around the world. Though you will still need to make adjustments for your unique children, here are some of the realities we had in mind as we prepared this curriculum:

- **Limited resources** – Supplies may not be available (copier for the booklets, paper, pencils, Bibles, classroom space, etc.). The lessons are designed to be used without the booklets. Where supplies are available, these can be a wonderful addition for children.
- **Limited reading opportunities** – Many children new to following Christ have limited reading capabilities. Either they are too young, or the local literacy rate is low. In other areas, translations of the booklet may not be available in the local language. The facilitator's notes are designed to present these lessons well, even without the printed booklets.
- **Cultural (and denominational) variety** – Values, experience, educational levels and spiritual conditions vary widely around the world. In addition, differences in doctrine and denominational practices abound. We have focused on including essential truths, principles and doctrines that are MOST foundational to life with Christ. This is just the beginning.

Considers real-world follow-up issues

These materials are designed with true follow-up realities in mind. While we cannot solve all of the obstacles related to helping new believers grow, we have at least considered them as we prepared the lessons.

- **Age differences** – This program is adaptable for various ages. While it presents a lot of scripture as foundation, it is designed to be relational and conversational. This works even with very young children, as long as the facilitator is listening and gently guiding a child to understand at his or her level. The material is ideal for use with school-age children.
- **Parents may not be believers** – Families may have questions or be antagonistic toward Christ. Though children often bring their families to know Jesus shortly after believing in him, the issues are complex. How will you build bridges to families? Will parents attend follow-up classes?

NOTE: If parents are believers, the booklets can be copied and given to them. Invite them to read and talk through the booklet with their own child, a few pages at a time.

- **Little or no understanding of Christian practices and concepts** – Children new to life with Jesus will need many things explained. We've included explanations of core concepts. But in no way can all questions be anticipated. Times for dialogue and asking questions are integrated into the entire program.
- **No opportunity for relationship** – In some cases, children respond to Christ, but leaders have no opportunity to continue the relationship. It is sad, but often a reality. It may be necessary to offer booklets to these children to read (or have read to them) on their own. Or, try to connect using the Mailbox Series (Correspondence Course) based on *Your New Life with Jesus* student booklets.

But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty, or thirty times what was sown.

Matthew 13:22-23 NIV

How to Use this Curriculum

First Steps of Follow-Up is ideal for one leader in a small-group follow-up setting with children. The lessons may be 60 to 90 minutes long, depending on how many children and how much dialogue you allow with children. You still get to adapt these materials to work best for you and your students.

1. Choose how you will present this

This program is written for maximum flexibility. Here is a list of possibilities. You might think of other ways to use it as well. Choose what best fits you, your setting and your students.

	Choose this if you have...	Where? How?	Supplies needed
Small Group* – BASIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mostly nonreaders - Little or no availability of supplies - More younger children - Ability to meet regularly - No Bibles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small home or classroom meeting space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bible for leader - Lesson outlines for leader - One copy of <i>Your New Life with Jesus</i> student booklet for reference
Small Group* – ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES OPTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mostly readers - Access to copier and additional supplies and resources for students - Mixed ages - Ability to meet regularly - Access to Bibles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small home or classroom meeting space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Above items plus... - Copies of <i>Your New Life with Jesus</i> student booklet/pages for each student (either copy or purchase) - Bible or New Testament/Psalms for each student, easy-to-read by children (optional) - Basic school supplies to share (paper, pencils, pens, crayons, etc.) - Blank paper or small notebook for journals for each student - An erasable board or large paper and writing supplies
Home/Family*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents who are believers - Parents who are readers - Opportunity to speak with parents about their child's interest in Christ - Parents who have Bibles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Copy of booklet for child/family - Optional Bible for child/family
Correspondence (Mail)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children who can read and write - Access to copies and mail supplies (child and leader) - Address of child - Someone to read/respond to correspondence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Via mail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Copies of booklets (each lesson copied separately for each child who participates) - Mailing envelopes, postage, etc. - Student addresses
Correspondence (Email)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to computers and e-mail - Children with access to computers and e-mail - Permission from parents to e-mail the child - Someone to read/respond to child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Via e-mail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Electronic copies of each lesson (on <i>First Steps of Follow-Up</i> CD) - E-mail address of child/family
Booklet Only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children who have made new commitments for Christ but might not be seen again by you or a local church - Mostly children who can read or find an adult to read the booklet to them - Ability to purchase or copy booklets to give away 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distribution after outreach event, mail or deliver to each child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Copies of booklets for each child

*These are recommended methods of presentation for First Steps of Follow-Up.

For more instructions on creating your own Mailbox Series (Correspondence Course), see the Sample Letters, Notes & Masters section in the back of this book.

First Steps of Follow-up

2. Get organized

The *First Steps of Follow-Up* Kit includes:

- This complete *First Steps of Follow-Up* Leader's Guide
- A sample of *Your New Life with Jesus* student booklet
- First Steps of Follow-Up* Leader's Guide on CD (with all Leader's Guide and student booklet files in reproducible .pdf format)

Preparation can be very simple. In general, you will need access to the following:

BASIC SUPPLIES *(best for settings with non-readers and limited supplies)*

- Lesson Outline for the teacher/leader
- A Bible for teacher/leader
- One copy of *Your New Life with Jesus* student booklet (optional)
- An erasable board or large paper and writing supplies (optional)

ADDITIONAL SUPPLY OPTIONS

(for settings with students who can read/write and where supplies are more readily available)

- A copier (optional) to make copies of *Your New Life with Jesus* student booklet/pages for each student
- A Bible or New Testament/Psalms for each student (easily readable by children)
- Basic school supplies: paper, pencils, pens, crayons to share
- Blank paper or small notebook for journals for each student
- An erasable board or large paper and writing supplies

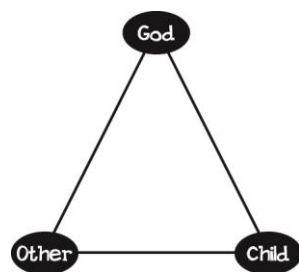
3. Make adjustments

Your students and your situation will be different from any other. Differences in culture, values, children, community and location will require you to make changes so the curriculum works best for these realities. As you make changes, always keep the children in mind. This is all about helping them to grow in Christ. It is all about relationship and gentle guidance. Avoid letting obstacles, organizational details and other issues become more important than your relationship with each child.

4. Prepare your heart

Although these materials have been prayerfully written, they cannot substitute for personal prayer on behalf of the children and families you are working with.

Read through the Lesson Outlines. Consider your own life with Christ. Be prepared to share from your own personal experience with Jesus.



In addition, realize that God, the child, parents, the church and teachers/leaders all have parts to play in helping a child grow in his or her new life with Jesus. At the beginning, your example and encouragement can be invaluable in helping a child get a strong start.

I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.

*1 Corinthians 3:6-7
NIV*

General Format (Lesson Outlines)

Lesson Overview





The first page gives an overview of the entire lesson, with objectives, key verses, list of activities and possible materials needed. This first page is intended to help teachers as they prepare. It is not intended for presentation to children.

Welcome, Introduction & Review

The welcome includes personal time to get acquainted with students. Topics of conversation are suggested. After the first lesson, review discussions are also included. The topic for the day is also introduced here.

Scripture & Discussion Topics

Pages 2-4 contain various topics to be considered one at a time. Each section varies in how material is presented and discussed. The following activities are found throughout these lessons:

-  **BIBLE LOOK-UP** – The leader (or students who can read), finds and reads scriptures on the topic. It is important to help kids learn how to use a Bible. In addition, many words and concepts will be brand new. Watch for student understanding as scriptures are presented. Avoid complicated discussions. Focus on the basics.
-  **FRIENDSHIP & CONVERSATION** – Conversation and questions to find out what children are thinking about certain topics. Enjoy the relationships. Listen well.
-  **PRAYER** – Times of prayer and response together. Prayer will be new for students. Teach as you pray together.
- ?? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS** – Questions for consideration. Avoid giving all the right answers. Guide students to discover some truths on their own as they think about the questions.
-  **WRITING/RESPONSE** – Activities that require a list, circling a favorite verse, or some type of personal application response. These are optional in areas with limited supplies or where children cannot write.

Bible Story

The story on page 5 of each lesson outline is intended to be read aloud, with students and leader discussing it together. It is not meant for Sunday-school-style presentation. Children are learning to read and consider God's Word for themselves. They may be hearing these stories for the first time.

Something to Do

Several options for response are included on page 6 of each lesson to help children begin to personalize the lessons and consider what they will do about the new information (journal, prayer, question time). Choose options that fit your kids.

Closing

Leader ends with prayer for students and a final scripture reminder for the day. Let children know how much you enjoyed them.

Your New Life with Jesus (Student Booklets)

How to use the student booklet

Your *New Life with Jesus* student booklet is designed as an optional addition to this small group course. All lessons may be presented without the booklets, but children who can read will appreciate their own copy to work through.

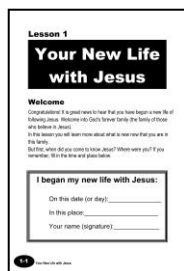
The booklet has been designed so it can be used in settings where no Bibles are available. All scriptures and Bible passages are printed in the text. If a child has no other help to understand his or her new life with Christ, the information in the booklet will offer a great start. However, nothing can replace the benefit of working through the booklet with a leader or a parent.

The booklet contains verses in the New International Version of the Bible. Use other versions as needed in your setting. Always work to help children understand what they hear.

Each eight-page lesson is loaded with information but is organized in such a way that children are often invited to respond to personal questions about what they are learning. The booklet by itself can be an excellent guide for parents and children to work through together.

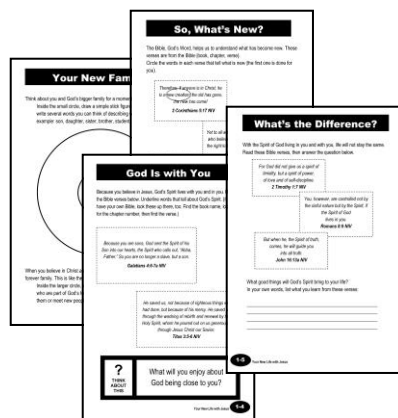
Page 1

- Welcome
- Review
- Conversation starters
- Introduce topic



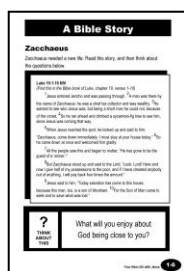
Pages 2-5

- Scripture
- Discussion
- Questions
- Response
- Activities



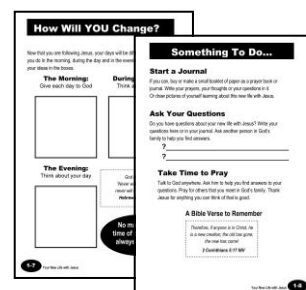
Page 6

- Bible story (scripture passage) to read and think about



Pages 7-8

- Personal application
- Activities



Find copies of student booklets arranged by lesson sections in this manual. Find variations of the booklet (single lessons, paginated lessons, paginated book, etc.) on the *First Steps of Follow-Up* Leader's Guide CD.

And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.

Colossians 1:10 NIV

Counseling Children Who Choose to Follow Jesus

First Steps of Follow-Up assumes that children have already made a decision to follow Christ. But for many, this commitment is still unclear. Some may need your help to confirm their understanding of what it means to trust Christ as Savior.

Be ready to reinforce the gospel with children as needed. Some may come to a fuller understanding of this decision as they work through the booklet with you. In addition, the principles below apply to your work with young, new believers.

Clearly present the gospel.

- Clearly explain the promise (eternal/abundant life)
- Clearly explain the problem (sin)
- Clearly explain the person (Jesus)
- Clearly explain the possibility (forgiveness, new life, following Jesus)

Is the child ready?

IS HE OR SHE OLD ENOUGH? Consider a child's age.

The Bible does not give a specific age when children can receive Christ. Jesus welcomed very young children into his arms. Jewish customs did not consider children accountable for their actions until they were nearly teens. In general, children need to understand the following to make a serious personal decision to follow Christ:

- Understand there is a standard for right and wrong (found in the Bible).
- Accept that God loves them, even though God is invisible.
- Recognize their own sin (inability to live up to the standard of God's law) and realize the eternal consequences of their sin. This requires development of a conscience, around ages three to six.
- Think and compare. Children must be able to compare their sin to Jesus' perfection. They must be able to understand how he paid the price for their sin, and then accept this truth personally.

IS HE OR SHE READY? Consider a child's readiness to make a decision.

- Notice the child's questions. Is he or she thinking seriously about gospel truth?
- Notice a child's facial expressions. Watch for signs that God is working in a child's heart and mind.
- Notice a child's behavior. Some who seem to present discipline challenges are really searching for genuine love and attention ... from Christ!
- Other reasons a child might respond to an invitation or even sign up for a *First Steps of Follow-Up* class:
 - Friendship (with a teacher or a classmate)
 - Gifts (a Bible, booklet, etc.)
 - Confusion
 - Assurance of salvation

First Steps of Follow-up

Counseling & questions

After children express their desire to follow Jesus, they will need people to meet with them, talk with them, answer questions and pray with them. The process of choosing to trust Jesus for salvation and follow him belongs to the child and to the Holy Spirit. However, adults can help the “new birth” of a child into Christ’s family go smoothly.

- Find out what the child already knows. Let him or her tell you about Jesus, talk about heaven and tell you why sin is such a problem for people. Listen carefully to his or her answers.
- Realize your role is to guide a child in the decision. He or she must make the decision personally. A leader simply provides encouragement, information and love. Watch the Holy Spirit do his work.
- Use the Bible to read scriptures. Avoid using too many and overwhelming a child.
- Use simple language a child can understand.
- Do not frighten the child about going to hell.
- Avoid a long, emotional appeal. Kids may not be ready.
- Accept any child’s interest as sincere, even the very young.
- Emphasize this as the beginning of a forever relationship.
- Celebrate a child’s decision to receive Christ. Send a certificate, give a Bible. Reinforce his new commitment.

Questions to ask

As you counsel with children in this decision, here are some specific questions to ask. Note that these are open-ended questions (questions without a right, wrong or one-word answer). At any point, you may find that some children are not ready as you listen to their answers. Integrate information related to these questions into your small group times with children:

Why did you come?
Have you ever received Jesus as your Savior?
Why do you need Jesus?
What will Jesus do for you and your sin?
Would you like to receive Jesus now? (*pray together*)
Where is the Lord now? How long will he stay?
What should you do if you sin?
How can you grow in your relationship with Jesus?

Praying with a child

- Tell the child that prayer is simply talking with God.
- Invite the child to use his or her own words to pray. You might pray first, then ask the child to pray in his or her own personal prayer to God. If the child is not sure what to say (and wants your help), you may say a phrase, then invite the child to repeat after you.
- In the prayer, thank God for sending Jesus, ask for forgiveness, commit your life to Christ and ask for help to grow.

*He is patient with you, not wanting
anyone to perish, but everyone to
come to repentance.*

2 Peter 3:9b NIV

Follow-Up Considerations

Plans for follow-up after outreach events are so important. The hope is to help new believers and their families become associated with a local church or children's group. There is no perfect formula for this, since everyone's growth is very personal. A focus on relationships is key.

Obstacles to integration

Many factors work against our wish to see new converts grow. Their families may not support their decision. It may be inconvenient to get to church on Sunday with other scheduled obligations or a lack of transportation. Some kids simply are ignorant of the fact that church is a good place for new Christians to be. Satan, most of all, wants to keep new believers everywhere from growing in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

How can you help overcome some of these practical obstacles for children?

- Transportation problems (rides)
- Relationships not well developed (needs friends)
- Feelings of knowing less than others (awareness)
- Not feeling prepared (Clothes, appearance, Bible)
- **Other obstacles?**

What else can you do?

In some cases, children will not be able to attend a *First Steps of Follow-Up* group. What can you do?

PRAY FOR THEM

Prayer is an important part of the follow-up process. There is a limit to how involved we can be in another person's spiritual growth, especially a child's. But anyone can pray for another person. Will a group of "pray-ers" in your church commit to each praying for one child for a whole month after the outreach? Or even for a year?

MAKE PERSONAL CONTACT

Can you call children who attended the outreach? Can you send postcards or letters of thanks for coming? Will you visit children who came – and their families? Consider how to make personal contact with children, especially those indicating an interest in following Christ.

INVITE THEM

- Invite them to special children's events at your church.
- Invite some to attend Sunday school and offer to bring them.
- You may also consider starting a weekly kids' meeting in their neighborhood.

SUPPORT THE PARENT'S ROLE

The primary environment for the growth of a child's faith is home. The difficulty is that many parents are unbelievers. Consider how you will reach out to families. A home visit? A telephone call to parents? A parenting class or other event? Above all, pray for families!

For more instructions on creating your own Mailbox Series (Correspondence Course), see the Sample Letters, Notes & Masters section in the back of this book.

First Steps of Follow-up

Help kids choose a good church

- Teach students that there are all kinds of churches. Some do not teach the truth about Jesus.
- Challenge them to pray that God will lead them to a good church in which they may grow in their knowledge of and relationship with Christ.
- Tell them to find a church that believes in the Bible as the true Word of God.
- Tell them to find a church that believes Jesus is the only way to God.
- Also, find a church that cares about kids and plans lots of activities for them.
- Find a church that parents also like.
- Hopefully, this describes your church, too!

NOTE: In some areas of the world, there is only one church choice available in each community or no church at all. Adjust your advice to match local realities.

What do new believers need to know first?

- **YOUR LIFE IS NEW AND DIFFERENT.**
“When Jesus comes into your life, he makes things new on the inside. You begin a new life of following him.”
- **JESUS IS ALWAYS WITH YOU.**
“You may not see him or feel different, but Jesus has come to live in your life forever. He will never leave you. He will always love you. His Holy Spirit lives in you and will help you grow in your life with Jesus.”
- **YOU ARE A CHILD OF GOD.**
“You are now part of God’s forever family, along with many others around the world. As part of God’s family, you can:
 - **Talk to God** as your Father, anytime, anywhere. Thank him, tell him what you are thinking or ask for his help.
 - **Get together with others** who know Jesus. Talk about him, learn about him, and grow to love him more than anything else.”
- **YOU CAN GROW TO BE LIKE JESUS.**
“As a new child of God, you will start to learn to live in new ways. God’s Word, the Bible, can help you learn more about Jesus. Start by following his example of loving other people and telling them about how they can be part of God’s forever family, too.”

Above all, keep discipleship in perspective

At its core, the definition of a disciple is a **learner**. The children you work with will be starting at the very beginning. They will know little about life with Jesus. It is important to remember some of these principles as you work with children:

- A disciple is not a ROBOT OR A CLONE.
- A discipler is always encouraging a bond between GOD and the DISCIPLE.
- Being a disciple is VOLUNTARY.
- Discipleship is commitment to the person of THE HOLY SPIRIT.
- Discipleship deals more with the INNER/SPIRITUAL quality of life than with outward OBEDIENCE.

Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 1:6 NIV

Teaching Kids around the World

Regardless of where you work with children, children's inner needs are very similar. The differences in culture, however, result in wide variances in the classroom. Most of these differences are in the way people deal with authority and in norms for communication.

If you hope to communicate the truth about Jesus across cultures, the following considerations may help your message to connect with kids more effectively:

Listen

Communication is a two-way process. If you do not understand something, ask. Then listen for the answer. Rephrase student responses to check your understanding. Use open-ended questions which require more than a "yes" or "no" answer. Give everyone a chance to be heard. Use what you learn to adjust your lessons.

Involve them in the process

Adults often rely on their ability to lecture when teaching children. However, kids learn best in settings where they can participate in the learning process. Use drama, music, movement and active projects. Challenge yourself to involve your kids' minds and hearts in the process of discovering truth.

You speak with more than words

You communicate with body language, laughter, silence, eye contact, openness, gestures and facial expressions. Help kids understand that you respect and enjoy them as they watch your body speak. They will listen to you much more readily when the messages of your mouth and your actions agree. Jesus taught with words, silence, commands, sermons and more. But his greatest lesson was taught to us as he lived a perfect life, then died on the cross for our sins. Be challenged by him to be a great example.

Additional tips for communicating with young new believers:

Here are some tips for connecting with young, new believers:

- Assume children know nothing about God.
- Do not compromise the true message by weakening it.
- Offer positive personal friendship and activities.
- Assume kids know nothing about how to behave in church.
- Avoid judging children who do not make good choices right away. They are learning.
- Commit to answering kids' tough questions about God and life.
- Clearly present new concepts. Avoid confusing children with too much as they are just beginning to understand life with Christ.

Working with Children across Cultures

A child's culture

Children around the world share many traits in common. However, variations in culture and local values result in significant differences in ministry needs and realities for kids. We find wide differences in:

Family
Social Structure (includes gender, age, etc.)
Communication
Religion
Economy (includes health, education, etc.)
Values

In some places, differences in cultural norms and values mean ...

- Children are not allowed to look adults in the eye (respect and communication issues).
- Boys and girls cannot meet together in class (gender values).
- Games cannot be played in church (respect for a house of worship).
- Older children will be baby-sitting younger children in your group (child status, economic realities).
- Children may not be able to read (education).
- Children may not be willing to answer questions (respect for teacher, traditional classroom cultures).
- Children may never have used crayons or glue (poverty or supply issues).
- Children will refuse gifts ... or mob for them (gift-giving practices).
- Children feel deep shame if chosen as a winner or loser (shame culture).
- The list goes on

A child's context

What are the strong influences in the life of a child you are working with?

- **FAMILIES:** Always, families are the number one influence in the spiritual growth of a child. They can be either *for* growth, or *against* it.
- **ECONOMY:** Does the child live within a poverty culture? Or with wealth? Both impact the way in which you minister to a child.
- **EDUCATION:** Can children read? Have they learned about the world outside their neighborhood? How will lack of education impact your program plans?
- **SOCIAL STATUS:** Are children given permission to make decisions? How will they expect to be treated?
- **AND MORE:** Other factors influencing a child's life are too many to list here. For any setting, research local norms so you can really prepare for excellent ministry to kids.

Attempt to understand culture through a child's eyes. Always consider how you can help a child grow within the realities of his or her own culture.

*I have become all things to all men
so that by all possible means I might
save some.*

1 Corinthians 9:22b NIV

Lesson Outlines

Lessons 1-6

LESSON 1:

Your New Life with Jesus

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

- To guide young believers to understand important truths about their new lives in Christ:
- They are part of God's forever family
- They have assurance of salvation
- God is always with them
- They will grow and change
- To discuss practical ways in which children can begin to grow in their own personal relationships with Christ.

KEY VERSES:

JOHN 1:12 NIV – “Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 NIV – “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”

INTRODUCTION FOR LEADERS

In this lesson, you have the incredible privilege of helping young believers in Christ get a healthy start in their personal relationships with him.

Scripture presented in this lesson is not designed to overwhelm students, but to give them perspective. The key is you and your gentle, guiding discussion.

Above all, avoid the temptation to make this life with Jesus all about things a child “must do” (pray, read God’s Word, go to church). Focus instead on this brand-new, wonderful relationship with Jesus. The rest will follow soon enough. Let your love for him shine through to the children today.

Lesson Overview

Welcome, Introduction & Review (10-20 minutes)

Welcome (Stories of coming to Christ)
Prayer

Scripture, Background & Discussion (20-30 minutes)

Your New Family (Circle Discussion)
So, What’s New? (Scripture & Discussion)
God Is With You (Scripture & Discussion)
What’s the Difference? (Scripture & Discussion)

Bible Story & Discussion (10-20 minutes)

A Bible Story (Zacchaeus & Discussion)

Response & Application Options (20-30 minutes)

How Will YOU Change? (Morning, Day, Evening)
Something to Do (Journals, Questions, Prayer)
(Total Time: 60-90 minutes)

Materials Needed

BASIC SUPPLIES:

(best for settings with non-readers and limited supplies)

- Lesson Outline for Lesson 1
- A copy of *Your New Life with Jesus* Lesson 1 student booklet for leader reference
- Bible for leader
- An erasable board and writing supplies OR paper and pen/pencil

ADDITIONAL OPTIONS:

(for settings with students who can read/write and where supplies are more readily available)

- A copy of *Your New Life with Jesus* Lesson 1 student booklet for each student
- A Bible or New Testament/Psalms for each student (easy-to-read for children)
- Blank paper or tablets for journals for each student
- Pens or pencils for each student

Welcome, Introduction & Review (10-20 minutes)

Welcome (Introductions; Stories of coming to Christ)

Materials: *Your New Life with Jesus* student booklets/pages
for each student (optional)
Pens or pencils for each student (optional)

FRIENDSHIP & CONVERSATION

- Warmly welcome students. Tell them you are glad they have come. Help them to feel at ease. Introduce children to each other.
- Congratulate children on beginning their new lives of following Jesus. Welcome them into God's forever family.
- Explain that in this lesson, children will get to understand more about who they are in this family.

?? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Spend time getting acquainted with the children and share stories of how they came to know Christ. At some point, briefly tell your own story of starting to follow Christ, too.
- Ask the following questions:
 - ***When did you come to know Jesus?***
 - ***Where were you? Do you remember?***
- NOTE: Some children may not remember a time and place. Or they are still gaining an understanding of their response to Christ. Be gentle and invitational as you converse with children about these stories. If they wish, they may write down today's time and place as a beginning.

PRAYER

- Open with a simple prayer. Ask God to give your students understanding from his Word about their new life in Christ and their new place in God's forever family.

BOOKLET OPTION

- If booklets are available, invite children to fill in the blanks at the bottom of the first page.
- All lessons are designed to be presented with or without student booklets.
- Leaders may find it helpful to have a copy of the booklet as a reference while leading children through the discussion, even if students do not have booklets.
- If using booklets, continue to refer to lesson plans for additional notes, comments, scriptures and questions for students to consider.

Scripture, Background & Discussion (20-30 minutes)

Your New Family (Circle Activity)

Materials: Erasable board or large paper and writing utensils
Piece of paper for each student, pen or pencil

FRIENDSHIP & CONVERSATION

- Guide students in a discussion introducing them to their new role as a member of God's forever family.
- On board or large paper, draw a very large circle with a smaller circle inside. Give a paper to each student (if available). Invite students to draw circles like yours on their own papers.
- Invite each child to draw a simple stick figure representing themselves inside the smaller circle.
- **What are some of the names used to describe you?** Give examples from your own life: mother, daughter, student, friend, etc. Invite children to each think of several words they could use to describe themselves. Write these down in the smaller circle.
- Look at the circles. Share answers with others in the class. Give time for this activity. Encourage and affirm every child as you get acquainted. Some might need more help to finish this.
- Next, look at the larger circle. Explain that when they trusted in Christ as Savior, God puts them in his forever family. Instruct them to write "God's Forever Family" in the bigger circle. Believing in Jesus places us and all we are into God's bigger family.
- Inside the larger circle, write some names of people that you and children know, who are part of God's forever family.



BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may do all of the activities above in the circle provided on page 1-2 of their booklets.

So, What's New? (Scripture & Discussion)

Materials: Bible for teacher (or for every reading student, if available)



BIBLE LOOK-UP

- Celebrate the truth about being part of God's forever family. Teach children that they can never be taken out of this family. How do we know this? We learn it from the Bible, God's Word.
- Show Bible. Some may never have been introduced to this book before. Explain that it is a book filled with words, stories and messages from God to us. Show how to find a book, a chapter and a verse in the Bible.
- Look up several verses listed below. As students listen to these being read, ask them to help you discover what the verses teach in answer to, "What is new?" because they have believed in Christ.
 - **2 Corinthians 5:17** – We are a new creation.
 - **John 1:12** – We are children of God.
 - **2 Peter 2:9** – We are chosen people, we are holy.
 - **John 15:15** – We are friends with Jesus.



BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may read the scriptures and consider these questions on page 1-3.

?? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Define words in these verses as you present them: new creation, believe, holy, etc. Assure children that any changes will be good changes, and not frightening for them.
- Help children personalize these. **Which verse do you like the best? Which has the most meaning for you right now?**

God Is with You (Scripture & Discussion)

Materials: Bible for leader (and for every reading student, if available)

**BIBLE LOOK-UP**

- When we believe in Jesus, God's Spirit lives with us and in us. He is always with us. He never leaves us alone. His Spirit is good and wonderful.
- How do we know? The Bible, God's Word, tells us so.
- Read these verses and notice what they teach us about God's Spirit.
 - **Galatians 4:6** – The Spirit of God's Son is in our hearts making us his children. Who is God's Son? Jesus!
 - **Titus 3:5** – He saved us by the Holy Spirit, poured out on us through Jesus Christ our Savior.
- God's Spirit is invisible. He is in us and with us, even though we cannot see him. His Spirit does not bring fear, but joy and peace to our lives.

**BOOKLET OPTION**

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and consider this question on page 1-4.

?? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Define words in these verses as you discuss them: Spirit, heart, Holy Spirit, God's Son, poured out, etc.
- **What will you enjoy about God being close to you at all times?**

What's the Difference? (Scripture & Discussion)

Materials: Bible for leader (or for every reading student, if available)

Paper (same paper as circle activity, optional)

Pens and pencils for each student (optional)

**BIBLE LOOK-UP**

- Discuss what difference it might make to have God's Spirit living in us and with us all the time.
- Discover that with the Spirit of God living in us and with us, life will not stay the same. **What will change?** Discover some answers from the Bible, God's Word.
 - **2 Timothy 1:7** – God helps us not to be afraid, but to feel his power, love and self-discipline.
 - **Romans 8:9** – We are controlled by the Spirit of God, rather than our old, sinful nature (God's Spirit reminds us to do right things).
 - **John 16:13** – The Spirit of God guides us into truth: he helps us understand the Bible (God's Word) and also to understand his direction for our lives when we have questions.
- Define words in these verses as you discuss them: sinful nature, old nature, direction, etc.
- **How do we know that God's Spirit is speaking to us?** He speaks quietly and gently. **Have you ever felt badly after doing something wrong?** This might be God speaking to you about your sin. **Have you ever seen someone in need and felt like you needed to help?** This might be God speaking to you to show his love.

**BOOKLET OPTION**

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 1-5.

**WRITING/RESPONSE**

- If students have paper and pencils, invite them to write down what they learn from these verses on the back of the papers that have their "family" circles. Share answers together. Consider other things that might change.

Bible Story & Discussion (10-20 minutes)

A Bible Story (Zacchaeus: Luke 19:1-10)

Materials: Bible for leader (or for every reading student, if available)



BIBLE READING

- Read and discuss the story of Zacchaeus, a man who started to follow Jesus and began to change right away.
- These notes are meant to guide your discussion. Students do not need you to retell the story.
- As you present this story, children will also begin to notice how to read a passage of scripture, think about it and consider lessons from it for their lives. Do not overwhelm them with this lesson, simply demonstrate good learning attitudes as you read this story together.



BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may read the Bible story and consider discussion questions on page 1-6.

1. Zacchaeus was a tax collector.

- **Did people like Zacchaeus?** No. **Why not?** First, they had to pay taxes to him. But also because he often cheated.
- He lived a selfish, sinful life. As a result, people did not like him.
- **What was Zacchaeus' biggest need?** He was lost from God.

2. Jesus helped Zacchaeus.

- Jesus came to his town.
- Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus. But he was short. He could not see over the heads of people in the crowd. **What did Zacchaeus do?** He climbed a sycamore-fig tree.
- Jesus knew Zacchaeus was lost from God. He knew that he needed help. He told him to come down. He also said he would come to his house to visit.
- **What did the people think about Jesus paying attention to Zacchaeus?** People were upset. It surprised them that Jesus loved someone who was as imperfect and unpleasant as Zacchaeus.
- When the people complained, Jesus told them he came for the lost. **(Read Luke 19:9-10.)**

?? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **What was Zacchaeus like before he met Jesus?**
- **What was he like after he met Jesus?**
- **Will Jesus bring good changes to your life? What kinds of changes?**

Response & Application Activities (20-30 minutes)

How Will YOU Change? (Morning, Day, Evening Activities)

Materials: Paper for each student (same paper as circle activity, optional)
Pens or pencils
Bible for leader (or each reading student, if available)



WRITING/RESPONSE

- When people follow Jesus, the way they live their days becomes different.
- Guide children to consider how their mornings, days and evenings will be different now that God is with them all the time and they are following Jesus. (Give time to think about it. Some may be silent to begin with.)
- With God's Spirit living in us, we find our days look something like this:
 - **MORNING:** We might say, "God, this is your day. Help me to live it for you and to do what you want me to do."
 - **DURING THE DAY:** **Read *Philippians 2:3-4*.** Throughout the day it means looking for chances to show Jesus' love to others, to think about others first. ***What does that mean for your family, your school, your neighbors, your community?***
 - **EVENING:** We find ourselves thanking God for the day and thinking back over it to see what God was doing in us and through us.
- Turn papers over. Invite students to draw themselves in the morning, day and evening, as they live their days differently in their new life with Jesus.
- **Read *Hebrews 13:5b*.** Define words in this verse as you discuss it.



BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, children may write/draw their ideas on how their days will be different on page 1-7.

Something to Do: (Start a Journal, Questions, Prayer)

Materials: Blank notebook or tablet of paper (optional), pens or pencils



WRITING/RESPONSE

- Invite children to decorate the outside of a notebook as a journal. They may bring these back each time you meet.
 - Each day (morning or evening) invite children to write down things they are learning, questions or thoughts about life with Jesus, and prayers to God. If children do not write yet, invite them to draw pictures of their thoughts about these things instead.
 - If possible, show an example of a journal or booklet you have made. Help children realize that it does not need to be hard or long. It simply includes writing down a few important thoughts.



BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, work through these final activities on page 1-8



PRAYER

- Introduce the concept of prayer as talking with God.
 - Children can talk to God anywhere, anytime. He helps with questions.
 - We can pray for our needs and the needs of others. We can pray for our new brothers and sisters in God's family.
 - ***Is there something we can pray together about for you?*** Pray for each other to grow strong in love for Jesus.



FRIENDSHIP & CLOSING

- As children prepare to leave, remind them about the circles on their papers. Invite them to look at the circles each evening and remember who they are in Christ. **Read *1 Corinthians 5:17* to close.** If possible, write this verse down for each child to take home and remember.
- Tell children it is wonderful to have them as part of the family.

LESSON 2:

Talking with Jesus

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

- To guide young believers to learn about prayer and how it helps them to grow in their new friendships with Jesus.
 - Think about what will change as we grow in Christ.
 - Discuss how prayer helps kids grow.
 - Discover what Jesus did and said about prayer.
- To offer continued assurance of salvation and reinforcement of children's understanding of their new relationship with Christ.
- To discuss some practical ways to begin learning to pray.

KEY VERSES:

JOHN 15:13-14 NIV – “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command.”

ROMANS 8:39 NIV – “Neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

INTRODUCTION FOR LEADERS

How does a relationship grow? Through conversation. Through spending time together. This is also how our relationship with Christ grows. Today, as you introduce children to scriptures, concepts and principles about prayer, let this be your emphasis. Allow children to feel Jesus' invitation to talk with them anytime, any place, as naturally as they would talk to their best friend. In fact, this best friendship is what Jesus is hoping to see grow in them. Enjoy.

Lesson OverviewWelcome, Introduction & Review (10-20 minutes)

Welcome (Review, Mirror & Changes Discussion)
Prayer

Scripture, Background & Discussion (20-30 minutes)

Things That Don't Change (Scripture & Discussion)
How Will You Grow? (Scripture & Discussion)
What Is Prayer? (Scripture & Discussion)
When Did Jesus Pray? (Scripture & Discussion)

Bible Story & Discussion (10-20 minutes)

A Bible Story (The Lord's Prayer, Discussion)

Response & Application Options (20-30 minutes)

Learning to Pray (P-R-A-Y)
Something to Do (Journals, Questions, Prayer)

(Total Time: 60-90 minutes)

Materials Needed**BASIC SUPPLIES:**

(best for settings with non-readers and limited supplies)

- Lesson Outline for Lesson 2
- A copy of *Your New Life with Jesus* Lesson 2 student booklet for leader reference
- Bible for leader
- An erasable board and writing supplies OR paper and pen/pencil
- A mirror

ADDITIONAL OPTIONS:

(for settings with students who can read/write and where supplies are more readily available)

- A copy of *Your New Life with Jesus* Lesson 2 student booklet for each student
- A Bible or New Testament/Psalms for each student (easy-to-read for children)
- Blank paper or tablets for journals for each student
- Pens or pencils for each student

Welcome, Introduction & Review (10-20 minutes)

Welcome (Introductions and stories about changes)

Materials: *Your New Life with Jesus* student booklet, Lesson 2 (optional)
 Pens or pencils for each (optional)
 A mirror

FRIENDSHIP & CONVERSATION

- Warmly welcome students. Tell them you are glad they have come. Help them to feel at ease. Introduce children to each other if they have not met.
- Ask children about their week. ***How is your new life with Jesus?*** Have they met other people who are part of God's family? (If students have their circle pages or booklets from last week, invite them to add these new names to the outer, larger circle.)
- Did students write or draw in their journals? Talk about what they have been thinking. If possible, share an example of a lesson learned in your own life in the past week.
- Do students have other questions or thoughts about Jesus? Talk about simple questions. Write others down and plan to discuss them later.

?? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Hold up a mirror (the bigger the better). ***Do you look different than you did one year ago? In what ways have you grown?***
- Some changes may not be visible with a mirror. This is especially true of changes taking place inside since we trusted Christ as our Savior. ***In what ways have you changed since coming to know Christ?*** Guide students to discover truths like these: their sins are forgiven, they are members of God's family, they have eternal life, they are children of God, etc. Some of these changes might not be visible to others.
- Invite children to look in the mirror again. ***Do you look different than last year? Or than when you were a baby? Will you look different five years from now? Why?*** Because they are growing. Kids' bodies grow, their minds grow smarter, they grow in many ways.
- God wants his followers to also grow in another way: spiritually. This means growing in our friendship with Jesus and growing to become more like him. We will learn about prayer (talking with Jesus) and how it helps us grow.

PRAYER

- Open with a simple prayer. Ask God to give your students understanding about their friendship with Jesus and the importance of prayer in growing their relationship with him.

BOOKLET OPTION

- If booklets are available, invite children to draw an example of how they have changed in the past year.
- All lessons are designed to be presented with or without student booklets.
- Teachers may find it helpful to have a copy of the booklet as a reference while leading the discussions, even if students do not have booklets.
- If using booklets, continue to refer to lesson plans for additional notes, comments, scriptures and questions for students to consider.

Scripture, Background & Discussion (20-30 minutes)

Things That Don't Change (Scripture & Discussion)

Materials: Bible for leader (and for every reading student, if available)

FRIENDSHIP & CONVERSATION

- Remind students that you will learn about talking with Jesus: prayer. First, let's remember some important truths about growing and changing.

BIBLE LOOK-UP

- Remind students that God brings good changes to their lives. But there are some very important things that will never change, even as they grow:
 - John 15:13-14** – We are friends with Christ; he is our best friend.
 - Romans 5:8** – God loves us; he loved us even before we were his children, even before we received his forgiveness for sin.
 - 1 John 5: 13** – We have eternal life. We get to go to heaven after we die, where Jesus lives as king. (Remind children they will not have to go to heaven now. Some might be frightened about having to leave their families and friends.)
 - 1 John 1:9** – Our sins are forgiven. Even in the future, we can always confess our sin (tell God) and ask him to forgive our sin, and he will.
- There are many other truths about this new relationship with Jesus. Ask children to tell you which of these verses (truths) is most special to them right now.

BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and consider this question on page 2-2.

How Will You Grow? (Scripture & Discussion)

Materials: Bible for leader (and for every reading student, if available)
Erasable board or large paper and writing utensils

BIBLE LOOK-UP

- This new friendship with Jesus brings good changes to our lives. **What kinds of changes will grow in you?** The Bible gives us answers.
- Show Bible. Look up Philippians 1:9-11. (Remind students how to find a verse in their Bibles: book, chapter, verse, etc.) Teach students that the Apostle Paul, one of Jesus' followers, wrote these words as a prayer for another group of Jesus-followers.
- Read the verses once. Then read them again. Together on the erasable board or paper, list some of the ways in which children who follow Jesus might grow:
 - Love will grow
 - Grow in knowledge and depth of insight; to know what is best
 - Grow to be pure and without blame
 - Grow to be filled with the fruit of righteousness (right-living)

BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 2-3.

?? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Define words in these verses as you discuss them: love, knowledge, pure, fruit of right living, etc.
- **Why will we want to grow in these ways?** It brings praise and glory to Jesus. To bring "glory" to Jesus is to make him famous. When people see that we are Jesus-followers – and we are loving, understanding, pure and full of right living towards others – they are not just impressed with us. They become impressed with Jesus! He becomes more famous than ever (he gets glory). And he deserves to be more famous than anyone.
- Isn't it great? As we grow, we make Jesus more famous by becoming more like him.

What Is Prayer? (Scripture & Discussion)

Materials: Bible for leader (and for every reading student, if available)

**BIBLE LOOK-UP**

- Prayer is one of the most important ways we grow in our relationship with Jesus. Prayer is simply communicating with him.
- People can pray out loud or silently. They can pray by writing down their thoughts and feelings toward God. They can sing their prayers. It doesn't matter how they do it. The most important part is learning to communicate openly with Jesus.
- As in any relationship, the better we communicate with God, the better our relationships with him will be.
- Read these Bible verses and see what they teach us about prayer:
 - **Matthew 7:9-11** – God wants to answer prayer; he loves to give good things to his people.
 - **Jeremiah 33:3** – God teaches us through prayer; when we ask, he helps us find answers to things we do not understand.
 - **Philippians 4:6-7** – God cares about our troubles; we can tell him about our problems, and he helps us not to worry about them.
 - **Psalms 66:18** – God hears prayers from people with clean hearts, where sin has been confessed and forgiven; he does not listen to selfish or proud prayers.

**BOOKLET OPTION**

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 2-4.

?? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Define words in these verses as you discuss them: prayer, sin, evil, worry, peace, Lord, etc.
- ***How often do you talk with your friends? How often will you talk with Jesus? How will talking with him help you grow to be closer friends with him?***

When Did Jesus Pray? (Scripture & Discussion)

Materials: Bible for leader (or for every reading student, if available)

Erasable board or large paper and writing utensils

**BIBLE LOOK-UP**

- Our best example for prayer is Jesus himself. ***When did Jesus pray?***
- On the erasable board or paper, show a time line representing all the hours of a day. After reading each of the following verses, invite one student to come and point to the hour they think that Jesus was praying in that verse:
 - **Mark 1:35** - He prayed early in the morning while it was still dark.
 - **John 6:11** - He prayed for food during the day.
 - **Luke 6:12** - He spent the night praying.
- ***Do you think these were the only times that Jesus prayed?***
- Sometimes he just talked to God in the middle of an event or experience (like when thanking God for the food), but many times, he went away to be quiet and alone with God. ***Why do you think he did this?*** He was spending time in relationship with God, the Father.
- ***When will YOU pray?*** Invite students to mark the hours they might pray in different colors or different types of marks on the same timeline.
- ***Will Jesus expect kids to pray in the middle of the night, or to stand up and pray out loud during school?*** No. We can pray whenever we remember, whenever it works for us. He hears us anytime, in any place and loves to hear us talk about anything at all. We can pray quietly in our minds ***Why?*** He is our friend.

**BOOKLET OPTION**

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 2-5.

Bible Story & Discussion (10-20 minutes)

A Bible Story (The Lord's Prayer: Matthew 6:6-13)

Materials: Bible for leader (or for every reading student, if available)



BIBLE READING

- Read the story from the Bible. Then discuss the story and questions together.
- As you read and discuss the story, children will also begin to notice how to find a passage of scripture, read it (without reading the verse numbers), think about it and consider lessons from it for their lives.
- Do not overwhelm children with every truth about the Lord's Prayer. Remember to teach the basics to your young believers.



BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 2-6.

1. Many disciples followed Jesus.

- Many people followed Jesus as his disciples. Disciples were "learners." They were committed to learning from a master teacher.
- Jesus loved to teach good lessons to his followers, lessons that helped them to grow in their relationship with God.

2. Jesus taught his disciples about their attitudes and prayer.

- Jesus first taught his disciples the kinds of attitudes they needed to have in prayer.
- First, they were to go into their room, close the door and pray in private. During Jesus' time, many religious leaders prayed loudly in front of everyone. **Why did they do this?** So that people would see them and think they were important and godly. But God was not impressed with this kind of praying. He hears humble prayers.
- Next, Jesus told them not to pray with lots of fancy or empty words. Jesus told his disciples to pray simply. **Is this good news for kids? Why?** Kids use simple words. They can't pray complicated prayers. God loves simple praying. He hears humble prayers.
- Finally, Jesus told them that God already knew what they needed. **If God already knows what we need, why should we pray?** Because it helps our relationship with him to grow. And he loves to hear us talk with him. When we spend time in prayer, sometimes we also listen. God might speak answers to our hearts as we listen.

3. Jesus taught his disciples the kinds of words to pray.

- PRAISE: He taught them to worship and honor God first, before praying about anything else.
- REPENT: He taught them to ask for forgiveness – and also for help to forgive others.
- ASK: He taught them to ask for things they needed, like daily bread and for help not to fall into sin when they were tempted.
- YES: Above all, he taught them to pray that God's plans would happen on earth (and in their own lives) as they do in heaven. This only happens as people yield to God, and one by one, day after day, choose to trust him. **Will you say "yes" to trusting and obeying God each new day?**

?? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **What do you learn about praying from Jesus' lesson?**
- **How will this help YOU as you learn to pray?**

Response & Application Activities (20-30 minutes)

Learning to Pray (P-R-A-Y)

Materials: Bible for leader (or each reading student, if available)



WRITING/RESPONSE

- Prayer is one of the big ways people grow in their relationship with Jesus. We don't become experts in prayer all at once. We grow in prayer, just like our bodies grow – a little at a time.
- **So what does praying look like for us?** Guide children to remember the simple prayer to start out each day: God, this is your day.
- If possible, sometime during the day – morning, afternoon, or evening, spend some quiet time away from everyone, alone with God. Talk to him, but also listen. When Jesus was alone with the Father, he did not talk constantly. He was still and quiet, listening to his Father. And while we will not hear an audible voice, God's Spirit in us may remind us of a Bible verse, or something we need to confess, or someone to pray for, etc. **What time of day will this be for you?**
- When you pray, start to include some of these things in your prayer:
 - P - PRAISE: Thank God for anything good. Tell him what you love about him. (*Psalms 103:1*)
 - R - REPENT: Ask God to forgive any wrongs (sin). (*1 John 1:9*)
 - A - ASK: Ask for God's help with problems, people, worries, anything. (*Matthew 7:7*)
 - Y - YES: Say yes to following Jesus and trusting him for this new day. (*Proverbs 3:5-6*)
- Define words in these verses as you discuss them: praise, faithful, forgive, pure, trust, acknowledge, etc.



BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 2-7.

Something to Do: (Journals, Questions, Prayer)

Materials: Blank notebook or tablet of paper for each student (optional)
Pens or pencils



WRITING/RESPONSE

- Invite children to work in their notebooks or journals, if they have them:
 - Each day (morning or evening) invite children to write down a prayer they have to God. Or, they might write a list of things to remember to pray about. If children do not write, invite them to draw instead.
 - Kids with good memories may decide not to write down anything at all!
 - If possible, show an example of your own journal or prayer list.



BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 2-8.



PRAYER

- Remind children that they can talk to God anytime, anywhere.
- **Is there something we can pray about together?** Pray for needs and requests. Pray for each other to grow strong in love for Jesus.



FRIENDSHIP & CLOSING

- As children prepare to leave, remind them that God is always with them. Read Romans 8:39. Realize that no matter where they go, no matter what happens, God loves them. He is always available to listen to them talking with him. Always.

LESSON 3:

Learning about Jesus

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

- To guide young believers to learn how God's Word can help them grow in their friendship with Jesus:
 - The Bible (God's Word) is a special book, like no other.
 - God's Word helps them learn the truth about Jesus and grow to be more like him.
- To offer continued assurance of salvation and reinforcement of children's understanding of their new life with Jesus.
- To discuss some practical ways children can begin to use their Bibles daily to learn about Jesus from God's Word.

KEY VERSES:

PSALM 119:105 NIV – "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path."

1 PETER 2:2 NIV – "Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation."

INTRODUCTION FOR LEADERS

Why study God's Word? For a new believer, there is only one reason: to learn more about Jesus and this new life of following him. In this lesson, there will be much discussion about God's Word, how to use it, how to understand it, and its benefits for a person's life. However, the focus continues to be on growing a wonderful friendship with Jesus.

Lesson Overview

Welcome, Introduction & Review (10-20 minutes)

Welcome (Review, Table Setting & Meal)

Prayer

Scripture, Background & Discussion (20-30 minutes)

God's Word Helps Us Grow (Scripture & Discussion)

What Is the Bible? (Scripture & Discussion)

How Does It Help Us Grow? (Scripture & Discussion)

How Do I Use the Bible? (Activity)

Bible Story & Discussion (10-20 minutes)

A Bible Story (House on the Rock, Discussion)

Response & Application Options (20-30 minutes)

Learning God's Word (Spend Time, Memorize)

Something to Do (Journals, Questions, Prayer)

(Total Time: 60-90 minutes)

Materials Needed

BASIC SUPPLIES:

(best for settings with non-readers and limited supplies)

- Lesson Outline for Lesson 3
- A copy of *Your New Life with Jesus* Lesson 3 student booklet for leader reference
- Bible for leader
- An erasable board and writing supplies OR paper and pen/pencil
- Table Setting/M meal

ADDITIONAL

OPTIONS:

(for settings with students who can read/write and where supplies are more readily available)

- A copy of *Your New Life with Jesus* Lesson 3 student booklet for each student
- A Bible or New Testament/Psalms for each student (easy-to-read for children)
- Blank paper or tablets for journals for each student
- Pens or pencils for each student

Welcome, Introduction & Review (10-20 minutes)

Welcome (Welcome, Review, Introduction to Lesson)

Materials: *Your New Life with Jesus* student booklet, Lesson 3 (optional)
 Pens or pencils for each (optional)
 Table setting with a simple meal to eat, covered (hidden)

FRIENDSHIP & CONVERSATION

- Warmly welcome students. Tell them you are glad they have come. Help them to feel at ease. Introduce children to each other if they have not met.
- Ask children about their week. ***Have you talked with Jesus during the past week? What have you experienced with prayer so far? What happened?*** Discuss and share some of your own experiences. ***Did anyone draw a mark some days during the week when they spent quiet time with God? Did you notice that he was close to you wherever you went?***
- Did students write or draw in their journals? Talk about what they have been thinking. If possible, share an example of God working in your own life.
- Do students have other questions about life with Jesus? Talk about simple questions. Write others down and plan to discuss them later.

?? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Have a table set up in front with food on plates ready to eat. Cover it at first so no one sees what is there.
- ***What did you eat for dinner this past week? What is your favorite meal?*** Enjoy listening to students' answers.
- Pull off tablecloth covering. Show students a favorite meal of yours.
- ***Why do people eat?*** They might be hungry. They might eat because there is a party or celebration. The most important reason we eat is to nourish our bodies. For children, this is especially important. We eat so our bodies will grow strong.
- Last lesson we talked about growing both physically and spiritually. ***What did we learn will help us grow?*** Prayer (talking with God).
- ***What other kind of "food" will help us grow spiritually?*** God's Word. We will learn about the Bible, God's Word, today and how it helps us grow in our friendship with Jesus.

PRAYER

- Open with a simple prayer. Ask God to give your students understanding about their friendship with Jesus and the importance of God's Word in growing their relationship with him.

BOOKLET OPTION

- If booklets are available, invite children to draw their favorite meal. Discuss these together briefly.
- All lessons are designed to be presented with or without student booklets.
- Teachers may find it helpful to have a copy of the booklet as a reference while leading through the discussion, even if students do not have booklets.
- If using booklets, continue to refer to lesson plans for additional notes, comments, scriptures and questions for students to consider.

Scripture, Background & Discussion (20-30 minutes)

God's Word Helps Us Grow (Scripture & Discussion)

Materials: Bible for teacher (and for every reading student, if available)

FRIENDSHIP & CONVERSATION

- Remind students that people grow in their relationship with Jesus by consuming God's Word. No, this does not mean we "eat" the Bible. But it does mean spending time reading God's Word and obeying it. Then we grow to bring praise and glory to God (to make him "famous").

BIBLE LOOK-UP

- What does the Bible say about itself? A lot.
 - Matthew 4:4** – Jesus said that we need more than bread (food) to live. We need the truth from God, too.
 - 1 Peter 2:2** – Peter, one of the first followers of Jesus, told people to want God's Word in the same way that a baby wants milk.
 - Joshua 1:8** – In ancient times, Moses told Joshua (both famous leaders of Israel) to never stop reading – and obeying – God's Word, because this obedience would give him great success.
 - Psalms 119:105** – King David wrote that God's Word is like a lamp for our feet during the dark. *How important is it to have a light when it is very dark?* Very important. God's Word helps us like a lamp or a flashlight in the dark.
- What truth about God's Word seems most special to you right now?**



BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 3-2.

What Is the Bible? (Scripture & Discussion)

Materials: Bible for teacher (and for every reading student, if available)

FRIENDSHIP & CONVERSATION

- The Bible is like God's letter to us:
 - Imagine that a friend wrote a special letter to you.
 - In the letter your friend tells how much he loves you.
 - He shares many things that can help you through any situation.
 - The letter contains guidelines that will help you avoid many heartaches and troubles.
 - This letter also helps you get to know the heart of your friend.
- This friend is God, and the letter is the Bible. It seems like a big, long letter, doesn't it? But it is filled with a lifetime of messages from God for us. It helps us learn all about Jesus and our life with him.



BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 3-3.

BIBLE LOOK-UP

- How did we get the Bible?**
 - The Bible was written by dozens of different authors.
 - It was written over thousands of years.
 - It was written by men who were willing, able and chosen to write God's words. They did not make up these words themselves. (**Read 2 Peter 1:20-21**) Some Bible words are called prophecies.
- The original words of the Bible have been translated into hundreds of languages. It is read by people all over the world. Those who follow Jesus don't just read it, they do what it says. It helps them learn about Jesus and grow to be more like him.

How Does It Help Us Grow? (Scripture & Discussion)

Materials: Bible for teacher (and for every reading student, if available)

**BIBLE LOOK-UP**

- God's Word helps us to grow. **But how? In what ways will it help us grow?** Read these verses to discover some of the answers. (Look for any words referring to God's Word: "the law of the Lord," "my words," "scripture," etc.)
 - **John 15:7** – If we have the words of Jesus inside us and stay close to him and obey him, we can ask for anything and receive it.
 - **Psalms 19:7** – The law of the Lord gives us new strength; it makes simple people wise (including kids!).
 - **2 Timothy 3:16** – It teaches us what is true, helps us correct our mistakes, makes our lives whole again and trains us to do what is right.

**BOOKLET OPTION**

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 3-4.

?? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- **How can God's Word help you grow?**
- Read these scripture verses again. List all the possible ways in which God's Word helps a person grow to be more like Jesus.

How Do I Use the Bible? (Activity)

Materials: Bible for teacher (or for every reading student, if available)

**BIBLE LOOK-UP**

- The Bible is a big book. Even so, kids can learn to use it. If students have Bibles, quickly take time for some practice with the Bible. One at a time, look for the following items. Do this as a class with one Bible, work in pairs or small groups, or allow each child to do this with his or her own Bible.
 - ❑ **Find the Table of Contents**
Notice that the Bible is made up of 66 books. It was written by different men. The Bible is made up of the Old and New Testaments (Testament means "Promise").
 - ❑ **Find page 150**
People do not usually find verses in the Bible with page numbers. A verse "address" has a book name (John), a chapter number (3) and a verse number (16).
 - ❑ **Find John 3:16**
This verse is found in a book written by John, one of Jesus' closest disciples. **Are the words in red in your Bible?** Some Bibles have highlighted Jesus' words in red. His words are extra important.
 - ❑ **Find Genesis 1:1**
The very beginning of the Bible teaches us that God made the heavens and the earth.
 - ❑ **Find Matthew 1:1**
This is the first verse of the New Testament. The New Testament is all about the life and work of Jesus and his early followers.
- We do not grow by knowing all about the pages and verses of the Bible. We grow by learning about Jesus, learning lessons from God's Word, and then putting these things into practice in our lives.

**BOOKLET OPTION**

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 3-5.

Bible Story & Discussion (10-20 minutes)

A Bible Story (The House on the Rock: Matthew 7:24-29)

Materials: Bible for teacher (or for every reading student, if available)



BIBLE READING

- Read the story from the Bible. Then discuss the story and questions together.
- As you read and discuss the story, children will also begin to notice how to find a passage of scripture, read it (without reading the numbers), think about it, and consider lessons from it for their lives.
- Avoid making this lesson all about legalism for children. The Sermon on the Mount (just prior to this passage) was all about a new Kingdom, one where righteousness came from the heart, not just from outward behavior (like the Pharisees had). Encourage your children to grow in their love for Jesus as they learn about the importance of his Word.



BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 3-6.

1. Jesus taught people many lessons.

- He taught them about a new Kingdom, ruled by God. The rules of this Kingdom are different from the rules of other kingdoms. What are some of the important teachings in this Kingdom?
Read Matthew 5:44 - Love your enemies.
Read Matthew 6:2-4 - Give in secret, from the heart.
Read Matthew 7:12 - Treat others as well as you treat yourself.
- After this very long session of teaching, Jesus taught his disciples the importance of not just hearing his words, but obeying them.

2. Jesus ended with the story of two men.

- One man built his house on a rock. He built it on a good foundation.
- When the storms came, his house stood firm. It did not fall. It did not break.
- Another man built his house on the sand. He did not build it on a good foundation.
- When the storms came, his house fell. It was a mess.

3. Jesus taught the meaning of the stories.

- **What was the difference between these two men's houses?** One built on a solid foundation; the other did not.
- **Read Matthew 7:24.** Jesus told people that obedience to his words would give their lives a strong foundation, like the man who built his house on a rock.

4. So which words did Jesus say that we should obey?

- There were many words. We can read about them in the New Testament.
- Many of Jesus' words were about loving God and loving people.
- They were about prayer and kindness. (*Read John 13:34.*)

5. God's Word is true.

- It is important. It is to be obeyed.
- **What difference can obeying God's Word make in your life?**

Response & Application Activities (20-30 minutes)

Learning God's Word (Reading, Thinking, Memorizing)

Materials: Bible for teacher (or each reading student, if available)

?? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- **If we do not have Bibles, how can we learn God's Word?** We can find someone who can read to us, or a class of children where a teacher will teach about God's Word. We can spend time reading and thinking about stories and verses in *Your New Life with Jesus* booklets.
- **SPEND SOME TIME IN GOD'S WORD: Do you have a Bible?** If so, it is time to get started learning from God's Word. Start with a small book, like Mark, in the New Testament. It is all about Jesus. Start simply, like this:
 1. **WHAT DOES IT SAY?** Read a few verses at a time. Think about what you read. Write down what you learn, if you can. Look for a promise in the verse. Thank God for the promise.
 2. **WHAT IS GOD TEACHING ME?**
Spend time being quiet before God and allow him to speak to your heart about what you read.
How will you know what God wants you to learn? Read John 14:26. The Holy Spirit will teach you. It is God's promise. Write down what God could be teaching you.
 3. **HOW CAN I OBEY?** Think of one way you might obey or respond to this lesson in the coming day.
 4. **TALK WITH JESUS.** Pray your response back to him. Tell him questions you still have. Thank him for teaching you.
- **MEMORIZE:** Or, choose ONE Bible verse to memorize. This hides God's Word deep in your heart. Go back to Lesson 2 (page 2-2) to look at some great ideas. In pairs, students choose one verse from this page to memorize and think about on their own. (Write this verse out on slips of papers or cards, if children do not have Bibles for reference.)



BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 3-7.

Something to Do: Start a Journal

Materials: Blank notebook or tablet of paper (optional);
Pens or pencils



WRITING/RESPONSE

- Invite children to work in their notebooks or journals, if they have them. Add an entry like this every time they read God's Word. Fill in the blanks with answers. Some may rather just think about these questions, without writing anything down.

Date:	_____
Scripture:	_____
What does it say?	_____
One thing God could be teaching me through this verse is	_____
In the coming day, one way I could obey this is	_____
Dear God, help me to	_____



PRAYER

- Remind children they can talk to God anytime, anywhere, about anything.
- **Is there something we can pray about together?** Pray for each other to grow strong in love for Jesus.



FRIENDSHIP & CLOSING

- As children prepare to leave, remind them that God's Word can help them with any question they have. **Read Psalm 119:105.** God's Spirit living in them is also a teacher and helper when they have questions. **John 14:26.**



BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 3-8.

LESSON 4:

Growing with God's Family

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

- To guide new believers to learn more about God's family and their part in it:
 - God's family can be found throughout the world.
 - God's family members care for and help each other.
 - God's family has a job and purpose in the world.
- To offer continued assurance of salvation and reinforcement of their understanding of this new life with Jesus in God's family.
- To discuss some practical ways to begin to find and connect with people in God's family.

KEY VERSES:

JOHN 13:34-35 NIV – "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

HEBREWS 10:25 NIV – "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another."

INTRODUCTION FOR LEADERS

We belong. We are not alone. This is the great news of today's lesson. As you review scriptures about God's family, you get to encourage children in their understanding of the Church (God's family) as a great place to grow in love together.

Lesson Overview

Welcome, Introduction & Review (10-20 minutes)

Welcome (Review, Families Discussion)

Prayer

Scripture, Background & Discussion (20-30 minutes)

God's Family Is Big (Scripture & Discussion)

You Are Not Alone (Scripture & Discussion)

What Does God's Family Do? (Scripture & Discussion)

Many Parts, One Job (Brick Activity)

Bible Story & Discussion (10-20 minutes)

A Bible Story (Believers Pray for Peter, Discussion)

Response & Application Options (20-30 minutes)

Loving One Another (Scripture Activity)

Something to Do (Journals, Questions, Prayer)

(Total Time: 60-90 minutes)

Materials Needed

BASIC SUPPLIES:

(best for settings with non-readers and limited supplies)

- Lesson Outline for Lesson 4
- A copy of *Your New Life with Jesus* Lesson 4 student booklet for leader reference
- Bible for leader
- An erasable board and writing supplies OR paper and pen/pencil
- Family photo
- Globe or world map (Optional)

ADDITIONAL

OPTIONS:

(for settings with students who can read/write and where supplies are more readily available)

- A copy of *Your New Life with Jesus* Lesson 4 student booklet for each student
- A Bible or New Testament/Psalms for each student (easy-to-read for children)
- Blank paper or tablets for journals for each student
- Pens or pencils for each student

Welcome, Introduction & Review (10-20 minutes)

Welcome (Welcome, Review, Introduction to Lesson)

Materials: *Your New Life with Jesus* student booklet, Lesson 4 (optional)
Pens or pencils for each (optional)
A picture of your own family (optional)

FRIENDSHIP & CONVERSATION

- Warmly welcome students. Tell them you are glad they have come. Help them to feel at ease. Introduce children to each other if they have not met.
- Ask children about their week. ***Have you spent time learning God's Word this week?*** Discuss and share a lesson you (the teacher) might have learned. ***Did anyone learn an important lesson to obey?***
- Did students write or draw in their journals? Talk about what they have been thinking. If possible, share an example of God working in your own life.
- Do students have questions about Jesus, prayer or God's Word? Talk about simple questions. Write others down and plan to discuss them later.

?? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ***What is your family like?*** Enjoy listening to students' answers and getting acquainted with their families and regular family life.
- Remind students that since they believed in Jesus Christ to be their Savior, they have also become part of a new forever family: God's family.
- In this lesson, we will learn about how important this family is for helping us grow, and for helping the world to know Jesus.

PRAYER

- Open with a simple prayer. Ask God to give your students understanding about their friendship with Jesus and the importance of God's family in growing their relationship with him.

BOOKLET OPTION

- If booklets are available, invite children to draw pictures of their families. Discuss families together. Enjoy learning about their lives.
- All lessons are designed to be presented with or without student booklets.
- Teachers may find it helpful to have a copy of the booklet as a reference while leading children through the discussion, even if students do not have booklets.
- If using booklets, continue to refer to lesson plans for additional notes, comments, scriptures and questions for students to consider.

Scripture, Background & Discussion (20-30 minutes)

God's Family Is Big (Scripture & Discussion)

Materials: Bible for leader (and for every reading student, if available)
Globe or world map (optional)



BIBLE LOOK-UP

- **How do we know we are in God's family?** God's Word tells us that this is what happens when we believe in Jesus.
- **Read John 1:12.** When we believe in Jesus, we become children of God, along with all others who believe in Jesus.



FRIENDSHIP & CONVERSATION

- **How many other people believe in Jesus around the world?** A lot! About one-third of all the people who live on earth say they are part of this family. This means they believe in Jesus as their Savior.
- If a globe or world map is available, show it to children. Together, find the location in which you live. Notice all the other nations on the earth. Most of them have at least a few people who know and love Jesus. (If a globe or map is not available, simply think of the names of different nations.)
- Teach children that even though many people believe in Jesus, many more do NOT know about Jesus yet (about two-thirds of the world). Invite children to hold up all fingers of both hands. Fold down three fingers. This is about how many people believe in Jesus. The rest (still standing) are the ones who DO NOT know Jesus. **Which group has more people?** Those who do not believe.
- **What does God want his family to do about all these people who do not know him?** Tell them! We will talk about it more together.



BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 4-2.

You Are Not Alone (Scripture & Discussion)

Materials: Bible for leader (and for every reading student, if available)



BIBLE LOOK-UP

- With all these people who believe in Jesus, we know that we are not alone. There are many other words used to describe God's family. All of them help us realize that we are not alone.
- Look up these scriptures. Ask children to tell you which words in each verse help us to know we are not alone.
 - Romans 12:4-5** – God's family is like a body; there are many parts; we belong to each other.
 - 1 Peter 2:5 and Ephesians 2:22** – God's family is also like a building of "living stones" (not real bricks – just imaginary). We are being built together as a place where God lives.



BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 4-3.



FRIENDSHIP & CONVERSATION

- There are many other words used to describe God's family. All of the descriptions help us to know that God's family is a group of people who grow in...
 - ... love for God.
 - ... love for each other.
 - ... love for others around us (near and far).
- **In what ways will it help you to know you are not alone? How can this help you grow in your life with Jesus?**

What Does God's Family Do? (Scripture & Discussion)

Materials: Bible for leader (and for every reading student, if available)

**BIBLE LOOK-UP**

- God's Word helps us to understand even more about what God's family does together (both near and far):
 - **Hebrews 10:25 – They meet together.** Often believers meet in churches. Some churches are fancy. Some churches are in people's homes or other meeting places. Some churches are small. Some churches are big. The most important thing is that people who love Jesus gather together to encourage each other.
 - **Acts 2:42 – They learn together.** Believers study God's Word. They share with each other, they share meals with each other, and they pray together.
 - **Ephesians 5:19 – They worship God together.** They read psalms together (poems of worship from God's Word). They sing songs that worship Jesus.
 - **John 13:35 – They love each other.** As non-believers watch God's family love each other, they will notice the difference. They will see that Jesus' love is in his people.
 - **Matthew 5:16 – They shine Jesus to the world.** Whether alone or together, people in God's family are the only ones who have the job of shining the love and truth about Jesus to the world.

**BOOKLET OPTION**

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 4-4.

?? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- *What will you enjoy most about God's family?*
- *How will you find and meet with people in God's family? Is there a children's meeting or a church or a Sunday school nearby? Can you attend? What other help will you need to meet with God's family?*

Many Parts, One Job (Brick Activity)

Materials: Bible for leader (or for every reading student, if available)

Erasable board or large paper and writing utensils

**FRIENDSHIP & CONVERSATION**

- When we trust in Christ, we become part of the Church. (This is not a building in our neighborhood; it is another name for God's big family.) We are not following Jesus all on our own. We are part of a family that is MUCH BIGGER than ourselves or any local group we might meet with.

**BOOKLET OPTION**

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 4-5.

**WRITING/RESPONSE**

- On the erasable board or paper, draw a simple building with many bricks.
- Teach that people who are up in heaven, like the Apostle Paul, are part of the Church. Invite a student to write Paul's name in a brick. One by one, add the names of some other New Testament Christians.
- Finally, invite students to write their own names in the bricks.
- Leave some blank. Why? Because there are many who have yet to trust in Jesus as their Savior all around the world. The building (God's family) is not complete yet. There is room for millions more.

**BIBLE LOOK-UP**

- **Who will tell them about him?** Read what Jesus had to say to his followers about this. **Read Mark 16:15.** Jesus tells his followers to go into all the world and preach the good news to ... whom? To everyone.
- Can you think of a person you know who does not know Jesus yet? Remember these names to pray for them later.

Bible Story & Discussion (10-20 minutes)

A Bible Story (Believers pray for Peter; Acts 12:5-16)

Materials: Bible for leader (or for every reading student, if available)



BIBLE READING

- Read the story aloud from the Bible (an easy-to-understand version, if possible). Then discuss the story and questions together.
- As you read and discuss the story, children will also begin to notice how you find a passage of scripture, read it (without reading the numbers), think about it, and consider lessons from it for our lives.
- Especially notice the things God's people did together: met together, prayed together, and loved each other. Peter's troubles all happened because he was preaching the gospel in Jerusalem.



BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 4-6.

1. The Church was brand new.

- Jesus had taught his disciples for several years. He died, rose again, and returned to heaven to rule with God.
- He left his twelve disciples in charge. Peter was one of these disciples.
- The disciples preached about Jesus wherever they could. They prayed for people who were sick, and God healed them. They worked together with other believers. It was an amazing time of love and growth in God's family.

2. Many people did not like Jesus or his followers.

- The leaders in Jerusalem did not like what Peter and others preached about Jesus. They treated Jesus' followers as enemies.
- They did many things to try to stop God's people. They hurt many. They even killed some.
- Peter was arrested and put in prison. He was expecting to die.

3. The Church (believers) prayed.

- They gathered together at Mary's home and prayed.
- They prayed hard.
- They had great love for Peter and wanted him to be released.

4. God answered their prayer with a miracle.

- An angel came to Peter in the night. Peter thought he was having a dream.
- The angel told Peter to get dressed. He led him past the guards, through the Iron Gate to the city and out onto the street.

5. Peter finds the believers.

- He knocked on the door. Rhoda, a servant, answered the door.
- She recognized Peter. She was so excited, she forgot to let him in. She ran to tell the others.
- Finally, they let Peter in. They were amazed.
 - ***What did God do as the believers prayed?***
 - ***In what ways did the believers help each other?***
 - ***What else do you learn about God's family?***

Response & Application Activities (20-30 minutes)

Loving One Another (Scripture Activity)

Materials: Bible for teacher (or each reading student, if available)
Erased board or large paper and something to write with

?? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- One of the main jobs God gives to people in his family is to love one another. This is a big job. It is also wonderful.
- Together, read the Bible verses below. After reading each, find the words that tell how God wants his people to treat each other. If an erasable board or paper is available, list these words as you find them.
 - Galatians 5:13** – Serve one another in love.
 - Ephesians 4:32** – Be kind and tender to one another; forgive each other.
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:11** – Encourage each other; build each other up.
 - 1 Peter 1:22** – Love each other deeply, from the heart.
 - James 5:16** – Admit to one another that you have sinned; pray for one another.
 - Romans 12:10** – Be devoted to one another; honor others more than yourselves.
- **What will you enjoy most about God's family?**
- **Where can you meet together with other people from God's family?**



BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 4-7.

Something to Do: (Journal, Questions, Prayer)

Materials: Blank notebook or tablet of paper for each (optional)
Pens or pencils



WRITING/RESPONSE

- Invite children to work in their notebooks or journals, if they have them. If possible, encourage them to visit a church or children's meeting with other people who follow Jesus. Ask them to write down what they saw and learned there.
- Invite children to write other questions. Consider any questions they may be asking this week. Help them find answers.



BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 4-8.



PRAYER

- Remind children they can talk to God anytime, anywhere, about anything.
- **Is there something we can pray about together?** Pray for students to find a place to meet with God's family so they can grow in love for each other, for God, and for the world.
- **Do you know someone who does not know Jesus?** Pray together for these people to come to know him as their Savior – to be added to God's family.



FRIENDSHIP & CLOSING

- As children prepare to leave, remind them about important words Jesus told his disciples about their friendships with one another. **Read John 13:34-35.** God's family is known by its love for each other. Enjoy giving love to others. Enjoy receiving it, too.

LESSON 5:

Jesus' Plans and You

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

- To guide new believers to learn about God's good plans and purposes for their lives:
 - God created them unique and special.
 - God gives unique gifts and abilities to everyone.
 - God's plans are carried out as his people use their gifts to serve him.
- To offer continued assurance of salvation and reinforcement of their understanding of this new life with Jesus.
- To invite each child to begin to consider God's unique plans and purposes for his or her life.

KEY VERSES:

JEREMIAH 29:11 NIV – “For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the LORD, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

1 PETER 4:10 NIV – “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.”

INTRODUCTION FOR LEADERS

What am I here for? What is my purpose in life? Though children may be new to their life with Christ, this question is likely not new to their hearts. Every person, even while very young, wonders about these big questions. Today, you have the privilege of leading kids to discover that in receiving Christ they have not only received salvation and forgiveness, but they have received a whole new life filled with purpose and meaning. Their adventure in following Jesus is just beginning.

Lesson Overview

Welcome, Introduction & Review (10-20 minutes)

Welcome (Welcome, Review, Gift Discussion)

Prayer

Scripture, Background & Discussion (20-30 minutes)

Who Made You? (Scripture & Discussion)

God Created You with Gifts (Scripture & Discussion)

What Are God's Gifts? (Scripture & Discussion)

Why Does God Give Gifts? (Scripture & Discussion)

Bible Story & Discussion (10-20 minutes)

A Bible Story (Peter's Life Story, Discussion)

Response & Application Options (20-30 minutes)

What About You? (Thinking, Drawing Activity)

Something to Do (Journals, Questions, Prayer)

(Total Time: 60-90 minutes)

Materials Needed

BASIC SUPPLIES:

(best for settings with non-readers and limited supplies)

- Lesson Outline for Lesson 5
- A copy of *Your New Life with Jesus* Lesson 5 student booklet for leader reference
- Bible for leader
- An erasable board and writing supplies OR paper and pen/pencil
- A wrapped gift
- A mirror (Optional)

ADDITIONAL OPTIONS:

(for settings with students who can read/write and where supplies are more readily available)

- A copy of *Your New Life with Jesus* Lesson 5 student booklet for each student
- A Bible or New Testament/Psalms for each student (easy-to-read for children)
- Blank paper or tablets for journals for each student
- Pens or pencils for each student

Welcome, Introduction & Review (10-20 minutes)

Welcome (Welcome, Review, Introduction to Lesson)

Materials: *Your New Life with Jesus* student booklet, Lesson 5 (optional)
Pens or pencils for each (optional)
A wrapped gift

FRIENDSHIP & CONVERSATION

- Warmly welcome students. Tell them you are glad they have come. Help them to feel at ease. Introduce children to each other if they have not met.
- ***So how was your week? Did you spend any time reading God's Word? What about memorizing a verse? What was God teaching you?***
- As a leader, also share your own experiences of God's work in your life (without being too complex, just giving simple examples). Also, don't be afraid of quiet. Sometimes, children need time to think.
- Did students write or draw in their journals? Talk about what they have been thinking. If possible, share an example from your own life.
- Do students have questions about God's family or another aspect of following Jesus? Talk about simple questions. Write others down and plan to discuss them later.

?? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Show the wrapped gift. It is so much fun to receive a gift and also to give gifts. When we see a wrapped gift like this, we wonder about it. We wonder who it is for, what is in it, when is it going to be opened. In some places presents/gifts are unwrapped right away and in other places, presents are taken home to be unwrapped privately.
- ***Have you ever received a gift you really enjoyed?*** Enjoy listening to students tell about gifts they have received.
- Tell students that today's lesson is going to be about gifts that God gives to people. They are invisible gifts, found deep inside us. They are part of his plans and purposes for us. ***Are you curious to learn more?***

PRAYER

- Open with a simple prayer. Ask God to give your students understanding about how special God created them, and about God's good plans for their lives.

BOOKLET OPTION

- If booklets are available, invite children to draw pictures of a favorite gift they have received. Discuss these together. Enjoy learning about their interests.
- All lessons are designed to be presented with or without student booklets.
- Leaders may find it helpful to have a copy of the booklet as a reference while leading children through the discussion, even if students do not have booklets.
- If using booklets, continue to refer to lesson plans for additional notes, comments, scriptures and questions for students to consider.

Scripture, Background & Discussion (20-30 minutes)

Who Made You? (Scripture & Discussion)

Materials: Bible for leader (and for every reading student, if available)
A mirror

☺ FRIENDSHIP & CONVERSATION

- **Do you remember looking in the mirror in Lesson 2?** (Allow students to look again, if a mirror is available). When we look in a mirror, we see something else very special. We see a person who God has created. Some of this creation we can see: eyes, hair, skin, smiles, etc. But many things God created in us we cannot see. Even so, we have had them inside us from the moment God created us. They are just as real, and God put them inside us on purpose.



BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 5-2.



BIBLE LOOK-UP

- **Read Psalm 139:13-16 aloud.** Discuss it together.
Who is the "you" talked about in these verses? The Lord God.
What did he do? He made us. He designed us. The way we are is exactly how God wanted us to be. There is no other person quite like each of one of us.
We also learn that God has planned and numbered our days. He knows what he created us to do.
- **Read Jeremiah 29:11.** God has good plans for us.
- **Do we have to do what God has planned?** No. He always gives us the choice to follow him or not. Many people run from God's plans. But it seems we would WANT to follow his plans, because God's plans are always THE BEST.

God Created You with Gifts (Scripture & Discussion)

Materials: Bible for leader (and for every reading student, if available)



BIBLE LOOK-UP

- Before you were born, God designed you with certain abilities and talents. He did this on purpose.
- **Read Ephesians 2:10.** **Do you wonder what God created you to do?** We might not know all the answers yet. But we might know part of the answer.



BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 5-3.

☺ FRIENDSHIP & CONVERSATION

- **What is it that you love to do? What are you really good at?**
- **Do any of these describe you?** Athlete, artist, quick learner, shy and tenderhearted, quiet thinker, friendly, very kind, strong, great memory, musical, mathematical, etc.
What else can you think of to describe your talents and abilities?
- These are all abilities that God has created in us. Before we became believers, these abilities were there. But now we realize that these talents and abilities are not just for ourselves. God has given us some of these gifts or abilities to use for his purposes. **How will he use your special talents and abilities to serve him?** It will be an adventure to find out the answers.

What Are God's Gifts? (Scripture & Discussion)

Materials: Bible for leader (and for every reading student, if available)
Erasable board or large paper and writing utensils

**BIBLE LOOK-UP**

- There are several places where we find lists of spiritual gifts that God gives to people. These are different from the other talents and abilities we might have. We will read about them in two places in the Bible:
 - **Read Ephesians 4:11**
 - **Read Romans 12:5-8**
- On board or paper, make a list of some spiritual gifts God gives to his people:
 - Apostles** – people with great leadership and vision for a lot of people
 - Prophets** – people who hear from God and then tell others his words
 - Evangelists** – people who love to tell others about Jesus and help them come to know him
 - Pastors** – leaders who love to care for people and help them grow in Christ
 - Teachers** – people who love to teach others about the Bible and Jesus
 - Service** – people who love to serve and care about others
 - Encouragement** – people who love to encourage others in their lives with Jesus
 - Giving** – people who love to be generous with people in need
 - Mercy** – people who love to care for others, especially the hurting

**BOOKLET OPTION**

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 5-4.

?? DISCUSSION & QUESTIONS:

- These gifts might seem very grown up. But God gives gifts to children, too. **What spiritual gifts has God given to you?** It may take some time to discover, but we know God will show us as we seek him. Some will be great prayer warriors, some will be administrators and organizers, some will be generous, others will take great risks for God, others will be able to love difficult people, etc.
- **What will God do through you?** It will be an adventure to learn the answer.

Why Does God Give Gifts? (Scripture & Discussion)

Materials: Bible for leader (or for every reading student, if available)

**BIBLE LOOK-UP**

- Some gifts may look more important than others, but in God's sight, each person's gift is necessary for his purposes. **So, why does God give these gifts?** Read these scriptures to find some answers:
 - **To bring honor to God:** 1 Peter 4:11
 - **To build each other up:** Ephesians 4:12
 - **To serve others:** 1 Peter 4:10
 - **To fulfill God's plan for the world:** Acts 1:8
- **What is our job?** Though our gift might look different from someone else's, all the gifts work together to accomplish these things and more. The biggest job is to help people who do not know Jesus around the world to come to know him.
- **Does this sound frightening?** It isn't. Jesus promises to be with us always. **Read Matthew 28:19-20.**

**BOOKLET OPTION**

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 5-5.

Bible Story & Discussion (10-20 minutes)

Bible Story (Peter's Life Story; various New Testament selections)

Materials: Bible for leader (or for every reading student, if available)



BIBLE READING

- Read the various scriptures from different places in the New Testament to tell the story of Peter. If possible, read from an easy-to-understand version. Then discuss the story and questions together.
- As you read and discuss the story, you will need to give children a brief explanation of what comes before and after the verses you are reading so they understand the many different stories that made up Peter's life story.



BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 5-6.

1. Peter follows Jesus. (Mark 1:16-18)

- Peter worked as a fisherman with his family.
- One day, Jesus walked by and said, "Come. Follow me."
- Surprisingly, Peter left his nets and everything and followed after Jesus.
- **Would you be willing to walk away from a job like this? What did it show about Peter's heart?** He was courageous. He knew Jesus was worth following.

2. Peter walks on water to Jesus. (Matthew 14:28-31)

- Later, as the disciples worked with Jesus, they were out on a boat, crossing a lake. Jesus was not with them.
- Then they saw him walking toward them on the water! Peter got out of the boat to walk to Jesus. Then he began to sink. Jesus rescued him.
- **Have you ever walked on water? What did this story show about Peter?** He was courageous. He had trust in Jesus. He also had small faith, because he doubted Jesus.

3. Jesus sees something special in Peter. (Matthew 16:16-18)

- One day Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?"
- Peter boldly answered that Jesus was Christ, the Son of God.
- Jesus blessed Peter for saying this. He predicted words about Peter and the Church (God's people) that would come true in the future. **What does this teach us about Peter?** He knew the truth about Jesus. God had special plans for him.

4. Peter denies he knows Jesus. (John 18:25)

- Jesus had been arrested and taken away to be killed on a cross.
- Peter was following behind, looking to see where they took Jesus and to see what they did.
- In one place, people asked Peter if he was a follower of Jesus, a disciple. He said "No." Three times he denied knowing Christ.
- **What does this show us about Peter?** He loved Jesus. But he was sometimes weak and afraid when he should have been strong.

5. Peter preaches with power. (Acts 2:38-41)

- After Jesus returned to heaven, God worked powerfully through Peter.
- In one day, Peter preached and 3,000 people became believers in Christ. He used Bible verses. He spoke with strength.

?? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ◆ Peter also wrote part of the Bible, prayed for a dead person to come to life and more.
- ◆ **Did Peter always get everything right the first time? Did God still use him? Why do you think so?**

Response & Application Activities (20-30 minutes)

What about You? (Thinking, Drawing Activity)

Materials: Bible for leader (or each reading student, if available)
 Paper and pen or pencils for each student (optional)
 The wrapped gift



WRITING/RESPONSE

- Show the gift. At some point we will all know more about the gift or gifts God has given us to use to serve him.
- Think about these questions:
 - What things do I like doing?**
 - How could God use those talents and abilities?**
 - What would I like to do for God?**
- If paper is available, give each student a piece. Invite them to draw a picture of themselves doing some of the things they do well. Ask them to draw themselves using these talents and abilities to serve Jesus somehow.
- During quiet moments with Jesus, invite students to ask Jesus to show them what he wants them to do. They might be surprised as he speaks to them in their hearts.



BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 5-7.



BIBLE LOOK-UP

- Together, read **Romans 8:28**.
- He has wonderful plans for us, even if there are times we do not know how he is working.

Something to Do: (Journal, Questions, Prayer)

Materials: Blank booklet or tablet of paper (optional)
 Pens or pencils



WRITING/RESPONSE

- As children begin to discover God's plan for their lives, invite them to write thoughts in their journals.
- Invite children to write down other questions. Consider any questions they may be asking this week. Help them find answers.



PRAYER

- Remind children they can talk to God anytime, anywhere, about anything.
- **Is there something we can pray about together?** Pray Jeremiah 29:11 over each student, praying that God will show them his plans and his purposes for their lives. Pray that they grow strong in their love for Jesus, always.



BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 5-8.



FRIENDSHIP & CLOSING

- As children prepare to leave, read **Jeremiah 29:11** one last time. Remind them about how special they are to God. Remind them that God has good and wonderful plans for them as they trust and follow him.

LESSON 6:

Becoming Like Jesus

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

- To invite new believers to commit their whole lives to becoming more like Jesus, bringing him honor and praise.
To consider the many gifts and blessings we have received.
 - To consider our gift back to God: our whole lives.
 - To consider ways kids can become like Jesus.
- To offer continued assurance of salvation and reinforcement of their understanding of this new life with Jesus.
- To invite each child to commit to a life of becoming like Christ, even when it is not easy.

KEY VERSES:

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-7 NIV – “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus ... taking the very nature of a servant.”

PHILIPPIANS 1:6 NIV – “Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

INTRODUCTION FOR LEADERS

While life with Jesus is all about a relationship and receiving undeserved grace and forgiveness for our sins, eventually we all realize that there are changes in behavior. This last lesson is designed to help children put this behavior in perspective. Our good behavior does not earn our salvation. It is not our requirement for knowing Christ or following him. Instead, out of hearts of love and devotion to Jesus, we WANT to become like him, honoring him in every way possible by the way we live our lives. Emphasize this incredible relationship of love as the motivation for all that believers do – even during difficult times. Encourage your students to follow after Jesus – always!

Lesson Overview

Welcome, Introduction & Review (10-20 minutes)

Welcome (review, changes discussion)

Prayer

Scripture, Background & Discussion (20-30 minutes)

God's Invisible Gifts (Gift Activity)

Our Gift to God (Scripture & Discussion)

Honoring God (Scripture & Discussion)

How To Become Like Jesus (Scripture)

Bible Story & Discussion (10-20 minutes)

A Bible Story (Jesus Washes Disciples' Feet)

Response & Application Options (20-30 minutes)

Will This Always Be Easy? (Scripture, Discussion)

Something to Do (Journals, Questions, Prayer)

(Total Time: 60-90 minutes)

Materials Needed

BASIC SUPPLIES:

(best for settings with non-readers and limited supplies)

- Lesson Outline for Lesson 6
- A copy of *Your New Life with Jesus* Lesson 6 student booklet for leader reference
- Bible for leader
- An erasable board and writing supplies OR paper and pen/pencil
- A wrapped gift
- A mirror (Optional)

ADDITIONAL OPTIONS:

(for settings with students who can read/write and where supplies are more readily available)

- A copy of *Your New Life with Jesus* Lesson 6 student booklet for each student
- A Bible or New Testament/Psalms for each student (easy-to-read for children)
- Blank paper or tablets for journals for each student
- Pens or pencils for each student

Welcome, Introduction & Review (10-20 minutes)

Welcome (Welcome, Review, Introduction to Lesson)

Materials: *Your New Life with Jesus* student booklet, Lesson 6 (optional)
Pens or pencils for each (optional)

FRIENDSHIP & CONVERSATION

- Warmly welcome students. Tell them you are glad they have come. Help them to feel at ease. Introduce children to each other if they have not met.
- Remind students of the discussion about God's gifts and purpose from last lesson. ***As you thought about it, what did God show you?***
- If possible, briefly share a small part of your own story. Discuss how it took time to discover your gifts and find God's place for you to use them.
- If students are not sure, assure them this is no problem. There are plenty of wonderful things for ALL of us to do (love others, care, pray, etc.) while we are waiting to learn more about God's special purpose for us. He shows us these things in his time.
- Did students write or draw in their journals? Talk about what they have been thinking.
- Do students have questions about life with Jesus? Talk about simple questions. Write others down and plan to discuss these later.

?? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Ask students about changes in their lives. ***What has changed since they believed in Jesus? What has not changed?*** Share fun stories, not just serious stories, as you do this. Enjoy your students.
- In this lesson, we will talk even more about changes that take place in the lives of people who follow Jesus.
- In fact, changes are one of the few things that will always be the same for believers. Until we get to heaven we will always be growing and changing. Even old people who follow Jesus are still growing up. Why? There will always be more to do to become like Jesus, our perfect example.

PRAYER

- Open with a simple prayer. Ask God to give your students understanding about their lives becoming more like Jesus today.

BOOKLET OPTION

- If booklets are available, invite children to draw their answers to the questions, "What has changed?" and "What has NOT changed?" since following Jesus. Discuss these together. Enjoy learning about their lives.
- All lessons are designed to be presented with or without student booklets.
- Leaders may find it helpful to have a copy of the booklet as a reference while leading through the discussion, even if students do not have booklets.
- If using booklets, continue to refer to lesson plans for additional notes, comments, scriptures and questions for students to consider.

Scripture, Background & Discussion (20-30 minutes)

God's Invisible Gifts (Activity)

Materials: Bible for leader (and for every reading student, if available)
 Erasable board or large paper and writing utensils
 Drawings of several large gift boxes on board or paper

☺ FRIENDSHIP & CONVERSATION

- Show the drawing of the gift boxes to your students. (Draw one box separate from the others and do not write in it during this first section.)
- Remind students about spiritual gifts talked about last week. These gifts are special talents and abilities that God has given to his people. Remember some of these together (evangelist, teacher, pastor, giver, mercy, servant, administrator, etc.).

BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 5-2.

WRITING/RESPONSE

- There are many other gifts that God has given that are for EVERYONE. They are God's best gifts. They are invisible. Start by naming a few, then ask students to help you think of others.

Forgiveness of sin	Salvation	Eternal life
God's presence	Purpose for living	A new family
Prayer (access to God)	His love	His promise to help
Peaceful hearts	His Word	Holy Spirit with us
Kindness	Guidance	Friendship with God
Jesus' perfect example	Wisdom	Etc.
- Write some of these words in the blank gift boxes. Realize that we could never list all the gifts that God has given to us. He is so generous!

Our Gift To God (Scripture & Discussion)

Materials: Bible for leader (and for every reading student, if available)

BIBLE LOOK-UP

- **As we look at what God has done for us, what do we feel like doing in return?** Giving him a gift back – or even many gifts. **But what kind of gift would be big enough for God, who has given us so much?** Give some time for silence and consideration before moving on. Listen first.
- **Read/discuss Romans 12:1.** The best gift we give to God? Our lives.
In view of God's mercy – because of God's generous love,
Offer your bodies as living sacrifices – give your everyday lives, your obedience, your service to God.
This is your spiritual worship – this offering (gift) of our lives is even better than songs of worship to God; it brings honor to him.
- **Read/discuss Mark 12:30.** Another way to say this is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. **Does this leave any part of us out?** No. This means our WHOLE lives are given to loving him.
- Recognize the wholehearted commitment. Assure children that this takes place in their everyday lives. ("Living sacrifices" may frighten some.)

BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 6-3.

WRITING/RESPONSE

- Show the last blank gift. If students are willing, invite them to write their names inside this box, as an indicator that they want to give their whole lives as a gift to God. Tell children they may do it at any time during the class, or even later, on their own. It is THEIR choice.

Honoring God (Scripture & Discussion)

Materials: Bible for teacher (and for every reading student, if available)

**BIBLE LOOK-UP**

- The gift of ourselves is not something we give to earn our salvation or to make God love us more. We have already received salvation and love from God. The invisible gifts we just listed are still ours, no matter what.
- This gift from us is about our response to God's incredible love for us. It is something we do because we love God so very much.
What does it look like when we give this gift to God?
- **Read 1 Corinthians 10:31.** This verse tells us that we bring glory to God (make him famous) and honor him (show respect) with the way we eat or drink or whatever we do. Again, this takes place in our ordinary, everyday lives. We show our love for him as we do everything to bring honor and glory to him.

**BOOKLET OPTION**

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 6-4.

?? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ***What kind of actions, behaviors and attitudes do you think will bring God glory (make God famous)?***

kindness	love	serving others
not complaining	doing chores	giving to people in need
praying for others	sharing	helping hurting people
tell others about him	praising him	and more ...
- Discover that any actions children might list as bringing glory to God are attitudes and behaviors that are like Jesus himself, who brought ultimate glory to God. ***Is it always easy to do these things? Why or why not?***

How To Become Like Jesus (Scripture)

Materials: Bible for teacher (or for every reading student, if available)
Erased board or large paper and writing utensils

**BIBLE LOOK-UP**

- Jesus was the very best example of someone who always honored (respected) the Father. He even gave up his whole life as a gift for us when he died on the cross.
- ***Can kids really become like Jesus?*** Although we can never be perfect like he was, kids CAN copy his behavior and attitudes. ***How?***
- **Read Philippians 2:5-7. *What is the most important way to copy Jesus' behavior?*** Fill in the blank: He took on the very nature of a servant. Jesus could have acted like he was in charge of everything and everyone. Instead, he was humble. He behaved like a servant to others, rather than like someone who was in authority.
- ***What might kids do to behave like servants toward others?*** List several ideas on the erasable board.

**BOOKLET OPTION**

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 6-5.

Bible Story & Discussion (10-20 minutes)

Bible Story (Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet; John 13:3-15)

Materials: Bible for leader (or for every reading student, if available)
Basin of warm, soapy water and towels (optional)



BIBLE READING

- Read the scripture passage aloud to students. Then retell and discuss the story and questions together.
- As you read and discuss the story, you will need to give children a brief explanation of what comes before and after the story.
- Optional: plan to wash the feet of your students, if you wish to fully act out this story. It becomes a very powerful lesson. Give enough time to do the activity and then talk about it together with children.
- Remember, the application of this lesson is not only that we are willing to literally wash other people's feet. The focus is on humbly serving others like Jesus did.



BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 6-6.

1. Jesus prepared his disciples to lead without him.

- Just before Jesus died on the cross, he celebrated a special meal called the Passover with the disciples.
- He was teaching many lessons his disciples would need to know after he died, rose from the dead and returned to heaven.
- This lesson was one of the most surprising.

2. The disciples needed their feet washed.

- In Bible days, when people came to visit a home, the lowest servant in the house would have the job of washing the visitors' feet.
- The roads were dirty and dusty. People wore sandals. Their feet always became dirty.
- At the Passover, Jesus and the disciples were in a rented room. They were not in a home, so there was no servant to wash their feet.
- None of the disciples thought of doing this. It was a low, dirty job.

3. Jesus washed his disciples' feet.

- When Jesus saw what was happening, he took off his outer robe, put on a towel, and washed the disciples' feet.
- (Optional: teacher may act this out by wrapping a towel around his or her waist, pouring water into a basin and washing the feet of one or more of the children. If there is time, do this for all children.)
- ***If a king or president were to come to visit us today, is this what you would expect him to do for us?*** No. This is why Jesus' behavior was so surprising to his disciples. He was the ultimate ruler, but he served them with love.
- Finally, Jesus' most incredible act of service was when he died on the cross to forgive our sin.

?? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ◆ ***What was Jesus' example to us?***
- ◆ ***How is Jesus' example easy to follow?***
- ◆ ***How is his example difficult to follow?***
- ◆ When we serve others, we are sharing the love of Jesus with them and also bringing honor (respect) and glory to him (making him more famous).

Response & Application Activities (20-30 minutes)

Will This Always Be Easy? (Scripture & Response)

Materials: Bible for leader (or each reading student, if available)



WRITING/RESPONSE

- **Will it always be easy to follow Jesus?** No. A life of honoring God and becoming like Jesus is the best life ever. But it is not always easy. Some people may misunderstand us and our love for Jesus. Others may even try to hurt us. Sometimes it will be hard to love others or to do the right things.
- But it is always worth it. Why? Because God is worth it. Because Jesus is worth every bit of praise, honor and sacrifice we can give.



BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 6-7.



BIBLE LOOK-UP

- **How can you stay strong following Jesus, even if troubling times come?** Read **Hebrews 12:1-3** and list some ideas:
Throw off everything that hinders us – Get rid of anything in our lives that keeps us from following Jesus with our whole hearts.
Sin that so easily entangles us – Get rid of sinful habits that keep us tangled up and keep us from growing to be more like Jesus.
Run with perseverance – Imagine we are running a race; do not stop or give up.
Fix our eyes on Jesus – If we are tempted to give up, remember Jesus' example; ask for his help; he went through many troubles to go to the cross and die for us; we can follow his example when life is difficult.
Consider him – When we consider Jesus, we find we will not get tired; we will not lose hope; he inspires us to continue following him.

Something to Do: (Journal, Questions, Prayer)

Materials: Blank notebook or tablet of paper (optional)
Pens or pencils



WRITING/RESPONSE

- Invite children to write personal letters to God telling him about how they want to honor him with their lives. They may write words or draw pictures. Invite them to fold these up and decorate them as if they are gifts. Seal the letters and put them away (in their Bibles or other safe places). Children may open these in several months and remember what they said to God.
- If students have journals, they may do this activity in their journals instead.
- Invite children to write other questions. Consider any questions they may be asking this week. How will they find answers? Pray and ask God for help. Find people in God's family to help them.



BOOKLET OPTION

- If using booklets, students may read these scriptures and write what they learn on page 6-8.



PRAYER

- Remind children they can talk to God anytime, anywhere, about anything. Praying to Jesus, often, will help them grow strong in their love for him.
- **Is there something we can pray about together?** Pray over each student, asking God to help each to grow strong in his love for Jesus, always.



FRIENDSHIP & CLOSING

- As children prepare to leave, read **Philippians 1:6**. Remind them that Jesus is the one who helped them start this life of following him. He will be with them. He will help them to keep growing to become more and more like him – making God known and loved throughout the world!

Reproducible Student Booklet

Lesson 1

Your New Life with Jesus

Welcome

Congratulations! It is great news to hear that you have begun a new life of following Jesus. Welcome into God's forever family (the family of those who believe in Jesus).

In this lesson you will learn more about what is new now that you are in this family.

But first, when did you come to know Jesus? Where were you? If you remember, fill in the time and place below.

I began my new life with Jesus:

On this date (or day): _____

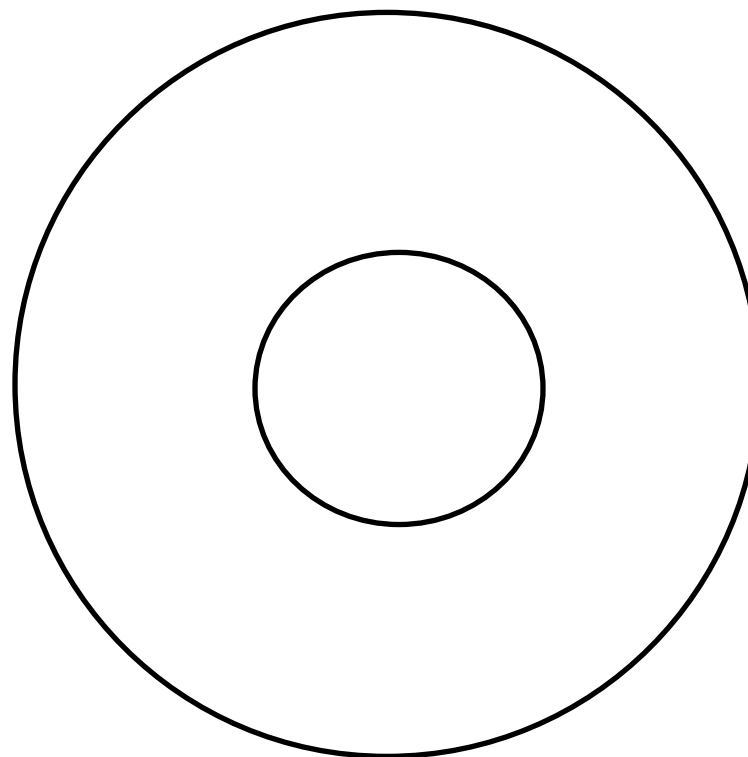
In this place: _____

Your name (signature): _____

Your New Family

Think about you and God's bigger family for a moment.

Inside the small circle, draw a simple stick figure of yourself. Now write several words you can think of describing who you are. (For example: son, daughter, sister, brother, student, friend, etc.)



When you believe in Christ as Savior, God places you in his forever family. This is like the bigger circle.

Inside the larger circle, write the names of some people you know who are part of God's forever family. (Add more later as you think of them or meet new people.)

So, What's New?

The Bible, God's Word, helps us to understand what has become new. These verses are from the Bible (book, chapter, verse).

Circle the words in each verse that tell what is new (the first one is done for you).

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV

Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

John 1:12 NIV

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God.

1 Peter 2:9 NIV

I no longer call you servants ... Instead, I have called you friends.

John 15:15 NIV

Which verse do you like best?

God Is with You

Because you believe in Jesus, God's Spirit lives with you and in you. Read the Bible verses below. Underline words that tell about God's Spirit. (If you have your own Bible, look these up there, too. Find the book name, look for the chapter number, then find the verse.)

Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but a son.

Galatians 4:6-7a NIV

He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Titus 3:5-6 NIV

?

THINK
ABOUT
THIS

What will you enjoy about
God being close to you?

What's the Difference?

With the Spirit of God living in you and with you, life will not stay the same.
Read these Bible verses, then answer the question below.

For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

2 Timothy 1:7 NIV

You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you.

Romans 8:9 NIV

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth.

John 16:13a NIV

What good things will God's Spirit bring to your life?
In your own words, list what you learn from these verses:

A Bible Story

Zacchaeus

Zacchaeus needed a new life. Read this story, and then think about the questions below.

Luke 19:1-10 NIV

(Find this in the Bible book of Luke, chapter 19, verses 1-10)

¹Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. ²A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. ³He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd. ⁴So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

⁵When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." ⁶So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

⁷All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a 'sinner.'"

⁸But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

⁹Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

?

THINK
ABOUT
THIS

What will you enjoy about
God being close to you?

How Will YOU Change?

Now that you are following Jesus, your days will be different. What might you do in the morning, during the day and in the evening? Write or draw your ideas in the boxes.

The Morning:

Give each day to God

During the Day:

Think about others

The Evening:

Think about your day

*God has said,
"Never will I leave you;
never will I forsake you."
Hebrews 13:5b NIV*

**No matter what
time of day, God is
always with you!**

Something To Do...

Start a Journal

If you can, buy or make a small booklet of paper as a prayer book or journal. Write your prayers, your thoughts or your questions in it. Or draw pictures of yourself learning about this new life with Jesus.

Ask Your Questions

Do you have questions about your new life with Jesus? Write your questions here or in your journal. Ask another person in God's family to help you find answers.

? _____
? _____

Take Time to Pray

Talk to God anywhere. Ask him to help you find answers to your questions. Pray for others that you meet in God's family. Thank Jesus for anything you can think of that is good.

A Bible Verse to Remember

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he
is a new creation; the old has gone,
the new has come!
2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV*

Lesson 2

Talking with Jesus

How Is Your New Life?

How is your new life with Jesus? Have you met other people who are part of God's family? (You can add their names to your circle on page 1-2.) What have you been thinking about Jesus?

Growing & Changing

Have you looked in a mirror recently? Do you look different than you did one year ago? In what ways? Write or draw an example below:

Just like your body is growing and changing, you are beginning to grow in another way, too. God wants you to grow spiritually. Talking with Jesus will help you grow. Let's learn more.

Things That Don't Change

First, let's look at some truths that WILL NOT change as you grow.

Jesus is your friend

Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command.
John 15:13-14 NIV

God loves you and always has

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
Romans 5:8 NIV

You have eternal life through Jesus

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.
1 John 5:13 NIV

Your sin is all forgiven

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.
1 John 1:9 NIV

Read these words again. Circle or highlight the words that are most special to you today.

How Will You Grow?

How will you grow and change? The Apostle Paul wrote this prayer for followers of Jesus. It helps us answer this question.

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

Philippians 1:9-11 NIV

Read these verses again. List some of the ways in which Paul wanted people to grow in their lives with Jesus.

Why do we want to grow in these ways? **To bring glory and praise to God!** To bring him glory means to make him famous.

WOW! Your growing will make God even more famous! Even kids can do this.

What Is Prayer?

Prayer is one of the most important ways we grow in our relationship with Jesus. It is simply communicating with him. People can pray out loud or silently. They can pray by singing or writing their thoughts and feelings to God. It doesn't matter. The most important part is learning to communicate openly with him.

As in any relationship, the better we communicate with God, the better our relationship with him will be. Here are some of the things the Bible teaches us about prayer.

God wants to answer prayer: Matthew 7:9-11 NIV

Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

God teaches us through prayer: Jeremiah 33:3 NIV

Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.

God cares about our troubles: Philippians 4:6-7 NIV

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

God hears prayers from clean hearts: Psalm 66:18 NIV

If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.

?

THINK
ABOUT
THIS

- ◆ How often do you talk with your friends?
- ◆ How often will you talk with God?
- ◆ How will this help your friendship grow?

When Did Jesus Pray?

Our best example for prayer is Jesus! When did Jesus pray? Read each of the verses below, then circle what part of the verse talks about when Jesus was praying.

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

Mark 1:35 NIV

Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish.

John 6:11 NIV

One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.

Luke 6:12 NIV

Do you think these were the only times Jesus prayed? No, he prayed often throughout his days and nights. Many times he went away to be quiet and alone with God. Why do you think he did this?

When will you pray?
Write down the times
in the box:

A Bible Story

Jesus Teaches His Disciples to Pray

Jesus' disciples asked him to teach them how to pray. It was a great request. Here is what he taught them:

Matthew 6:6-13 NIV

(The Bible book of Matthew, chapter 6, verses 6 to 13)

⁶But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

⁷And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

⁹This, then, is how you should pray:

¹⁰"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹Give us today our daily bread.

¹²Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."



**THINK
ABOUT
THIS**

- ◆ What do you learn about praying from what Jesus taught his disciples?
- ◆ How will this help you as you learn to pray?

Learning to Pray

Prayer is one of the big ways you can grow to bring honor to God. You will not become an expert all at once, but a little at a time, just like your body grows a little at a time. Here are some of the most important things to do when you pray:

P	PRAISE GOD Thank God for anything good. Tell him what you love about him.	Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Psalms 103:1a NIV
R	REPENT Ask God to forgive you for any wrongs you have thought, said or done.	If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9 NIV
A	ASK FOR NEEDS Ask for God's help with problems, people, worries ... anything!	Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. Matthew 7:7 NIV
Y	SAY YES TO GOD Tell God you say "yes" to following him again today.	Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV

Remember, you can talk to God about any time, in any place, about anything!

Something to Do...

Write in Your Journal

In your prayer booklet or journal, draw a simple calendar of the coming week (or use the one below). Draw a mark on every day you spend some time talking with Jesus in prayer.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Ask Your Questions

Do you have questions about your new life with Jesus or prayer? Write your questions here or in your journal. Ask another person in God's family to help you find answers.

? _____
? _____

Take Time to Pray

Talk to God anywhere. Pray every day, if you can. Remember to:

P-Praise **R**-Repent **A**-Ask **Y**-Yes to Jesus

A Bible Verse to Remember

Neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Romans 8:39 NIV

Lesson 3

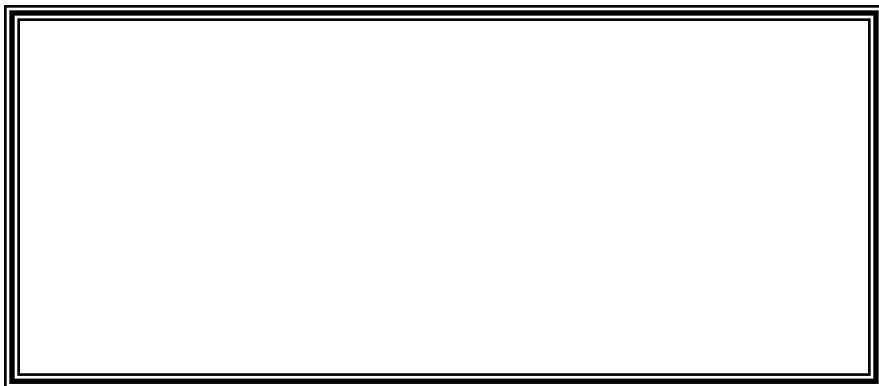
Learning about Jesus

How Is Your Life with Jesus?

How is your new life with Jesus? Have you talked with him during this past week? Did you notice that he was with you wherever you went? He loves you so much.

What Else Helps Us Grow?

What did you eat for dinner this past week? What is your favorite meal? Draw a picture of it here:



Why do people need to eat food? To help them grow. What kind of food will help us grow in Jesus? Our lesson today will help us to learn about the importance of God's Word to help us grow.

God's Word Helps Us Grow

We grow by consuming God's Word. Does this mean we "eat" the Bible? No, but it does mean spending time learning God's Word, then obeying it. Why do we need this? Here's what the Bible says:

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Matthew 4:4 NIV

Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.

1 Peter 2:2 NIV

Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

Joshua 1:8 NIV

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

Psalms 119:105 NIV

Circle your favorite verse about God's Word so far.

What Is the Bible?

The Bible Is God's Word

Imagine that a friend wrote a special letter to you.

- In the letter your friend tells you how much he loves you.
- He shares many things that can help you through any situation.
- The letter contains guidelines that will help you avoid many

heartaches and troubles.

- This letter also helps you get to know the heart of your friend.

The Bible is like God's big, long letter to us. It is filled with a lifetime of messages from God for us. It teaches us about Jesus and following him.

How Did We Get the Bible?

- The Bible was written by dozens of different authors.
- It was written over thousands of years.
- It was written by men who were willing, able and chosen to write

God's words. They did not make up these words themselves.

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 1:20-21 NIV

The original words of the Bible have been translated into hundreds of languages. It is read by people all over the world, including YOU!

How Does It Help You Grow?

Read the verses below. Underline any words referring to God's Word ("the law of the Lord," "my words," "Scripture," etc.). List what you learn about how God's Word helps us grow.

If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.

John 15:7 NIV

The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

Psalms 19:7 NIV

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.

2 Timothy 3:16 NIV

How can God's Word help you grow?

As we read, learn and obey, we grow to be more like Jesus!

How Do I Use the Bible?

Finding Things in the Bible

If you have a Bible, take some time to learn about it. It is a big book. But kids can learn to use it. After you have found each item, place a check mark in each box.

☐ Find the Table of Contents

Notice that the Bible has 66 books. It was written by different men. The Bible is made up of the Old and New Testaments (Testament means “Promise”).

☐ Find page 150

People do not usually find verses in the Bible with page numbers. A verse “address” has a book name (John), a chapter number (3) and a verse number (16).

☐ Find John 3:16

This verse is found in a book written by John, one of Jesus’ closest disciples. Are the words in red in your Bible? Some Bibles have highlighted Jesus’ words in red. His words are extra important. They really help us learn about Jesus.

☐ Find Genesis 1:1

The very beginning of the Bible teaches us that God made the heavens and the earth.

☐ Find Matthew 1:1

This is the first verse of the New Testament. The New Testament is all about the life and work of Jesus and his early followers.



THINK
ABOUT
THIS

Do you have your own Bible?
If not, pray and ask God for his
help to find one.

A Bible Story

The House on the Rock

Jesus’ disciples asked him to teach them how to pray. It was a great request. Here is what he taught them:

Matthew 7:24-29 NIV

(The Bible book of Matthew, chapter 7, verses 24 to 29)

²⁴“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

²⁵The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.

²⁶But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.

²⁷The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

²⁸When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, ²⁹because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.



THINK
ABOUT
THIS

- ◆ Are Jesus’ words just for listening to?
No, they are to obey.
- ◆ How will this help you as you learn to pray?

Learning God's Word

Spend Time in God's Word

Do you have a Bible? It's time to get started learning God's Word on your own. (If you do not have a Bible, spend time reading and thinking about stories and verses in this booklet, or find someone to read the Bible to you.)

Start with the book of Mark in the New Testament. It's about Jesus. Or use the story of the House on the Rock (page 3-6).

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Read a few verses at a time. Think about what you read. Write down what you learn, if you can. Look for a promise in the verse. Thank God for the promise.

WHAT IS GOD TEACHING ME?

Spend time being quiet before God and allow him to speak to your heart about what you read. How will you know what God wants you to learn? Read John 14:26. The Holy Spirit will teach you. It is God's promise. Write down what God could be teaching you.

HOW CAN I OBEY?

Think of one way you might obey or respond to this lesson in the coming day.

TALK WITH JESUS.

Pray your response back to him. Tell him questions you still have. Thank him for teaching you.

Memorize a Verse

Or, pray and choose a Bible verse to memorize. This hides God's word in your heart. See page 2-2. Choose one verse to memorize and think about on your own. Write it here:

Something to Do...

Write in Your Journal

If you have a journal, add an entry like this every time you read God's Word. Fill in the blanks with your answers.

Date:	_____
Scripture:	_____
What does it say?	_____
One thing God could be teaching me through this verse is	_____
In the coming day, one way I could obey this is	_____
Dear God, help me to	_____

You could also think about these questions on your own.

Ask Your Questions

Do you have more questions about your life with Jesus or God's Word? Write your questions here or in your journal. Ask another person in God's family to help you find answers.

? _____

? _____

Take Time to Pray

Talk to Jesus anywhere. Ask for his help to understand God's Word.

A Bible Verse to Remember

*Your word is a lamp to my feet and
a light for my path.*

Psalm 119:105 NIV

Lesson 4

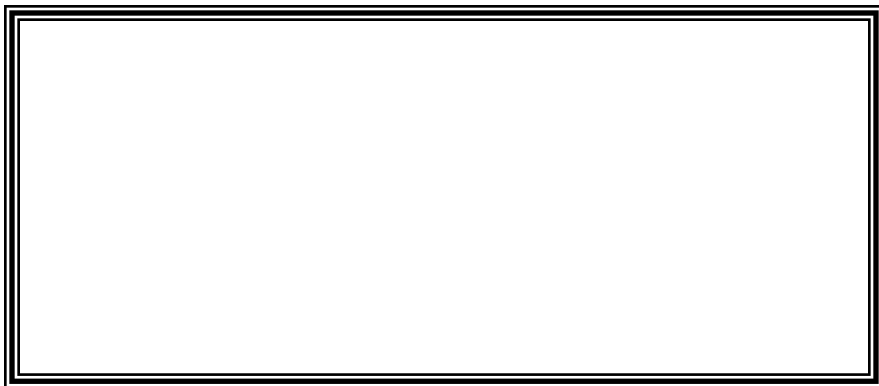
Growing with God's Family

How Is Your Life with Jesus?

How is your new life with Jesus? Have you talked with him during this past week? Have you been learning about Jesus from God's Word? He loves you so much!

Your Family

What is your own family like? Draw a picture of them here:



Since you believed in Christ to be your Savior, you are also part of God's forever family. This lesson will help you learn more about this new family and how it helps you grow in your life with Jesus.

God's Family is Big

How do you know you are in God's family? God's Word tells us that this is what happened when you believed in Jesus.

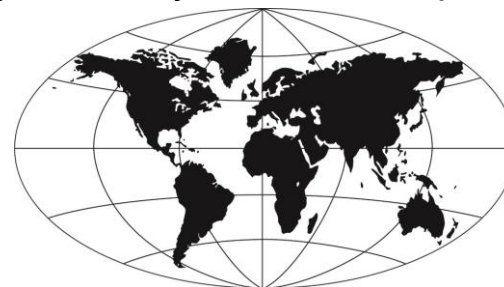
*Yet to all who received him, to those
who believed in his name,
he gave the right to become
children of God.*

John 1:12 NIV

So, How Big Is This Family?

It is huge. Nearly one-third of all the people who live on the earth are part of this family. They believe in Jesus as their Savior.

Where do you live? Can you find it on this map of the world?



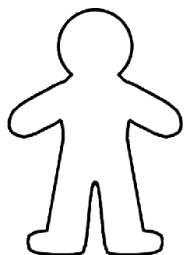
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**THINK
ABOUT
THIS**

- ♦ Most people still do NOT know about Jesus.
- ♦ What does God want his family to do about this? Tell them!

You Are Not Alone

The Bible uses many other words to describe God's family. All of them help us to realize we are not alone.



WE ARE LIKE A BODY:

Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

Romans 12:4-5 NIV



WE ARE LIKE A BUILDING:

You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house ... And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

1 Peter 2:5 and Ephesians 2:22 NIV

In the verses above, circle or underline words that remind us that we are not alone, we belong together.

Most importantly, God's family are people who grow together in ...

... love for God.

... love for each other.

... love for others around us (near and far).

What will you enjoy most about God's family?

What Does God's Family Do?

They meet together

Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command.

John 15:13-14 NIV

They learn together

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:8 NIV

They worship God together

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

1 John 5:13 NIV

They love each other

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9 NIV

They shine Jesus to the world

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

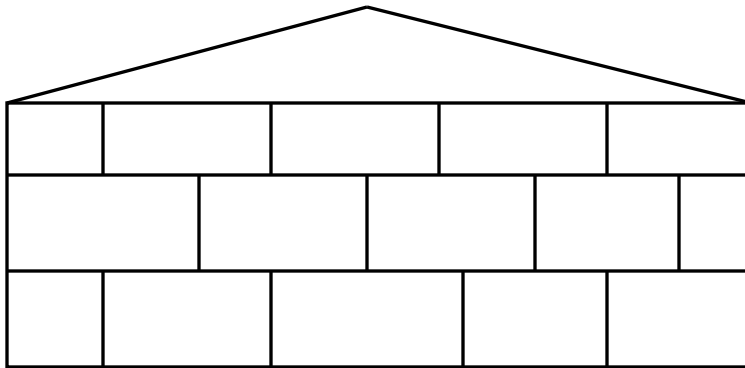
1 John 1:9 NIV

Where can you find and meet with God's family?

Many Parts, One Job

When you trusted in Christ you became part of the Church (another name for God's family). Of course, you are not a stone or a piece of wood. Instead you are part of something much BIGGER than you.

People who are up in heaven, like the Apostle Paul, are part of the Church. Write his name in a brick below. Add the names of some other New Testament Christians, too.



Now write YOUR name in one of these "bricks." Add names of a few Christian people you know.

Please leave some blank. Why? Because there are many who have yet to trust in Christ. The building is not complete yet. Who will tell them about him? This is what Jesus had to say about it:

*Go into all the world and preach the good news
to all creation.*

Mark 16:15 NIV

**Jesus wants his followers to tell people
about him. What a great honor!**

A Bible Story

Believers Pray for Peter

The book of Acts is full of stories about when the Church was new, just after Jesus had lived on earth. There was much persecution of Christians. But the believers helped each other. This is one story.

Acts 12:5-16 NIV (*The Bible book of Acts, chapter 12, verses 5 to 16*)

⁵So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him. ⁶The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. ⁷Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists.

⁸Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." And Peter did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me," the angel told him. ⁹Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. ¹⁰They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him.

¹¹Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were anticipating." ¹²When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying.

¹³Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer the door. ¹⁴When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, "Peter is at the door!" ¹⁵"You're out of your mind," they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, "It must be his angel."

¹⁶But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished.

**?
THINK
ABOUT
THIS**

- ◆ What did God do for believers as they prayed together?
- ◆ What do you learn about God's family?

Loving One Another

One of the main jobs of God's family is to love one another. There are many Bible verses that teach us about this.

For each Bible verse below, fill in the blank with one or more words showing how God wants his people to treat each other.

ONE ANOTHER

You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. **Galatians 5:13 NIV**

ONE ANOTHER

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. **Ephesians 4:32 NIV**

ONE ANOTHER

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. **1 Thessalonians 5:11 NIV**

ONE ANOTHER

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.
1 Peter 1:22 NIV

ONE ANOTHER

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. **James 5:16a NIV**

When will YOU meet with God's family to practice loving each other?

Something to Do...

Visit a Church; Write in Your Journal

If you can, visit a church or children's meeting with other people who are following Jesus, like you. After your visit, write down or draw what you saw and learned there.

Ask Your Questions

Do you have more questions about your new life with Jesus or God's family? Write your questions here or in your journal. Ask another person in God's family to help you find answers.

? _____
? _____

Take Time to Pray

Talk to God anywhere. Ask for his help to find a group of God's family to meet and grow with. Ask for his help to get good friends who will also help you grow strong in your life with Jesus. Pray for other people you know who are part of God's family.

A Bible Verse to Remember

A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

John 13:34-35 NIV

Lesson 5

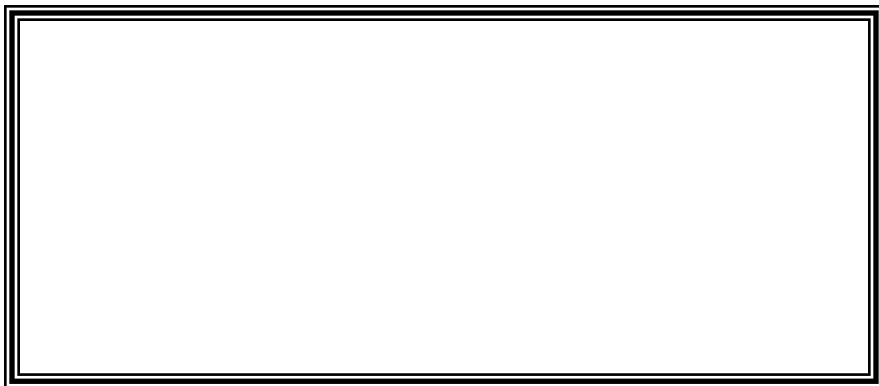
Jesus' Plans and You

How Is Your Life with Jesus?

How is your new life with Jesus? Have you talked with him during this past week? Have you been learning about Jesus from God's Word? He loves you so much!

Thinking about Gifts

Have you ever received a gift? Draw a picture or write a description of one of the best gifts you have ever received.



God has given gifts to his people, even beyond the gift of salvation. These gifts are invisible, but they are very important and exciting. This lesson will help you learn about God's gifts and you.

Who Made You?

Read Psalm 139:13-16 below. This poem was written to God (he is the "you" in this passage).

- ¹³For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
- ¹⁴I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.
- ¹⁵My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place.
When I was woven together in the depths of the earth,
- ¹⁶your eyes saw my unformed body.
All the days ordained for me
were written in your book
before one of them came to be.

Who Made You? _____

God created and designed you! The way you are made is exactly the way God wanted you to be. You are special. There is no other person quite like you. And God has good plans for your life.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Jeremiah 29:11 NIV

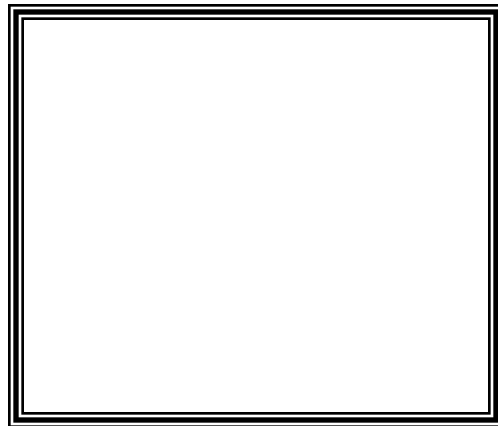
God Created You with Gifts

Before you were born, God designed you with certain abilities or talents for his purposes.

*For we are God's workmanship,
created in Christ Jesus to do good works,
which God prepared in
advance for us to do.
Ephesians 2:10 NIV*

What is it that you love to do? What are you really good at? Draw a picture of yourself doing that here:

Are you ...
An athlete?
A quick learner?
Shy and
tenderhearted?
A quiet thinker?
Friendly?
Very kind?
Strong?
Musical?
Mathematical?
What else?



These are all abilities that God has created in you. Before you became a believer, these abilities were there. But now you realize that God has given you some of these gifts or abilities to use for his purposes. **What will God do through you?**

What Are God's Gifts?

The Bible contains several lists of spiritual gifts. Circle some of the names of gifts that God gives in the two scripture passages below. We've done the first one for you.

Ephesians 4:11 NIV: It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers.

Romans 12:5-8 NIV: So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

These gifts might seem very grown up. But God gives gifts to kids, too. What gifts has God given to you? It may take some time to discover. But we know God will show you as you seek him.

What will God do through you as you grow in him? It will be an adventure to see how he uses you!

Why Does God Give Gifts?

To bring honor to God

If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 4:11 NIV

To build each other up

To prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

Ephesians 4:12 NIV

To serve others

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

1 Peter 4:10 NIV

To fulfill God's plan for the world

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Acts 1:8 NIV

A Bible Story

Peter's Life Story

Peter followed Jesus as one of his closest disciples. Here are several verses telling parts of the life story of Peter (also called Simon).

Peter Follows Jesus. (Mark 1:16-18)

¹⁶As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." ¹⁸At once they left their nets and followed him.

Peter Walks on Water to Jesus. (Matthew 14:28-31)

²⁸"Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." ²⁹"Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. ³⁰But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" ³¹Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

Jesus Sees Something Special in Peter. (Matthew 16:16-18)

¹⁶Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. ¹⁸And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."

Peter Denies He Knows Jesus. (John 18:25)

²⁵As Simon Peter stood warming himself, he was asked, "You are not one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it, saying, "I am not."

Peter Preaches with Power. (Acts 2:38-41)

³⁸Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

³⁹The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." ⁴⁰With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." ⁴¹Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

**?
THINK
ABOUT
THIS**

- ◆ Peter also wrote part of the Bible, prayed for a dead person to come to life, and more.
- ◆ Did Peter always get everything right the first time? Did Jesus still use him? Why do you think so?

What about You?

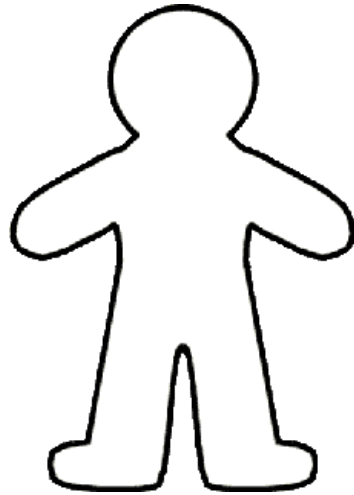
Now it's time for you to think and pray. Ask yourself these questions (write your thoughts and answers in your journal, if you have one):

What things do you like doing?

How could God use those talents and abilities?

What would you like to do for God?

Finish this drawing to look like you. Show yourself serving Jesus in some way.



During your quiet moments with Jesus, ask him to show you what he wants you to do. You might be surprised as he speaks to your heart. He has plans for you, even if there are times you do not know how he is working.

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. **Romans 8:28 NIV***

Something to Do...

Write in Your Journal

What gifts has God given you? What task does he have for YOU to do with these gifts? Write ideas and questions you have about this in your journal.

Ask Your Questions

Do you have more questions about Jesus' plans for you? Write your questions here or in your journal. Pray. Ask another person in God's family to pray with you about God's answers.

? _____
? _____

Take Time to Pray

Talk to Jesus anywhere. Ask for his directions. Ask him to help you know what he wants you to do. Be ready to do whatever he asks today (even if it's small), as practice for following him anywhere.

A Bible Verse to Remember

*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."
Jeremiah 29:11 NIV*

Lesson 6

Becoming Like Jesus

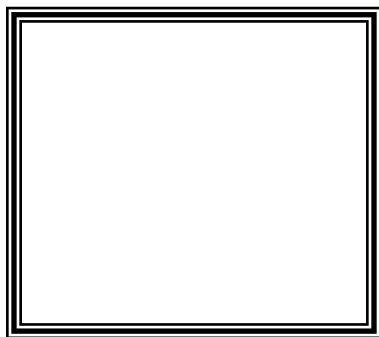
How Is Your Life with Jesus?

How is your new life with Jesus going? As you thought about it, what did God show you about his gifts and plans for you? If you are not sure, do not worry. God will show you things when it is the right time for you to know. We can trust him, even while waiting.

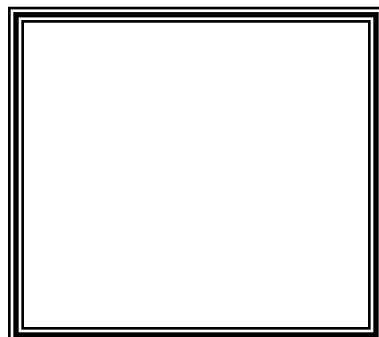
Thinking about Gifts

Draw two pictures below. Show one thing that has NOT changed since you believed in Jesus, and one thing that HAS changed.

Not Changed



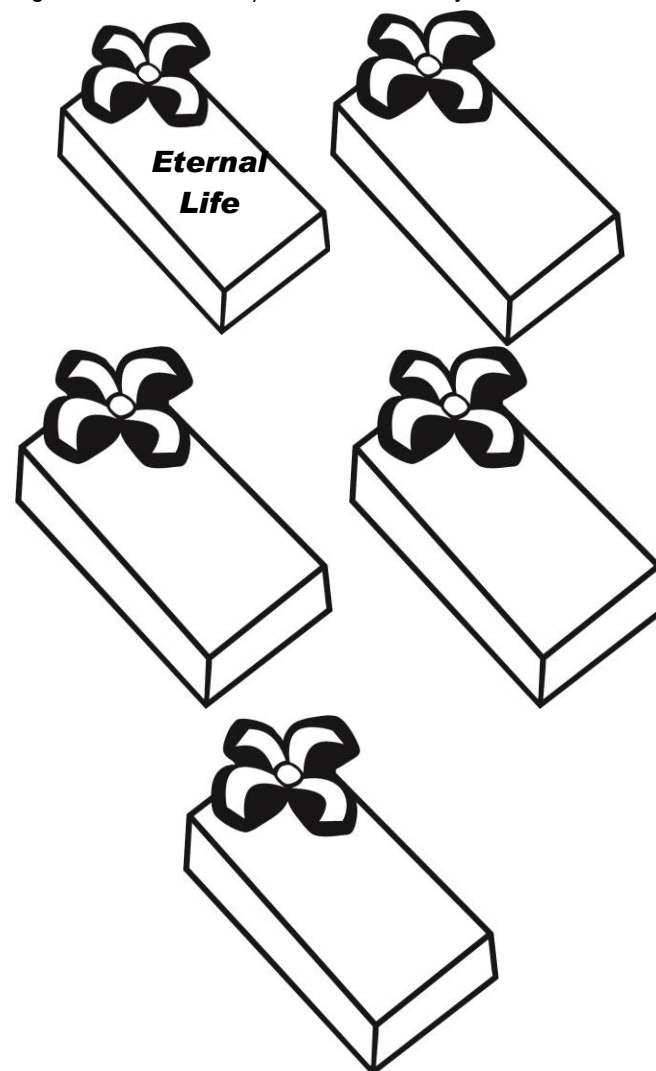
Changed



In this lesson, we will learn even more about the changes in us that help us become more like Jesus.

God's Invisible Gifts

See the gifts below. On each, write one word that tells about an invisible gift or blessing that God offers to EVERYONE (not the spiritual gifts from Lesson 5). We did one for you.



Our Gift to God

As we look at all that God has done for us, what do you think is a gift we could offer back to him? The Bible gives us some ideas:

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers,
in view of God's mercy, to
offer your bodies as living sacrifices,
holy and pleasing to God—this is
your spiritual act of worship.*
Romans 12:1 NIV

*Love the Lord your God with
all your heart and with
all your soul and with
all your mind and with
all your strength.*
Mark 12:30 NIV

The best gift we can give to God is: OURSELVES! Copy the underlined words into the spaces below:

Imagine that this gift represents you. Write your name on it to show you are giving all of yourself to God.



Our Gift to God

The gift of ourselves is not something we give to earn our salvation. We have already received that invisible (but very valuable) gift from God. All the invisible gifts listed on page 6-2 are still ours.

This gift from you, now, is about your response to God's incredible love for you. It is something you do because you love and respect God so much.

*So whether you eat or drink or
whatever you do, do it all for the
glory of God.*
1 Corinthians 10:31 NIV

In just a few words, God tells us that whatever we do is to be for God's glory (to make him famous). That's it. We show our love for him as we do everything for his honor.

Draw a picture of yourself doing something to bring God glory:



How to Become Like Jesus

Jesus was the very best example of someone who always honored the Father. He even gave up his life for us in obedience to God.

Can kids become like Jesus? We can never be perfect, like he was. But kids CAN copy his behavior and attitudes. How?

*Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ
Jesus: who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be
grasped, but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.*

Philippians 2:5-7 NIV

Fill in the blank below with an important attitude for becoming like Jesus:

**“He took on the very nature of a
S_____”**

What might kids do to serve others? Write some ideas below:

A Bible Story

Jesus Washes the Disciples Feet

Just before Jesus died on the cross, he celebrated a meal called the Passover with his disciples. He did something surprising there.

John 13:3-15 NIV

(The Bible book of John, chapter 13, verses 3 to 15)

³Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; ⁴so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist.

⁵After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. ⁶He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

⁷Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." ⁸"No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

⁹"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

¹⁰Jesus answered, "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you."

¹¹For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

¹²When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. ¹³"You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. ¹⁵I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you."

**?
THINK
ABOUT
THIS**

- ◆ What was Jesus' example to us?
- ◆ When we serve others, we are sharing the love of Jesus with others and honoring him.

Will This Always Be Easy?

A life of following Jesus and honoring God is the best life ever. But it is not always easy. Some people may misunderstand you or even try to hurt you. Sometimes it will be hard to love others or to do the right thing.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Hebrews 12:1-3 NIV

How can you stay strong following Jesus if troubling times come? Copy the underlined answers from the Bible verse above into the lines below for some Bible advice:

Something to Do...

Write in Your Journal

Write a letter to God (or a draw a picture). Tell him how you want to honor him now and as you grow in your relationship with Jesus. Remember that God will always be with you and will help you.

Ask Your Questions

You may still have questions as you grow in your life with Jesus. Pray and ask God for answers. Also ask another person in God's family to help you find God's answers to your questions.

? _____

? _____

Keep on Praying

Have you decided to follow Jesus with your whole self? It is a simple thing to begin. It goes on for a lifetime. Pray often so you will grow strong in your love for Jesus, forever.

A Bible Verse to Remember

Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 1:6 NIV

Sample Letter, Notes & Masters

Small-Group Invitation (Blank)

Parent Invitation Letter (Sample)

Journal Cover

Mailbox Series (Correspondence Course)

Instructions

Cover Page

Certificate of Completion (Blank)

Small Group Invitation

IMPORTANT: Remove this note before copying!

Fill in blanks with details of your class or meeting. Copy and give *personally* to children you know need to attend.

You are invited to a
small-group Bible study just for you
to learn about

Your New Life with Jesus

Along with other children, we will talk together, pray together, and help each other learn what it means to follow Jesus.

Date _____

Time _____

Place _____

Contact for Questions _____

**Come as you are.
You don't need to bring
anything.**

**Let us know if you can come.
We hope to see you there.**

Parent Invitation Letter (Sample) **IMPORTANT:** *Remove this note before copying!*

Adapt this letter as an invitation note to Christian parents who might want to work through the *Your New Life with Jesus* booklet with their own children.

Dear Christian parent,

We are thrilled to report that your child has indicated a serious interest in following Jesus as Savior.

We wanted you to know that we have a booklet called *Your New Life with Jesus* available for your child.

We are planning to work through the lessons in a small group with your child. However, we thought you might want the opportunity to work through this booklet on your own with your child as he or she grows to understand this new life with Jesus.

Would you like to receive this booklet to read and talk through it together? Please let us know.

We know how very important your encouragement and love will be to your child as he or she begins this new life with Christ.

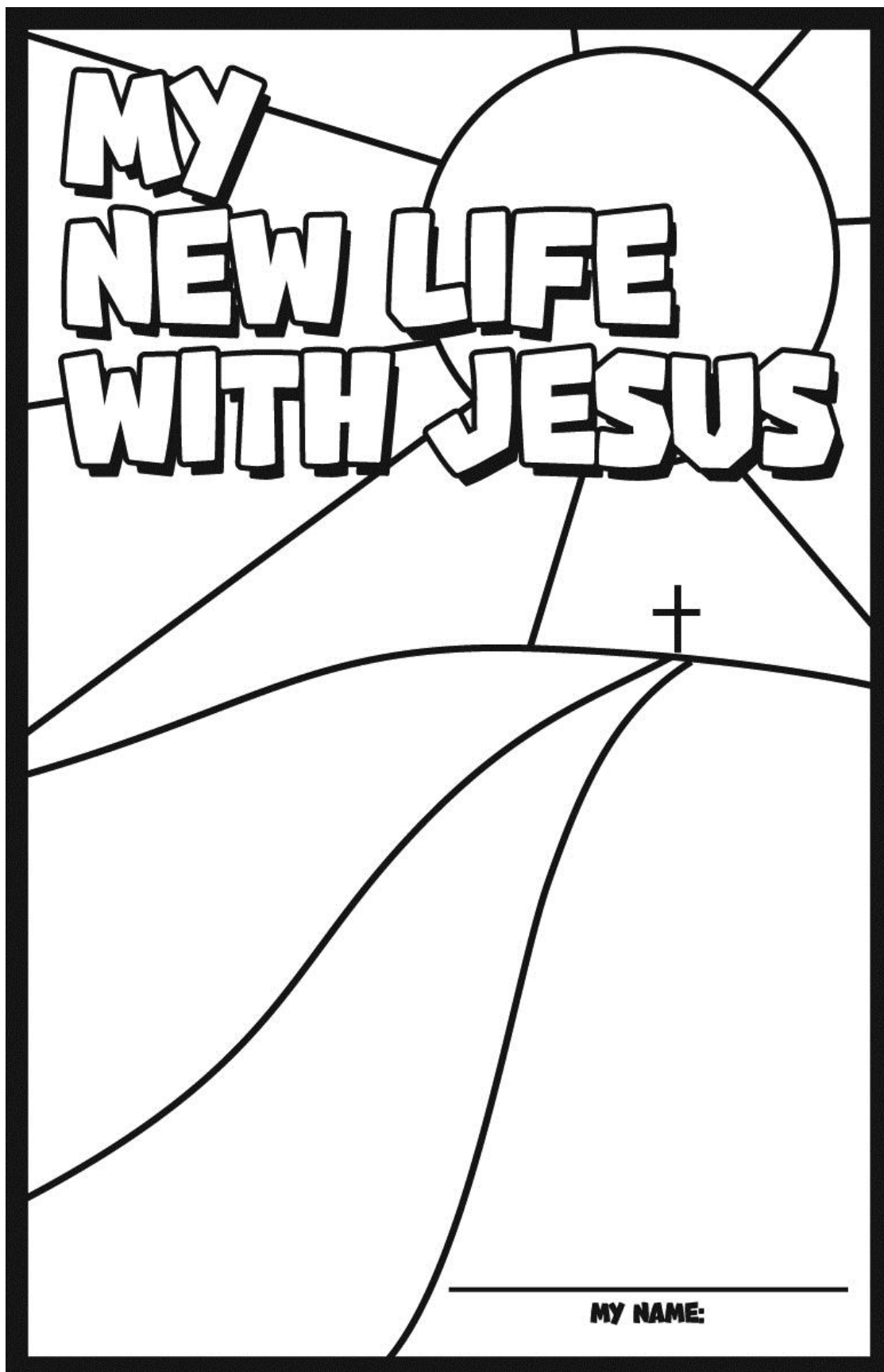
Let us know if you have any questions. We are praying for your child to grow a strong and lasting love for Jesus.

In Christ,

(Your name)

Journal Cover *IMPORTANT: Remove this note before copying!*

Make a photocopy for each student to use as a cover for their own personal prayer notebook or journal. Invite children to color and decorate these as they wish.



Mailbox Series (Instructions)

If you expect that you will not see students again after an outreach event where children have responded to the gospel, you might consider a correspondence course.

You will need:

- Access to copies of each lesson
- Mail and postage supplies
- An address for each child
- Someone to read and respond to the correspondence

The child will need:

- To be able to read and write (or have someone who can read to him or her)
- Ability to mail a letter (and follow mailing instructions)

General Instructions:

1. Ensure permission (and commitment) from the child that he or she wants to participate. Be sure to check whether it will be appropriate for his or her family situation (unbelievers, other home challenges, etc.).
2. Send the first lesson home with a child after he or she makes an initial commitment. Include a self-addressed stamped envelope for them to use to mail the lesson back to you when finished.
3. As you receive lessons, read them, pray for the child, make comments, add your own notes of encouragement, etc. Be positive and warm. Answer the child's questions, too.
4. Send one lesson at a time. Attach the cover letter to each. Fill in the blank to match the lesson number. Include their previous lesson with notes of encouragement and comments on your prayers for them.
5. Offer a certificate of completion (or other small gift) for those who finish.

NOTE: This could be done via e-mail, but students would need to print out the lesson and return it to you. These children would need access to a computer, e-mail, a printer, and a way to return it to you (either mail or in-person), etc.

Mailbox Series (Correspondence Course) Cover Page

IMPORTANT: Remove this note before copying! Make a photocopy of this cover letter for each lesson as you send these to students. Add to the copy of the next lesson the child needs to receive.

Your New Life with Jesus

Lesson _____



MAILBOX SERIES



Dear _____,

Here is the next lesson in the MAILBOX SERIES *Your New Life with Jesus*. You did great on the last one.

When you finish this lesson, mail it back to us. (See the address below.) We will send you the next one so you can keep on growing in *Your New Life with Jesus*.

1. Use the envelope we sent you with our address.
2. Add the postage in the upper right corner.
3. Place it in a mailbox.

We have a certificate waiting for you when you have finished and mailed all six lessons to us. Keep up the good work.

We are so glad you are learning about "Your New Life with Jesus." Let us know if you have questions. We will try to help. Let us know if you have specific prayer requests. We are praying for you.

Loving Jesus and you,

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Certificate of Completion**IMPORTANT: Remove this note before copying!**

Print copies on nice/colorful paper. Fill in names, dates, and signatures and give to children who have completed *Your New Life with Jesus* lessons.

Certificate of Completion

This certificate is awarded to

for successfully completing the six lessons of

Your New Life with Jesus

Date_____

Signature_____

“Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 1:6 NIV