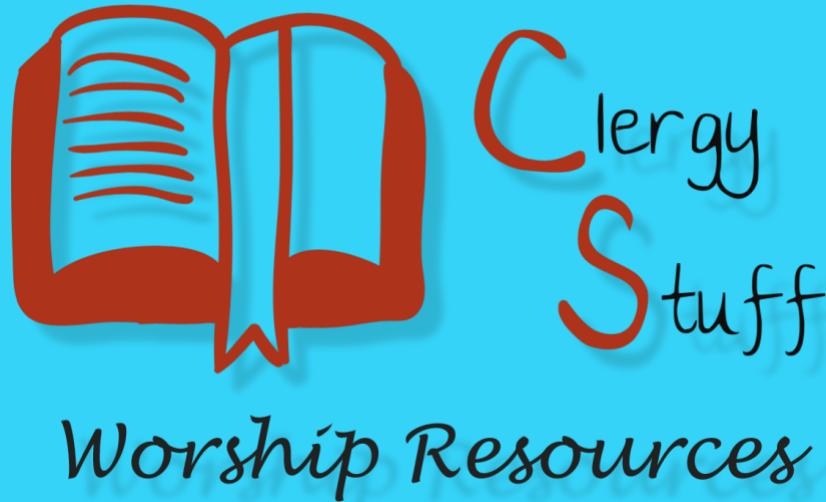


Narrative Lectionary Worship Resources



Narrative Lectionary Worship Resources

Program 2, 2019-20 (Winter/Spring)

January 12, 2020—May 31, 2020

Narrative Lectionary Worship Resources

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Scripture Readings

Text: Mark 2:1-22

2When he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. ²So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door; and he was speaking the word to them. ³Then some people came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. ⁴And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. ⁵When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." ⁶Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, ⁷"Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" ⁸At once Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves; and he said to them, "Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? ⁹Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and take your mat and walk?' ¹⁰But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic— ¹¹"I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home." ¹²And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

¹³Jesus went out again beside the sea; the whole crowd gathered around him, and he taught them. ¹⁴As he was walking along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him.

¹⁵And as he sat at dinner in Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were also sitting with Jesus and his disciples—for there were many who followed him.

¹⁶When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, they said to his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" ¹⁷When Jesus heard this, he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."

¹⁸Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and people came and said to him, "Why do John's disciples

and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" ¹⁹Jesus said to them, "The wedding guests cannot fast while the bridegroom is with them, can they? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. ²⁰The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast on that day.

²¹"No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak; otherwise, the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made. ²²And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins."

Secondary Text: Psalm 103:6-14

⁶The Lord works vindication

and justice for all who are oppressed.

⁷He made known his ways to Moses,

his acts to the people of Israel.

⁸The Lord is merciful and gracious,

slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

⁹He will not always accuse,

nor will he keep his anger forever.

¹⁰He does not deal with us according to our sins,

nor repay us according to our iniquities.

¹¹For as the heavens are high above the earth,

so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;

¹²as far as the east is from the west,

so far he removes our transgressions from us.

¹³As a father has compassion for his children,

so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him.

¹⁴For he knows how we were made;

he remembers that we are dust.

Pronunciation Guide

Capernaum: kuh-PUHR-nay-uhm

Levi: LEE-vi

Alphaeus: al-FEE-uhs



Scripture Readings

Dramatic Reading of the Text

Readers: Narrator, Jesus, Scribes, People

Narrator: When he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door; and he was speaking the word to them. Then some people came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic,

Jesus: "Son, your sins are forgiven."

Narrator: Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts,

Scribes: "Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Narrator: At once Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves; and he said to them,

Jesus: "Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and take your mat and walk'? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"

Narrator: he said to the paralytic

Jesus: "I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home."

Narrator: And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying,

People: "We have never seen anything like this!"

Narrator: Jesus went out again beside the sea; the whole crowd gathered around him, and he taught them. As he was walking along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him,

Jesus: "Follow me."

Narrator: And he got up and followed him. And as he sat at dinner in Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were also sitting with Jesus and his disciples—for there were many who followed him. When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, they said to his disciples,

Scribes: "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

Narrator: When Jesus heard this, he said to them,

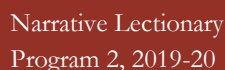
Jesus: "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."

Narrator: Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and people came and said to him,

People: "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?"

Narrator: Jesus said to them,

Jesus: "The wedding guests cannot fast while the bridegroom is with them, can they? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast on that day. No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak; otherwise, the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins."



Jesus Heals and Teaches, Mark 2:1-22

[illegible]



Theme and Liturgy

Preaching Theme

Main Idea: Jesus' words and actions were shocking and challenging, and can shock and challenge us, too.

When Jesus began his ministry, he started by gathering followers and then by healing and teaching. The first priority for him was to tend to the people.

But then it was time to stir the pot. Jesus started doing and saying things that were confusing and shocking. He forgave sins—a task reserved only for God. Next, he invited a hated tax collector to walk with him. (They were hated because they were corrupt, not because they collected taxes.) He even ate with many of the town's tax collectors, and on the sabbath, no less! In a short time, Jesus made waves, angering many who were in power at the time. These early events did not directly challenge the powerful, but they were socially (sometimes legally) questionable. Leaders were not yet threatened by Jesus' actions or his following, but they were upset by his lack of decorum and his brashness.

You could say Jesus was the original shock jock. The things he did angered and upset the status quo. But that was the point. The nation had fallen away from the things of God, and needed to be held accountable for its sin and its apathy. A long, slow discourse about these things were not called for—no, this was a time to throw a wrench in all that they knew, challenging their sensibilities and making them rethink their ways of being.

Where have we become complacent about the things of God? Have we watered down the radical, shocking words and actions of Jesus so that they no longer shock or challenge us? Perhaps it is time to let God's word shake us to the core.

For supplementary preaching resources, please [visit our website access point](#). (Link: bit.ly/proclaim-it-nl)

Scripture Summary

Jesus' ministry was in full swing. He was beginning to do and say things that were shocking and challenging. Healings, forgiveness, eating with tax collectors on the sabbath—was there anything this trouble-maker wouldn't do?

Call to Worship

L: Come, worship the Lord!

C: The one who heals,

L: Come, worship the Lord!

C: The one who forgives,

L: Come, worship the Lord!

C: The one who loves.

Confession and Forgiveness

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Living God,

C: You have given us all we need to follow you, yet we doubt ourselves, criticize others, grasp for meaningless pleasures and seek hollow assurances. Forgive us for refusing to see what is in front of our faces. Restore us by the power of your son, Jesus Christ, amen.

P: The Son of Man is powerful, yet compassionate. Take heart in the pardon that he offers: you are forgiven. You are beloved children of God. Your faith has healed you. Amen.



Liturgy

Prayer of the Day

O Lord,
Your words are sometimes difficult to hear. Turn our hearts in your direction, so that even when following is a challenge, we rely on your Spirit to guide us on the path. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

Offertory Prayer

Dear Savior, your mission is as urgent now as it was when you walked on earth. Use these gifts which we offer here according to your need, so that all your children might know your healing love, for the sake of the world. Amen.

Prayers of the Church

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

L: You rewarded faith with forgiveness and healing, dear Teacher. Strengthen our trust in your power to redeem our lives, that we may never hesitate to ask for your transforming mercy. Radical God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Just as a creature sheds unneeded skin or a butterfly abandons its cocoon, so your son ushered in a time to shake off the old ways and embrace the new kingdom. Don't allow us to become so attached to the past that we cannot follow where your Spirit is leading us. Radical God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: O Lord, you shocked your followers with the company you chose to keep. May we similarly seek out the marginalized and unpopular, resisting the urge to judge and exclude them the way the world does. Radical God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: The sick were healed with a word from you. Send also your Spirit to those whom we know are suffering in mind, soul, or body, (*especially...*). Radical God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We hold up your disciples as examples, but they were ordinary people who chose to follow when invited. May our response be like theirs, and our reward the abundant life which they found in you. Radical God,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: Gather us as you do these prayers, and answer us in a way which we can hear: through your word, through others, and through the ways you are calling us to bear hope to the world, for the sake of Jesus Christ, amen.

Eucharistic Invitation

Lord, you have not come to call not the righteous, but sinners. May this meal that we are about to receive stand as a vivid reminder of the forgiveness which you offer freely, and the grace which is available to all. Join the feast; all is ready!



Liturgy

Litany

**Note: The congregation begins reading this litany first.*

C: Answer us, Jesus, for all that you do!

L: Ask, my beloved, whatever you wish.

C: Why do you speak in the way that you?

L: My words are from God; I proclaim only that.

C: Why do you blaspheme and offer forgiveness?

L: The souls who are seeking desire redemption.

C: But who can forgive, except God alone?

L: Indeed, only God and the one who's been sent.

C: And so do you claim to be speaking for God?

L: The Son of Man does as required of him.

C: So God's words and yours are one and the same?

L: Which would be harder: to heal or forgive?

C: Why do you ask when you know we've no answer?

L: The one who forgives is the same one who heals.

C: We've never heard anyone speak in this way.

L: I know you have questions you still haven't asked.

C: Yes, why do you eat with the people who sin?

L: Who needs to heal: the healthy or sick?

C: Collectors of tax have a place at your table?

L: For God has a need for the unrighteous too.

C: But why would you want to be seated with them?

L: There is no one better to learn of God's kingdom.

C: But why do great teachers hang out with such riff raff?

L: It is only your eyes which regard them unworthy.

C: Are there not standards and rules which apply?

L: The only commandment that matters is love.

C: Why are some fasting, but not your disciples?

L: The time is not right for them to abstain.

C: But do they not care or respect the old rites?

L: They do as I ask them, while I'm still around.

C: Should not faithful Jews observe what is right?

L: My followers have me; for now we shall feast.

C: Then shall they forever defy the tradition?

L: As long as I live, we shall celebrate life.

C: Why do your decrees fall outside of the law?

L: I come to make new what is now past its time.

C: How can you speak in these radical ways?

L: My father commands me to serve the new wine.

C: And what if we choose to refuse what you offer?

L: Your life will be poorer; your eyes won't perceive.

C: How you perplex us and daily oppose us.

L: My friends, all are welcome. Come join in the feast!

C: Jesus invites us to join in the feast.

L: Will you agree?

C: It's unlikely, and yet—

All: All are invited to join in the feast!



Creative Expression

Skit

Characters: Reporter, Friend, Scribe, Paralyzed, Levi, Person

Props: Microphone

[Reporter holds microphone as they report on the unfolding scene.]

Reporter: Yes, thank you. This is Farrah See reporting. We're on the scene now. Jesus of Nazareth has just forgiven a man's sins. Now, we don't yet have all the details, but we'll bring them to you as we know more. Wait...here comes one of the witnesses now. What can you tell me about the events that unfolded here today?

Friend: There were four of us carrying him. I mean, he was heavy, but that's what you do for a friend. When we couldn't get to Jesus because of the crowd, we dug through the roof. It was risky, but this Jesus was worth the risk. We lowered our friend down right in front of Jesus – he was paralyzed, you know, so we couldn't just walk him in anyway. Well, when Jesus saw our friend and our faith, he said, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

Reporter: Astonishing! How did the scribes take it?

Scribe: How did we take it? We were outraged! We wondered, how could he say such a thing? It's blasphemy! Only God can forgive sins! Does this man think he is God? And then he said to us, "Which is easier, to say to one who is paralyzed, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and take your mat and walk?'" Outrageous!

Reporter: Wait...here comes the man now. He's...uh...walking. Sir, what do you have to say?

Man: I was really hoping Jesus could heal me. He said simply, "Stand up, take your mat and go to your home." And I did! I mean, everyone was murmuring, and praising God. They said, like, "We have never seen anything like this!"

Reporter: We're going to follow Jesus down to the sea, where he still seems to be stirring things up. There's a whole crowd around him. Wait, he's saying something...He's talking to Levi, the...tax collector. Well, this is just getting stranger and stranger.

Levi: I can't believe Jesus and his disciples had dinner with me! And my fellow tax collectors, and others, too. Those Pharisees keep calling us sinners. But then Jesus said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, only those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."

Reporter: Jesus' words are cutting, for sure. The crowds seem pretty upset.

Person: We asked Jesus one day, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" He answered with a patchwork of confusing sayings. He said, "The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast on that day."

Man: Yeah, and he said, "No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak; otherwise, the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made."

Person: And, "No one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins."

Reporter: The more Jesus heals, the more they flock to him. The more he speaks, the less they understood. Who knows what will become of this strange, wise drifter? This is Farrah See reporting. Back to you.



Kids' Storytime

Main Message

Jesus wasn't worried about how popular someone was.
Jesus cared about people and showed them love!

Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin

Setting the Scene/Background

Jesus broke social norms by hanging out with tax collectors and scandalized people by forgiving sins.

We know now that Jesus is the son of God, but if we didn't know, it might be a wacky thing to see!

Help kids remember Jesus' radical love and forgiveness in this lesson for today!

Telling the Story

Tell the story using the *KidStuff* bulletin.

Activity

Invite kids to think of someone famous or popular they think breaks a lot of rules—inside their heads only! Offer a prompt that might help, maybe a popular sports figure or a character on a TV show.

Ask what Jesus would say if he met that person. Offer some options:

Stop breaking rules!

Stop throwing fits when you don't win!

Don't be sneaky or swipe other people's stuff!

Remind kids that Jesus loves everyone, even people who break rules. The first thing Jesus would say to any of those people is that they are loved and forgiven.

Does this mean we can break laws? No. But it does mean we don't have to judge others for how they behave!

Reflection Questions

- Do you think certain sins are harder to forgive than others? Why or why not?
- How can we be sure we are forgiven and loved?

Stuff to Consider

Many kids with ADHD, ASD and other behavioral health conditions might struggle with following rules and may be seen as a rule breaker by the group. Try to keep the focus on famous people or characters, not people in our daily lives. Don't shame anyone.

Next Week's Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Pot of dirt
- Mini trowel/garden rake
- Seeds



Planning Worksheet

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Skit or Creative Ideas

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Props for Kids' Storytime or Skit

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Choral Music/Special Music

Guest Speakers/Announcements



Scripture Readings

Text: Mark 4:1-34

4 Again he began to teach beside the sea. Such a very large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat on the sea and sat there, while the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. ² He began to teach them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: ³ “Listen! A sower went out to sow. ⁴ And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵ Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up quickly, since it had no depth of soil. ⁶ And when the sun rose, it was scorched; and since it had no root, it withered away. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. ⁸ Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.” ⁹ And he said, “Let anyone with ears to hear listen!”

¹⁰ When he was alone, those who were around him along with the twelve asked him about the parables. ¹¹ And he said to them, “To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside, everything comes in parables; ¹² in order that

‘they may indeed look, but not perceive,
and may indeed listen, but not understand;
so that they may not turn again and be forgiven.”

¹³ And he said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? Then how will you understand all the parables? ¹⁴ The sower sows the word. ¹⁵ These are the ones on the path where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. ¹⁶ And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: when they hear the word, they immediately receive it with joy. ¹⁷ But they have no root, and endure only for a while; then, when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. ¹⁸ And others are those sown among the thorns: these are the ones who hear the word, ¹⁹ but the cares of the world, and the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things come in and choke the word, and it yields nothing. ²⁰ And these are the ones sown on the good soil: they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.”

²¹ He said to them, “Is a lamp brought in to be put under the bushel basket, or under the bed, and not on the

lampstand? ²² For there is nothing hidden, except to be disclosed; nor is anything secret, except to come to light. ²³ Let anyone with ears to hear listen!” ²⁴ And he said to them, “Pay attention to what you hear; the measure you give will be the measure you get, and still more will be given you. ²⁵ For to those who have, more will be given; and from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away.”

²⁶ He also said, “The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, ²⁷ and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. ²⁸ The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. ²⁹ But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.”

³⁰ He also said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? ³¹ It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; ³² yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”

³³ With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; ³⁴ he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

Secondary Text: Psalm 126

¹ When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.

² Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then it was said among the nations,
“The Lord has done great things for them.”

³ The Lord has done great things for us,
and we rejoiced.

⁴ Restore our fortunes, O Lord,
like the watercourses in the Negeb.

⁵ May those who sow in tears
reap with shouts of joy.

⁶ Those who go out weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy,
carrying their sheaves.



Scripture Readings

Pronunciation Guide

Negeb: NAY-geb

Dramatic Reading of the Text

Readers: Narrator, Jesus

Narrator: Again he began to teach beside the sea. Such a very large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat on the sea and sat there, while the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. He began to teach them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them:

Jesus: “Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up quickly, since it had no depth of soil. And when the sun rose, it was scorched; and since it had no root, it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.” And he said, “Let anyone with ears to hear listen!”

Narrator: When he was alone, those who were around him along with the twelve asked him about the parables. And he said to them,

Jesus: “To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside, everything comes in parables; in order that

‘they may indeed look, but not perceive,
and may indeed listen, but not understand;
so that they may not turn again and be forgiven.’”

Narrator: And he said to them,

Jesus: “Do you not understand this parable? Then how will you understand all the parables? The sower sows the word. These are the ones on the path where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: when they hear the word, they immediately receive it with joy. But they have no root, and endure only for a while; then, when trouble or

persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. And others are those sown among the thorns: these are the ones who hear the word, but the cares of the world, and the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things come in and choke the word, and it yields nothing. And these are the ones sown on the good soil: they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.”

Narrator: He said to them,

Jesus: “Is a lamp brought in to be put under the bushel basket, or under the bed, and not on the lampstand? For there is nothing hidden, except to be disclosed; nor is anything secret, except to come to light. Let anyone with ears to hear listen!”

Narrator: And he said to them,

Jesus: “Pay attention to what you hear; the measure you give will be the measure you get, and still more will be given you. For to those who have, more will be given; and from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away.”

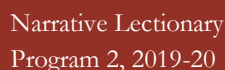
Narrator: He also said,

Jesus: “The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.”

Narrator: He also said,

Jesus: “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”

Narrator: With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.



Parables in Mark, Mark 4:1-34



Theme and Liturgy

Preaching Theme

Main Idea: Some of Jesus' followers were ready to let God's word take root and grow strong in a hostile environment.

Let's take a look at Jesus' parable in light of Israel's oppression by Rome. Jesus described a number of ways people responded to God's word to date.

First, Jesus described people who heard God's word, but the temptations of the world kept them from internalizing what they heard. Some caved to the lure of wealth and an easier life for those who bought into Rome's systems. God's word is radically selfless, while the words of the world are intentionally selfish. One will undoubtedly win over the other, and those without the benefit of being rooted in the word run the risk of leaning toward the things of the world.

Similarly, some people heard the word, but "it was scorched... since it had no root." These people accepted the word, but where God's word clashed with the ways of Rome, it fell away. Maybe these people were simply trying to survive in a hostile world. Maybe living by the word was just too difficult.

Next, Jesus described people who heard God's word and let it settle within them, but then it was "choked" out of them. Considering what the people were enduring, it's easy to see how some, upon hearing God's word, looked at their situation and concluded that the promises of God were inconsistent with their experience. It's not uncommon today—many people hear God's word, but what they hear doesn't seem to match what they experience in the world. Peace, justice, evidence of God's presence—all of these can seem lacking in this world.

However, there were some who heard the word, let it settle within them, and it took root. These were the believers that were most likely the most receptive to Jesus' teachings. They were ready to accept Jesus' challenge to act and speak into a hostile world, and to endure suffering for the sake of the world. Others were not yet ready to hear it, and so the meaning of the word was kept from them. But for those Jesus had collected, it was time to let their light shine into a darkened world. Like a mustard seed, it would

grow beyond anyone's imagination, and would do so by the power of God.

For supplementary preaching resources, please [visit our website access point](#). (Link: bit.ly/proclaim-it-nl)

Scripture Summary

Jesus taught by parables so that some would understand, while others were kept from knowing the word. For now, Jesus would invest in those ready to follow.

Call to Worship

L: Open your ears, and hear!

C: The word of the Lord is calling!

L: Sowing the seeds of life!

C: Seeking the rich soil!

L: Hear what your savior says!

C: Grow and find life in the word!

Confession and Forgiveness

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Living God,

C: You have given us all we need to follow you, yet we doubt ourselves, criticize others, grasp for meaningless pleasures and seek hollow assurances. Forgive us for refusing to see what is in front of our faces. Restore us by the power of your son, Jesus Christ, amen.

P: The Son of Man is powerful, yet compassionate. Take heart in the pardon that he offers: you are forgiven. You are beloved children of God. Your faith has healed you. Amen.



Liturgy

Prayer of the Day

O Lord,

Your word is indeed life to us. May we receive it with joy, unencumbered by the concerns of our lives, caring only to hear your invitation of grace: abundant life in your service. Through Jesus we pray, amen.

Offertory Prayer

The measure we give, O God, is the measure we get. Therefore let us bring our gifts with joy, knowing that we cannot have less when we offer what we have back to your good purpose. For we are well only when all your children are well and thriving, according to your vision for a world redeemed. Amen.

Prayers of the Church

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

L: We say we desire to know your will, O Lord, but so often we get in our own way, allowing doubts, cares and distractions to derail us. Turn us again to the path which leads to life and bring forth your good fruits in us. God of harvest,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: As seeds sown by a hopeful farmer thrive or die according to how they are cultivated, so your creatures—both human and animal—require a stable, enriching environment in which to prosper. May we be part of the solution to problems we have helped cause on this planet, taking responsibility and making

amends for the damage we have done. God of harvest,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: As we remember the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. we give you thanks for all who were bold to speak and act on behalf of justice and truth. Continue to raise up new voices for a new era, where difficult truths still need to be spoken. God of harvest,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: From a tiny seed a mighty mustard plant grows. May our kindness be the seeds from which healing springs, as we tenderly care for all your children in need. We lift up this day (*especially...*). God of harvest,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: For all the saints who shone their lights rather than hiding them, we give you thanks, O Lord. May we follow their example and share in their heavenly portion. God of harvest,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: Into your hands we commend our prayers, nurturing God, knowing that you are trustworthy and will answer. For the sake of Jesus Christ we pray, amen.

Eucharistic Invitation

As the grain that became our bread once grew and flourished, so may we, too, thrive when we receive it from your hand, O Savior. Feed us now and forevermore with the food which never diminishes nor disappoints. Come and eat!



Liturgy

Litany

Right side: To those who had been called,

Left side: Jesus offered guidance.

R: Although the words were difficult,

L: He told them what they meant.

R: The sower and seed?

L: The word of God proclaimed.

R: The seed upon the path?

L: Is faith that's snatched away.

R: And those on rocky soil?

L: Acceptance quick but shallow.

R: And how about the thorns?

L: The choking world's concerns.

R: But what about the last?

L: The ones in fertile soil?

R: Surely they will thrive!

L: Indeed, with fruit besides!

R: Are these the true believers?

L: The ones who trust the word.

R: What about the hidden lamp?

L: The light concealed from view?

R: Will not its glow one day appear?

L: Then all shall be revealed!

R: And what you give comes back again?

L: With even greater yield!

R: And if you hoard your meager lot?

L: It surely disappears!

R: The kingdom's like a scattered seed

L: Which grows by night, in secret,

R: But when it's ready to be picked

L: Is when the master takes it.

R: So right away the harvest comes,

L: No waiting in the fields!

R: The kingdom's like a tiny seed,

L: The smallest one of all.

R: Which when it's planted in the ground

L: Grows big and full and tall.

R: With all these seeds and all these plants,

L: The message seems to be:

R: To grow, and bloom and bear much fruit

L: And thus the Lord is pleased!

R: So let us grow

L: And multiply

All: And bear the gospel fruits!



Creative Expression

Skit

Characters: Leo, Juan

Props: A hoe or rake, plastic or real

[Leo is tilling soil and singing to himself as Juan approaches.]

Leo: [humming and singing, occasionally saying the words, “Good Soil”]

Juan: Hey Leo! Getting ready for planting?

Leo: I am! I love having fresh beans and carrots.

Juan: And tomatoes!

Leo: My favorite is fresh garden tomatoes cut up with fresh cucumbers and a little ranch...

Juan: Mmmmm, it’s just like heaven.

Leo: Oh I know. Spending time in this garden, working the soil and seeing things grow is just the best. I don’t know what it is about nature, I just feel so connected to God in the outdoors!

Juan: I have never been much for going outside myself.

Leo: Really?

Juan: Really. Too many bugs. Possibility of snakes and skunks? No thank you. I’d much rather find God in music. [noticing Leo’s disapproving look] But I am really grateful for people like you, Leo, who love the outdoors and grow all these delicious fruits and vegetables!

Leo: [chuckling] I guess so. Which do you think is better?

Juan: What do you mean which?

Leo: Which way to connect to God. Is it better in nature or singing in worship?

Juan: [pensive] Well, I know God wants us to be in community, and singing in church is with our community.

But I also know that there are a lot of stories dealing with nature in the Bible.

Leo: [sort of discouraged] But I guess you could hear about those nature stories in church, too.

Juan: Maybe. But if God is who created the earth, it started with things that grow in nature.

Leo: You’re right!

Juan: And weren’t you singing the words “good soil” earlier?

Leo: I guess I was.

Juan: Do you know the song, “Lord let my heart be good soil?”

Leo: Yeah, I guess that’s where I heard it before...

Juan: Exactly! You’re bringing worship to nature!

Leo: I guess I am!

Juan: Jesus talks about us being good soil for the seeds of God’s word to grow in—and come to think of it, you are totally good soil for God! You donate so much of your produce to the hungry, and you volunteer at the homeless shelter every week. I think you are doing worship just fine!

Leo: Thanks, Juan. It’s good to have affirmation.

Juan: It is! And try not to worry about which is better. I don’t think there is a better—just what works for each of us in our own way!

Leo: You’re right! I’ll stop worrying!

Juan: Good! You can use that time to make sure I get some great tomatoes this summer!



Kids' Storytime

Main Message

God's word is like seeds. We can be good soil so the seeds can grow, or we can be rocky and hard where God's word won't have much impact. What will we choose to work toward?

Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Pot of dirt
- Mini trowel/garden rake
- Seeds

Setting the Scene/Background

God's word is good, but if we can't hear the message and be changed by the love and grace we are shown, it won't make much of a difference.

Help kids see themselves as gardeners of their lives and that God's messages can help them if they listen and take it to heart.

Telling the Story

Tell the story using the *KidStuff* bulletin.

Activity

Show kids the empty pot and your seeds.

Tell them Jesus said seeds need good soil to grow.

Explain that the seeds represent God's word.

Put some seeds in places they won't grow such as the floor or your pocket. Say, this is what can happen when we don't hear the stories of God and let them help us grow.

Work the soil with your tool. Talk about how we are the soil. When God's word comes to us, the seeds of God's word can grow in us.

Plant the seeds. Keep it around so kids can see them grow week by week! (Don't use this option if you aren't sure these seeds will grow in the place they are.)

Reflection Questions

- What makes good soil, good?
- What happens when I'm like the rocky ground?
Does God still love me?

Stuff to Consider

This can get metaphorical for kids to think about being soil to receive seeds. If it helps, you can talk about us being like seeds that grow, because every kid grows, whether they get taller or just learn more as they go.

Next Week's Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Prop chains or ropes



Planning Worksheet

Preaching Themes

Kids' Storytime Ideas

Skit or Creative Ideas

Worship Setting

Props for Kids' Storytime or Skit

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Scripture Readings

Text: Mark 5:1-20

⁵They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. ²And when he had stepped out of the boat, immediately a man out of the tombs with an unclean spirit met him. ³He lived among the tombs; and no one could restrain him any more, even with a chain; ⁴for he had often been restrained with shackles and chains, but the chains he wrenched apart, and the shackles he broke in pieces; and no one had the strength to subdue him. ⁵Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always howling and bruising himself with stones. ⁶When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and bowed down before him; ⁷and he shouted at the top of his voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." ⁸For he had said to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" ⁹Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion; for we are many." ¹⁰He begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. ¹¹Now there on the hillside a great herd of swine was feeding; ¹²and the unclean spirits begged him, "Send us into the swine; let us enter them." ¹³So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the swine; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and were drowned in the sea.

¹⁴The swineherds ran off and told it in the city and in the country. Then people came to see what it was that had

happened. ¹⁵They came to Jesus and saw the demoniac sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the legion; and they were afraid. ¹⁶Those who had seen what had happened to the demoniac and to the swine reported it. ¹⁷Then they began to beg Jesus to leave their neighborhood. ¹⁸As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed by demons begged him that he might be with him. ¹⁹But Jesus refused, and said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and what mercy he has shown you." ²⁰And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.

Secondary Text: Psalm 89:1-4

- ¹I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord, forever;
with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.
- ²I declare that your steadfast love is established forever;
your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.
- ³You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one,
I have sworn to my servant David:
- ⁴"I will establish your descendants forever,
and build your throne for all generations."



Scripture Readings

Dramatic Reading of the Text

Readers: Narrator, Spirit, Jesus

Narrator: They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. And when he had stepped out of the boat, immediately a man out of the tombs with an unclean spirit met him. He lived among the tombs; and no one could restrain him any more, even with a chain; for he had often been restrained with shackles and chains, but the chains he wrenched apart, and the shackles he broke in pieces; and no one had the strength to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always howling and bruising himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and bowed down before him; and he shouted at the top of his voice,

Spirit: "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me."

Narrator: For he had said to him,

Jesus: "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!"

Narrator: Then Jesus asked him,

Jesus: "What is your name?"

Narrator: He replied,

Spirit: "My name is Legion; for we are many."

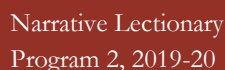
Narrator: He begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. Now there on the hillside a great herd of swine was feeding; and the unclean spirits begged him,

Spirit: "Send us into the swine; let us enter them."

Narrator: So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the swine; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and were drowned in the sea. The swineherds ran off and told it in the city and in the country. Then people came to see what it was that had happened. They came to Jesus and saw the demoniac sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the legion; and they were afraid. Those who had seen what had happened to the demoniac and to the swine reported it. Then they began to beg Jesus to leave their neighborhood. As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed by demons begged him that he might be with him. But Jesus refused, and said to him,

Jesus: "Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and what mercy he has shown you."

Narrator: And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.



Gerasene Demoniac, Mark 5:1-20

[illegible]



Theme and Liturgy

Preaching Theme

Main Idea: Jesus' ministry was often met with fear and resistance.

Already by this point in Jesus' ministry (quite early), he was starting to upset people. Even when he was doing good, people were resistant to his words and actions.

In the country of the [Gerasenes](#) (a town east of the Jordan River with more Greek than Jewish influence), Jesus encountered a man clearly tormented by his demons. The man was shackled, but had broken through those—no one could do anything with him, so he lived among the tombs (the dead) instead of among the living. Jesus commanded the demons to leave the man, and the demons challenged him to leave them alone. The demons were the first to recognize Jesus' divinity and were afraid. But Jesus continued, commanding them to leave. They begged that he send them into a flock of swine, and Jesus agreed. They entered the swine and fled into the sea.

Now, you might think the townspeople were happy about this miracle, but instead were quite afraid. They begged Jesus to leave.

Why would they react in this way? [Systems theory](#) suggests that a system (in this case the Gerasene community) always pulls toward status quo (not change). The community, although also affected by the man's demons, had effectively dealt with the problem—they tried time and again to restrain him, and they made him live among the tombs. It was not ideal, but it was what they knew.

Along came Jesus. When he drove the demons out of the man, the community was terrified. A man tormented with demons they could handle. A man who could cast out demons was too big a change. They didn't want to know what else such a man could do, so they cast him out.

All of us live in such systems—likely several. Our family systems, our work systems, our neighborhood and community systems—all of these have their own dynamics. All of these strive to keep the system in a state of status quo. What this means is when people introduce change, the system will naturally resist it, even when the change is for the better. It seems the more dysfunctional the system, the more resistant it is to functional change.

Another characteristic of dysfunctional systems is that the black sheep of the system is usually the healthiest among them. The healthiest person resists the dysfunction, threatens the status quo, and is so labeled trouble-maker.

Jesus was the healthiest person entering a dysfunctional system, not only in Gerasa, but to the entire Jewish (and Gentile) community. He resisted the dysfunction, threatened the status quo, and would carry out most of his ministry labeled a trouble-maker.

Consider your own community. In what ways does it resist change? Who is labeled trouble-maker? How might your community learn to embrace healthy change?

For supplementary preaching resources, please [visit our website access point](#). (Link: bit.ly/proclaim-it-nl)

Scripture Summary

While in the community of the Gerasenes, Jesus tried to help a man tormented by demons, but his efforts were met with fear and resistance. It seems only the demons knew who Jesus truly was—the son of God.

Call to Worship

L: Let us sing of the love of the Lord,

C: And proclaim God's faithfulness forever!

L: The Lord offers blessing,

C: And cures our afflictions.

L: Let us sing of the love of the Lord,

C: And proclaim God's faithfulness forever!

Confession and Forgiveness

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Living God,

C: You have given us all we need to follow you, yet we doubt ourselves, criticize others, grasp for meaningless pleasures and seek hollow assurances. Forgive us for refusing to see what is in front of our faces. Restore us by the power of your son, Jesus Christ, amen.

P: The Son of Man is powerful, yet compassionate. Take heart in the pardon that he offers: you are forgiven. You are beloved children of God. Your faith has healed you. Amen.



Liturgy

Prayer of the Day

O Lord,
Your power is greater than evil. Shake us from complacent acceptance of all that doesn't work in our world, and visit us with your mighty healing spirit, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Offertory Prayer

Our lives belong to you, along with all our possessions. Receive these offerings of love, dedicated to the work of your just kingdom on earth, for the sake of your Son Jesus, amen.

Prayers of the Church

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

L: Lord, we are often not ready for the transformation you bring to our lives. Give us courage to embrace the upheaval of positive changes, even when they cause discomfort and feel unfamiliar. Mighty God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: As the herd of swine perished because of the evil spirits, so nature often suffers for sins not its own. Help us see how we have failed to respect and protect the environment in which we and all creatures live, and give us conviction to do better. Mighty God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: As the Lunar New Year is celebrated around the world, we are reminded that you are the one who

makes all things new, restoring us to wholeness and renewing creation. Open our eyes to the new things you are doing around us. Mighty God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Your power casts out the demons which have a hold on our spiritual, mental and physical well-being. Send a special measure of your healing to those who need it most, (*especially...*). Mighty God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We celebrate the lives and work of your apostles Timothy, Titus, and Silas, rejoicing that your followers raised up partners wherever they went, to further spread the gospel. May we also inspire others with our witness to your powerful deeds in the world. Mighty God,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: Receive these prayers in your mercy, and protect us from dangers which we cannot see, by the grace of your Son Jesus Christ, amen.

Eucharistic Invitation

Many long for the love and forgiveness which you offer, O God. May this meal be a sign of your gifts freely available to all people, and may we be the messengers whom you seek to proclaim it. Come and join in the Lord's holy supper!



Liturgy

Litany

For this litany, divide the people into three groups.

Group 1: What do you want with us,

Group 2: Jesus of Nazareth?

Group 3: We are the demons

1: The legion, the many

2: Who take up our space

3: Within this sad human—

1: We rattle and rumble

2: And cast him about.

3: We howl and thunder,

1: And make ourselves heard.

2: And now you command us

3: To leave him forever?

1: We do not agree;

2: Go out of this place

3: And torment us no more.

1: What are you saying,

2: Jesus of Nazareth?

3: You will not back down

1: Until we are gone?

2: Then let us, at least,

3: Pass into this swine herd,

1: For there we'll continue

2: Our thundering roar.

3: Down into the sea we will go.

1: What do you want from us,

2: Jesus of Nazareth?

3: You've cast out the demons

1: From this tortured man?

2: We don't recognize him

3: Nor you, for that matter—

1: We'd like you to leave us,

2: Depart from this land,

3: And take with you

1: All your strange powers.

2: Which make us distrust

3: What we can't understand.

1: What do you want with us,

2: Jesus of Nazareth—

3: You come with your healing,

1: Disruption, upheaval,

2: Forgiveness and mercy,

3: But change and discomfort.

1: We can't quite be sure

2: Of these blessings you bring.

3: You ask us to change,

1: To be open,

2: To wonder

3: What life could be like

1: If we gave you a chance.

2: What do we lose

3: When you ask us to follow?

1: Our safety?

2: Our comfort?

3: Our lives?

1: Then give us your life

2: And we'll follow with gladness,

3: Please guide us

All: For all of our lives.



Creative Expression

Interview

As a complement to this week's story, invite someone who has struggled with mental health challenges to speak with the congregation about the challenges and joys of the struggle. Give them the questions ahead of time so they are prepared with their answers. Give them flexibility to craft their own questions if there are things they want to say that are not on your list of questions.

Welcome your guest and thank them for sharing such an intimate part of their life.

Ask:

Tell us a little about your struggle with mental health.

Today's story about the Gerasene man suggests that the man, who we now might understand had mental health challenges, may have had demons. How does the "demon" imagery concerning mental health speak to you?

What would you like people to know about your struggles and of how they might approach conversations and what action might they take to help those who struggle?



Kids' Storytime

Main Message

Jesus heals and is with us even when we are not well.

Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Prop chains or ropes

Setting the Scene/Background

When someone has trouble, especially the kind of trouble that makes them behave in a way not considered socially acceptable, people tend to want to hide that person away.

Jesus doesn't fear our deepest, darkest hurts or secrets and will walk with us to heal us.

Help kids see that even if they feel alone or trapped by something going on in their life, Jesus will not abandon them. He will walk with them on the journey to healing!

Telling the Story

Tell the story using the *KidStuff* bulletin.

Activity

Bind yourself in the chains or ropes. Tell the story of the Gerasene Demoniac while bound. Don't explain the situation; simply show it, no matter how many questions are asked of you.

After the story is told, ask if they've ever felt like they were trapped, or hurt or sad about something in their lives.

Talk about how Jesus walks with us in our hard times, freeing us from our hurts the way someone chained up can be freed from chains.

At this point, remove the binding, explaining that Jesus healed the lonely man who was possessed. He can heal us, too, when we are hurt.

Reflection Questions

- Do you think demons are real? Why or why not?
- If Jesus heals, why do we need medical help?
- Is it hard to be with someone who is sick? Why or why not?

Stuff to Consider

It can be tricky to talk about Jesus healing us—some think that they only need to pray to get rid of serious mental health conditions.

Try to be clear that when medicine is what we need to be well, Jesus affirms those choices and walks with us even in that kind of healing!

Next Week's Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Where's Waldo® picture (or picture of a crowd)



Planning Worksheet

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Skit or Creative Ideas

Worship Setting

Props for Kids' Storytime or Skit

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Special Events (Baptism, New Members)

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Scripture Readings

Text: Mark 5:21-43

²¹ When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea. ²² Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet ²³ and begged him repeatedly, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live." ²⁴ So he went with him.

And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. ²⁵ Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. ²⁶ She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. ²⁷ She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸ for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well." ²⁹ Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. ³⁰ Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" ³¹ And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'" ³² He looked all around to see who had done it. ³³ But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. ³⁴ He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

³⁵ While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?" ³⁶ But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." ³⁷ He allowed no one to follow him except

Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. ³⁸ When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. ³⁹ When he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." ⁴⁰ And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. ⁴¹ He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha cum," which means, "Little girl, get up!" ⁴² And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. ⁴³ He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Secondary Text: Psalm 131

¹ O Lord, my heart is not lifted up,
my eyes are not raised too high;
I do not occupy myself with things
too great and too marvelous for me.
² But I have calmed and quieted my soul,
like a weaned child with its mother;
my soul is like the weaned child that is with me.
³ O Israel, hope in the Lord
from this time on and forevermore.

Pronunciation Guide

Jairus: JAY-uh-ruhs

Talitha cum: TALL-ih-thuh KOOM



Scripture Readings

Dramatic Reading of the Text

Readers: Narrator, Jairus, Woman, Jesus, Disciple, People

Narrator: When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea. Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet and begged him repeatedly,

Jairus: "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live."

Narrator: So he went with him. And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, for she said,

Woman: "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well."

Narrator: Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said,

Jesus: "Who touched my clothes?"

Narrator: And his disciples said to him,

Disciples: "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'"

Narrator: He looked all around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. He said to her,

Jesus: "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

Narrator: While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say,

People: "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?"

Narrator: But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue,

Jesus: "Do not fear, only believe."

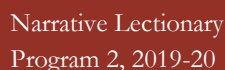
Narrator: He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. When he had entered, he said to them,

Jesus: "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping."

Narrator: And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her,

Jesus: "Talitha cum,"

Narrator: which means, "Little girl, get up!" And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.



Jairus' Daughter Healed, Mark 5:21-43

[illegible]



Theme and Liturgy

Preaching Theme

Main Idea: Jesus' healings did not discriminate; he came for all.

People from all around the countryside had learned of Jesus' healings and miracles. When he crossed over the sea, crowds were already waiting for him. They all wanted him to heal them or their loved ones. They pressed in on him from every side, so it was hard even to move. They all wanted his attention, hoping that if he agreed, he might heal them.

But one woman knew she didn't even need his attention to be healed. She knew he held so much power, she would be healed simply by touching his cloak. (Touching Jesus was forbidden, by the way, because she was bleeding. Consider this—because of her affliction, she had not been touched by another human for 12 years!) She crept in, touched his cloak, and Jesus immediately felt the power leave him. After a humorous exchange with his disciples, the woman confessed, and Jesus praised her for her faith.

Sandwiching this story is the story of Jairus' daughter, (age 12—the same length as the woman's hemorrhage), who was dying. Jesus was on his way to heal the girl when the exchange with the woman happened. When Jesus finally reached the girl, she was dead. He told those gathered that the girl was not dead, but sleeping, and the crowd laughed at him. What a different response! While the woman had so much faith in Jesus, these people had none. But their skepticism didn't deter him. He went in, held the girl by the hand, and healed the little girl.

This story is filled with juxtaposition and a literary chiasmic structure.

Jairus was one of the synagogue leaders, a man of power and position; the woman was broken and outcast. Jesus' healings were not dictated by social status.

The little girl was in the beginning of her life; the woman nearer the end. Jesus' healings were not dictated by age.

The woman expressed immense faith; the crowd expressed no faith at all. Jesus' healings were not dictated by faith.

The woman was healed amid a pressing crowd; the little girl with almost no witnesses, save a few select disciples and her parents. Jesus' healings were not dictated by the public eye.

It seems Jesus' miracles and healings were not limited, but instead were wide-spread and abundant. People healed all kinds of people in all kinds of circumstances. Random to

us, perhaps, but not to Jesus. Even today, we cannot predict who, when, or how Jesus will heal. But we can hold on to hope that there is nothing in our lives that would prevent us from garnering Jesus' attention. We are all worthy of Jesus' love and attention.

For supplementary preaching resources, please [visit our website access point](#). (Link: bit.ly/proclaim-it-nl)

Scripture Summary

All kinds of people flocked to Jesus for healings and miracles. In the healing of an old woman and a little girl, Jesus showed that he could and would offering healing to all kinds of people in all kinds of circumstances.

Call to Worship

L: Come and hear the words of life!

C: Jesus speaks and we are healed.

L: Come and see God's power in action!

C: Jesus transforms with a touch.

L: Come and know the love of Christ.

C: Jesus is our living Lord!

Confession and Forgiveness

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Living God,

C: You have given us all we need to follow you, yet we doubt ourselves, criticize others, grasp for meaningless pleasures and seek hollow assurances. Forgive us for refusing to see what is in front of our faces. Restore us by the power of your son, Jesus Christ, amen.

P: The Son of Man is powerful, yet compassionate. Take heart in the pardon that he offers: you are forgiven. You are beloved children of God. Your faith has healed you. Amen.



Liturgy

Prayer of the Day

Holy Lord,
Your grace knows no partiality nor distinction between people. Lead us also to serve whomever and wherever we are needed, for the sake of Jesus our healer, amen.

Offertory Prayer

Receive and bless these gifts which we offer at your altar of mercy. Continue teaching us in the ways of discipleship, that all might be fed, clothed, nurtured and healed, according to your will for the world. Amen.

Prayers of the Church

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

L: You never overlooked those who needed you, O Lord, even when the crowds were crushing with their numbers. Turn our eyes and hearts to those who are trying to get our attention amid everything that tries to distract and pull us away from discipleship. Healing God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: You have redefined what it is that makes us unclean, and have ignored the stigmas and limitations which we often put upon ourselves and one another. Empower those who work to broaden society's embrace of the excluded, ostracized and misunderstood. Healing God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: On this feast of Candlemas, we remember how the one who would heal so many was once brought as a baby to be dedicated at your temple. Bless all new members of your kingdom, guiding them in the path that you set before them. Healing God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: You put no limits on your healing, offering it freely to all who ask. May your Spirit's power bless all those for whom we pray this day, (*especially...*). Healing God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: A saint is anyone through whom your light shines, O Lord. Make us transparent to your will, and instruments of your peaceful revolution on earth. Healing God,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: May these things and all others for which we pray be gathered gently into your arms, and may we see the fulfillment which you have promised us as your children. In Jesus' name, amen.

Eucharistic Invitation

From far and wide let us gather at the Lord's table. From many traditions, cultures, opinions, natures, and varieties we come, all to be joined in one holy fellowship of believers. The meal has been prepared; come and enjoy!



Liturgy

Litany

Lower voices: Woman, now get up!

Higher voices: I plead at Jesus' feet.

L: Your sins have been forgiven,

H: I have suffered many years,

L: Now your sickness has been healed,

H: Could it really be the case?

L: You may go upon your way,

H: Joyful day!

L: Your faith is strong.

H: Alleluia!

L: You are well.

H: I begin new life today.

L: Little girl, get up!

H: Our daughter is no more!

L: She's only sleeping, now she wakes—

H: But she was really dead!

L: The one who heals can also raise,

H: The dying back to life?

L: Look now, she walks; Arise!

H: Weary ones, get up!

L: Your savior passes by.

H: He sees your need

L: And hears your pleas;

H: Your voice is not unheard.

L: Followers, arise!

H: And open to his word.

L: This one can heal,

H: Forgive as well.

L: Come, follow where he leads.

H: He knows your every need.

L: Faithful ones, arise!

H: Your sadness holds you down.

L: And busy-ness and worries too

H: All clamor for your time.

L: Your eyes are on the ground

H: As you plod about your days.

L: Arise—look up!

H: And see the one

L: Inviting you to life.

H: People, now arise!

L: Your faith has made you well.

H: Forgiveness is your legacy

L: And mercy your identity.

All: As children of the Lord!



Creative Expression

Skit

Characters: Marlo, Gabe

[Open on Marlo praying, Gabe walks in as Marlo finishes]

Marlo: [praying] Please help me to be the person you want me to be. Give me the strength to finish this school project, and patience with my classmates when they don't pay attention. Help me to be kind and loving and guide my heart and hands in this day. Amen. [looks up] Oh, hey Gabe!

Gabe: Hey Marlo! What were you doing?

Marlo: Praying.

Gabe: Why? You aren't in church.

Marlo: I know, I just like to pray.

Gabe: Really? Why?

Marlo: I don't know. I like to invite God into my daily life, I suppose.

Gabe: Don't you think God has better things to do with God's day then listen to your prayer?

Marlo: Well, maybe I'm not the most important person in the world.

Gabe: I'm not trying to be mean. I am just saying that there are like, billions of people in the world and I just don't know how God could really be able to notice each one of us. Know what I mean?

Marlo: Yeah, that makes sense.

Gabe: So, I guess I just save my prayers for large groups. Where it can really count, you know?

Marlo: I can see why you'd use that method, for sure.

Gabe: Yup. But it's cool that you pray.

Marlo: And it's ok you don't pray on your own. But, don't you think that God can listen to each of us for real?

Gabe: I just don't see how it could work.

Marlo: Well, do you think of God as that old dude with a white beard in the sky?

Gabe: Ha ha! I guess I didn't think about it but yeah—maybe like Morgan Freeman. Great voice, warm smile...

Marlo: Hah! He really was a good God in that movie. But I don't think that's really how God works.

Gabe: Really?

Marlo: No—I mean, God came to us as a human in Jesus. But God is so much bigger than that idea. God isn't in a human body. God is Spirit, moving in and through and around all of us.

Gabe: [Impressed] Wow...

Marlo: And not to mention the angels. God has messengers, too.

Gabe: You're right!

Marlo: So really, I totally believe that God can and does know each of us and hear each of our individual prayers. I don't know exactly how it works. But I trust that it does.

Gabe: You know, I think I might be changing my mind. I think you're right about God being so much bigger than we can imagine.

Marlo: Right?!

Gabe: I can't believe it. I think I'm going to start saying prayers on my own.

Marlo: You can still pray with other people—where two or more are gathered, there God will be!

Gabe: You're right! Let's pray right now!

Marlo: Ok!

[both kneel and fold hands]



Kids' Storytime

Main Message

Even though there are many people for Jesus to love, he knows you completely!

Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Where's Waldo® picture (or picture of a crowd)

Setting the Scene/Background

The world is big and filled with people. It can be hard to believe that God would know each of us individually, but this story proves that Jesus has the capacity to tell someone was healed while stuffed in a crowd of people.

Show kids that even though God has many children to love, each one of them is known deeply and loved by God!

Telling the Story

Tell the story using the *KidStuff* bulletin.

Activity

Show kids the Where's Waldo® picture. (Or picture of a crowd of people. Be sure you have already found Waldo or have chosen a person to talk about.)

Ask if they think that God can know each person individually.

Point out where Waldo is. Talk about how similar many people look in this picture, but there is only one Waldo. It's the same with us! There are many children of God but there is only one of you, and God knows you and loves you!

Reflection Questions

- How can God know each person?
- What must God be like to be so familiar with us?
Is God like a web of spirit? A balloon we all fit inside? What do you think?

Stuff to Consider

Some children might have vision issues, whether it's physical difficulties or developmental things that can make it tricky to see. Be sure to do a lot of verbal description of the picture you are looking at so that everyone understands what is being shown.

Next Week's Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Toys for a very young child—two years old max
 - Blocks
 - Large truck
 - Stuffed animal



Planning Worksheet

Preaching Themes

Kids' Storytime Ideas

Skit or Creative Ideas

Worship Setting

Props for Kids' Storytime or Skit

Hymns

Special Events (Baptism, New Members)

Choral Music/Special Music

Guest Speakers/Announcements



Scripture Readings

Text: Mark 6:1-29

6 He left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. ² On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, “Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! ³ Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him. ⁴ Then Jesus said to them, “Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house.” ⁵ And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. ⁶ And he was amazed at their unbelief.

Then he went about among the villages teaching. ⁷ He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. ⁸ He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; ⁹ but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. ¹⁰ He said to them, “Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. ¹¹ If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.” ¹² So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. ¹³ They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

¹⁴ King Herod heard of it, for Jesus’ name had become known. Some were saying, “John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him.” ¹⁵ But others said, “It is Elijah.” And others said, “It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old.” ¹⁶ But when Herod heard of it, he said, “John, whom I beheaded, has been raised.”

¹⁷ For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, because Herod had married her.

¹⁸ For John had been telling Herod, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife.” ¹⁹ And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, ²⁰ for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a

righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him. ²¹ But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. ²² When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, “Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it.” ²³ And he solemnly swore to her, “Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom.” ²⁴ She went out and said to her mother, “What should I ask for?” She replied, “The head of John the baptizer.” ²⁵ Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, “I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.” ²⁶ The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. ²⁷ Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John’s head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, ²⁸ brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. ²⁹ When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

Secondary Text: Psalm 122

- ¹ I was glad when they said to me,
“Let us go to the house of the Lord!”
- ² Our feet are standing
within your gates, O Jerusalem.
- ³ Jerusalem—built as a city
that is bound firmly together.
- ⁴ To it the tribes go up,
the tribes of the Lord,
as was decreed for Israel,
to give thanks to the name of the Lord.
- ⁵ For there the thrones for judgment were set up,
the thrones of the house of David.
- ⁶ Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
“May they prosper who love you.
- ⁷ Peace be within your walls,
and security within your towers.”
- ⁸ For the sake of my relatives and friends
I will say, “Peace be within you.”
- ⁹ For the sake of the house of the Lord our God,
I will seek your good.



Scripture Readings

Pronunciation Guide

Joshua: JOH-seez

Herodias: hih-ROH-dee-uhs

Dramatic Reading of the Text

Readers: Narrator, People, Jesus, Herod, John, Daughter, Herodias

Narrator: He left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said,

People: “Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joshua and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?”

Narrator: And they took offense at him. Then Jesus said to them,

Jesus: “Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house.”

Narrator: And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. And he was amazed at their unbelief. Then he went about among the villages teaching. He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. He said to them,

Jesus: “Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.”

Narrator: So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them. King Herod heard of it, for Jesus’ name had become known. Some were saying,

People: “John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him.”

Narrator: But others said,

People: “It is Elijah.”

Narrator: And others said,

People: “It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old.”

Narrator: But when Herod heard of it, he said,

Herod: “John, whom I beheaded, has been raised.”

Narrator: For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, because Herod had married her. For John had been telling Herod,

John: “It is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife.”

Narrator: And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him. But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl,

Herod: “Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it.”

Narrator: And he solemnly swore to her,

Herod: “Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom.”

Narrator: She went out and said to her mother,

Daughter: “What should I ask for?”

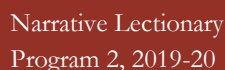
Narrator: She replied,

Herodias: “The head of John the baptizer.”

Narrator: Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested,

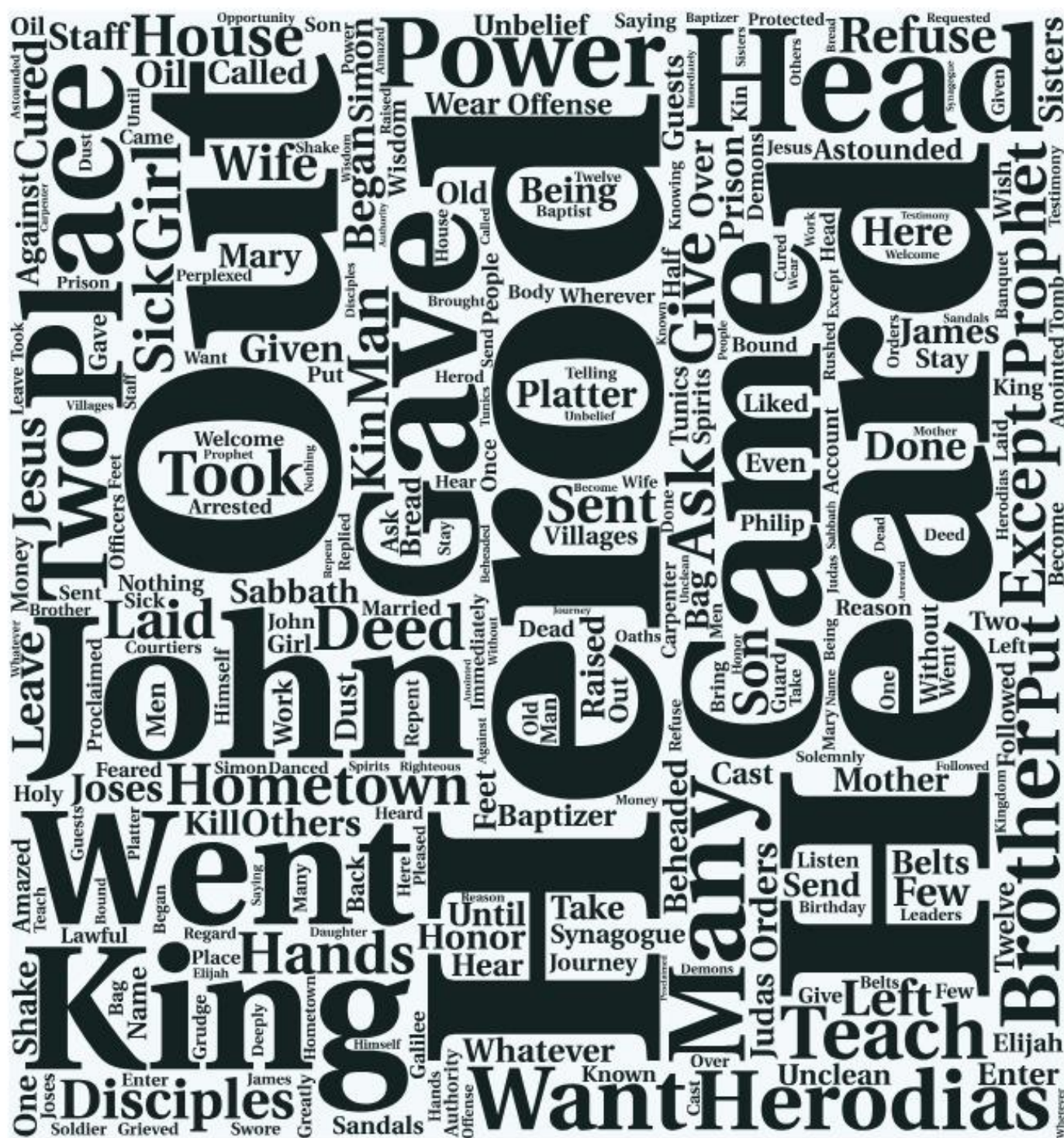
Daughter: “I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.”

Narrator: The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John’s head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.



Death of John the Baptist, Mark 6:1-29

Tag Cloud





Theme and Liturgy

Preaching Theme

Main Idea: John prophesied about God's laws. Jesus spoke and acted as expressions of God's love.

John and Jesus were two prophets (at this time, John and Jesus were both considered prophets—Jesus' divinity had not yet been revealed) upsetting the status quo by preaching truth and change. Jesus was "amazed" to discover that those in his own town lacked belief in him. It seems even Jesus could never outgrow being the little kid from next door whenever he went home.

John was also upsetting people. King Herod had imprisoned him because his words were dangerous and offensive, but King Herod had a soft spot for John. Even though John condemned his relationship with Herodias, his brother's wife, Herod found him perplexing and interesting, and liked listening to him.

But Herod also had a soft spot for his daughter, who had apparently been trained to entertain the men. During one drunken party, she aroused them all so much, Herod promised her anything she wanted. (This is why we don't drink to excess, kiddies.) What she wanted (what her mother, Herodias wanted) was John's head on a platter. Herod couldn't go back on his word in front of his guests, so he made it happen.

It's no wonder Herod was terrified when he heard that Jesus was prophesying, teaching, healing, and performing miracles. He thought John had returned from the dead to exact his revenge on Herod for his murder.

Although we have the luxury of knowing that Jesus was much more than a prophet, the people of Jesus' day did not yet see it. To them, Jesus and John were two prophets cut from the same cloth. They were cousins, after all. Both were preaching and prophesying against the sins of Israel and the corruption of Rome. Both were trying to bring people back to the core of God's word—to love one another and to follow God's laws.

For John, God's laws came before God's love. John openly and brazenly called out religious leaders for turning religion into a business, and for behaving corruptly.

But for Jesus, God's love came before God's laws. For Jesus, God's laws were an expression of God's love. His healings, miracles, and teachings were expressions of God's love. Jesus' coming death and resurrection would be the ultimate expression of God's love.

For supplementary preaching resources, please [visit our website access point](#). (Link: bit.ly/proclaim-it-nl)

Scripture Summary

John and Jesus were both prophets who prophesied about God's laws. Only Jesus spoke and acted as expressions of God's love.

Call to Worship

L: I was glad when they said,

C: Let us go to the house of the Lord!

L: We are at your gates

C: To give thanks to the Lord.

L: Peace be within these walls,

C: For the sake of the Lord our God.

Confession and Forgiveness

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Living God,

C: You have given us all we need to follow you, yet we doubt ourselves, criticize others, grasp for meaningless pleasures and seek hollow assurances. Forgive us for refusing to see what is in front of our faces. Restore us by the power of your son, Jesus Christ, amen.

P: The Son of Man is powerful, yet compassionate. Take heart in the pardon that he offers: you are forgiven. You are beloved children of God. Your faith has healed you. Amen.



Liturgy

Prayer of the Day

Lord God,
Our savior Jesus persisted in his mission, in the face of opposition, disbelief and danger. Encourage us by his example when we encounter roadblocks, and give us the same Spirit which strengthened him, in whose name we pray, amen.

Offertory Prayer

Receive these gifts which we place upon your table, O God. All that we have first belonged to you, and it is right for us to offer our wealth and our lives to the good work of your kingdom. Bless them and use them according to your will. Amen.

Prayers of the Church

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

L: As Jesus sent his disciples out, relying on your provision, so send us into the world knowing that you supply our every need in one way or another. Teach us to put our trust in you. Steadfast God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Your creation holds many secrets which cure, revive and nurture. Open us to the wonders of this world and their powers, making us even more diligent in our attempts to preserve and protect the planet. Steadfast God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Even our Lord was misunderstood by those who claimed to know him best. Forgive us when we judge our loved ones, limit or alienate them based on who we think they are, and help us to forgive when they are tempted to do the same to us. Steadfast God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: You empowered your disciples to heal cast out demons in your name. So empower us to bring healing words and deeds to those whom we know are in special need of it. We lift up (*especially...*). Steadfast God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We may not always know who paved the way so that we could have the abundant life we now enjoy. Bless those who went before, spreading your word and showing your care, that others might benefit. Steadfast God,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: Hold these prayers, O God, as you hold us together in one fellowship of faith. We offer them up in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Eucharistic Invitation

We are glad to be here in your house, O God. Feed us on the bread and offer us the cup of salvation, that we might find nourishment for our souls and strength for our journey. Come, for all is ready!



Liturgy

Litany

L: Jesus came to the town where he had been raised.

Group 1: Now who is this here?

Group 2: Don't we know him from youth?

L: He took up the Torah and read in the synagogue.

1: It's Mary's boy grown!

2: The son of the carpenter!

L: And then he began to offer his teaching.

1: Now what is he saying?

2: From where does this come?

L: He spoke with authority, wisdom and truth.

1: Who told him to say this?

2: These words aren't his own!

L: The people were shocked and offended at him.

1: I'd never believe it,

2: What's happened to him?

L: They made their displeasure abundantly clear.

1: Who gives him his power?

2: It cannot be true!

L: And harsh were the words that they spoke in response.

1: He'd better be careful!

2: Should mind what he says!

L: For he wasn't being who they thought he was.

1: This Jesus—what's changed him?

2: He isn't himself!

1: We knew him in childhood,

2: And as he grew older.

1: We're friends with his parents,

2: And all of his family.

L: Their ears couldn't hear the truth that he spoke.

1: I think he should finish.

2: I've heard quite enough!

L: But Jesus could hear them and made his response.

1: Now what is he saying?

2: What words does he dare?

L: A prophet is shunned only by his own people.

1: What nerve!

2: What bad manners!

L: There's no more to say. Your faithlessness saddens me. Now I must go.

1: For those who are closest

2: Are often most judged.

1: We think that we know them,

2: And that they can't change.

L: If we listen closely, this story can teach us:

1: Don't start with presumption,

2: And open your heart,

1: For the one that you think

2: You know best in the world

1: May one day surprise you

2: Beyond expectation.

1: Be patient and listen,

2: Allow transformation

1: Of them and yourself

2: Without limitation.

L: And perhaps the message will finally take root.



Creative Expression

Skit

"No Prophet Accepted in the Hometown"

Characters: Jack, Mrs. Stearns, Mr. Smith, Ms. Washington

Props: Stack of papers for speech

[Open on Jack preparing to give a speech at his old school.]

Jack: Thank you [name of local school] for having me here today! I remember attending here years ago and learning so much from the teachers here! Mrs. Stearns, Mr. Smith and Ms. Washington were all so supportive! Let's give them a round of applause for their leadership! [hopefully audience claps with you!]

I'm honored to be the guest alumni, here to share what I have learned since graduation!

[stage whispering to each other from "back" of room]

Mrs. Stearns: Can you believe Jack is old enough to have graduated?

Mr. Smith: I know! It was just yesterday we were trying to get him to pay attention in class!

Ms. Washington: He was so cute! Remember the time he wouldn't leave his stuffed bear at home? He was so dependent on Bear-tholomew, I never thought he'd grow out of it!

Mr. Smith: It was so sweet!

Mrs. Stearns: And now he's here to teach kids things he learned in college! How can we even listen to that? All I see is tiny Jack with messy hair and untied shoelaces and that sweet little bear!

[All three of them look at Jack wistfully, saying aww/precious/where has the time gone.]

Jack: [notices the three of them talking and looking at him, trying to remain poised] Ahem. As I was saying, I'm honored to be here today to talk to you about behavioral health, especially brain development for youth. There have been amazing studies helping us understand what is going on inside your minds at each developmental stage, helping us learn that sometimes we function better at different

times of day depending on our age. Did you know that our brain is not fully developed until we are in our twenties?!

Ms. Washington: [the three are still whispering] Listen to him sounding all professional and grown up!! Can you believe it? He could never get up in front of a class and give a presentation when he was here!

Mrs. Stearns: He'd get so nervous he'd turn green and run straight to the trash can to barf!

[The three chuckle a little more loudly than they mean to, Jack turns to look at them.]

Jack: Is everything ok?

Mr. Smith: [looking sheepish being caught talking] We're so sorry. We're being rude. Please continue.

Jack: Thank you.

[As he continues his speech, the three continue whispering over him with similar remarks.]

The most important thing we have learned is the role that sleep plays in your development. You may think it's really fun to stay up really late before you need to get up early, but perhaps the most important thing for your health is rest. It's important not just for your body, but for your brain.

[The three have grown progressively louder. At this time Jack flips.]

Excuse me! But what is going on with you all?

Ms. Washington: I'm so sorry, Jack, we just can't get over how grown up you are!

Jack: Please try. I'm 28, I have a PhD in Neuroscience, and you asked me to come and speak today.

Mrs. Stearns: I know, it's just so hard to not think about you as a little kid.

Jack: I understand, but if you could please just be quiet! I'm guessing the rest of the group might be interested in what I have to say. Just because I was a kid once doesn't mean I still am, or that it's ok to be rude when I speak!

All Three: [overlapping] Sorry, please forgive us, please continue, we'll knock it off.



Kids' Storytime

Main Message

Being a believer isn't always easy. Even Jesus had people who didn't want to hear his message.

Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Toys for a very young child—two years old max
 - Blocks
 - Large truck
 - Stuffed animal

Setting the Scene/Background

People in Jesus' home town didn't have any faith in him, but can you blame them? How hard is it to see any child grow up and then watch them have authority?

Help kids understand why it might have been hard for those people to believe in Jesus. Talk about how sometimes it isn't easy to believe or have faith, but that doesn't mean we should stop trying!

Telling the Story

Tell the story using the *KidStuff* bulletin.

Activity

Check in on the age group you have. Are they mostly really little? Or are they mostly older elementary students? A mixture? This message might change depending on who you have sitting with you!

Show the toy. Ask if anyone remembers playing with something like it. Admit (if you like) that you still enjoy playing with toys like these sometimes!

Talk about how we grow and change. As we get older, we learn more and more until we are adults.

Sometimes, when people watch you as a baby or a little kid, it can be hard to see you as an adult. The people who saw Jesus grow up had a hard time believing that this kid they saw play with toys was preaching about God now!

Ask them to imagine what they might be like when they grow up—will they have important things to say? Will they want others to listen?

Reflection Questions

- What is it like to grow older? Why do you act differently?
- Have you ever gone for a long time without seeing someone? Were they different when you saw them again?

Stuff to Consider

You may never know who plays with what toys. Don't say a toy is for "babies." You might inadvertently be shaming a child who likes that toy and is older. Don't assign genders to toys. Some girls love blocks, and some boys love dolls. Let the toys be enjoyed by whoever likes them!

Next Week's Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Megaphone/paper rolled up to look like a megaphone



Planning Worksheet

Preaching Themes

Kids' Storytime Ideas

Skit or Creative Ideas

Worship Setting

Props for Kids' Storytime or Skit

Hymns

Special Events (Baptism, New Members)

Choral Music/Special Music

Guest Speakers/Announcements



Scripture Readings

Text: Mark 7:1-23

⁷Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, ²they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. ³(For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; ⁴and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) ⁵So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?” ⁶He said to them, “Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written,

‘This people honors me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me;
⁷in vain do they worship me,
teaching human precepts as doctrines.’

⁸You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.”

⁹Then he said to them, “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition! ¹⁰For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘Whoever speaks evil of father or mother must surely die.’ ¹¹But you say that if anyone tells father or mother, ‘Whatever support you might have had from me is Corban’ (that is, an offering to God)— ¹²then you no longer permit doing anything for a father or mother, ¹³thus making void the word of God through your tradition that you have handed on. And you do many things like this.”

¹⁴Then he called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵there is nothing

outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.”

¹⁷When he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about the parable. ¹⁸He said to them, “Then do you also fail to understand? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile, ¹⁹since it enters, not the heart but the stomach, and goes out into the sewer?” (Thus he declared all foods clean.) ²⁰And he said, “It is what comes out of a person that defiles. ²¹For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, ²²adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. ²³All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

Secondary Text: Psalm 51:1-3, 6-7

¹Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.
²Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.
³For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.
⁶You desire truth in the inward being;
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.
⁷Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.



Scripture Readings

Dramatic Reading of the Text

Readers: Narrator, Pharisees, Jesus

Narrator: Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him,

Pharisees: “Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?”

Narrator: He said to them,

Jesus: “Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written,

“This people honors me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me;
in vain do they worship me,
teaching human precepts as doctrines.”

You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.”

Narrator: Then he said to them,

Jesus: “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition! For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘Whoever speaks evil of father or mother must surely die.’

But you say that if anyone tells father or mother, ‘Whatever support you might have had from me is Corban’ (that is, an offering to God)— then you no longer permit doing anything for a father or mother, thus making void the word of God through your tradition that you have handed on. And you do many things like this.”

Narrator: Then he called the crowd again and said to them,

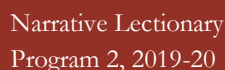
Jesus: “Listen to me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.”

Narrator: When he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about the parable. He said to them,

Jesus: “Then do you also fail to understand? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile, since it enters, not the heart but the stomach, and goes out into the sewer?”

Narrator: (Thus he declared all foods clean.) And he said,

Jesus: “It is what comes out of a person that defiles. For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”



What Defiles? Mark 7:1-23

A word cloud visualization of the text from the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 23. The words are arranged in a dense, overlapping pattern, with the most frequent words being the largest. The words are in various orientations, including horizontal, vertical, and diagonal. The colors are primarily black and white, with some words in red and blue. The background is white.



Theme and Liturgy

Preaching Theme

Main Idea: Jesus demanded that people attend to the internal things that defile.

It had been a long time since Israel had had a prophet to help them see where they had gone off course from God's word. As humans will do, they had held tightly to external things—rituals, rites, habits—instead of following God's laws internally—love, compassion, justice, peace.

Jesus could see how far from God's word people had gone. He could prioritize words and actions according to God's intent better than anyone had before.

Jesus used ritual hand-washing as an example. God gave a law about hand-washing to keep people safe from germs that might make them sick or even kill them. But the people had taken the hand-washing to a new level. They had turned it into a ritual that was sometimes unnecessary (one can wash their hands without making a ritual of it). The ritual had become the focus, rather than a focus on eating clean.

But Jesus also saw that the things that come from within were being unattended. Things like "fornication, theft, murder..." were far more damaging to humans and human society than eating with clean, but not ritually-washed hands.

Even today, it is easier to attend to external things than internal ones. It is much easier to blame a co-worker for being late than to attend to our own lack of motivation to get our work done to the best of our ability. It is easier to auto-pay our bills for the luxuries we attain (cable and cellphone service are, globally speaking, luxuries) than to shift our perspective internally to make charitable giving a higher priority. External habits are easier to make than the internal perspective shifts that get those habits to stick.

Jesus could see that the lack of attention to the things that truly matter were tearing the community apart. Mothers and fathers were being neglected because the synagogues were demanding that their support be turned over as offerings to God. The poor, sick, imprisoned, developmentally and physically challenged, women, widows, and children were all being neglected or mistreated. If society really wanted to follow God's ways,

they would have to attend to the things inside that prevented them from attending to the people who were suffering.

For supplementary preaching resources, please [visit our website access point](#). (Link: bit.ly/proclaim-it-nl)

Scripture Summary

Jesus could see that the rites and rituals being performed had fallen far from God's intent for God's people. Jesus demanded that they stop over-attending to external things, and begin attending to the internal things that defile.

Call to Worship

L: Come, worship the God of mercy!

C: Who blots out all our sins,

L: Who looks on us with love,

C: And guides us into truth.

L: Teach us your wisdom, O Lord!

C: And we shall be made clean.

Confession and Forgiveness

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Living God,

C: You have given us all we need to follow you, yet we doubt ourselves, criticize others, grasp for meaningless pleasures and seek hollow assurances. Forgive us for refusing to see what is in front of our faces. Restore us by the power of your son, Jesus Christ, amen.

P: The Son of Man is powerful, yet compassionate. Take heart in the pardon that he offers: you are forgiven. You are beloved children of God. Your faith has healed you. Amen.



Liturgy

Prayer of the Day

O God,
You know what we carry in our inmost hearts. Fill us with the things which promote life, and purge us of all that distorts and defiles from within, for the sake of Jesus our Lord, amen.

Offertory Prayer

You desire offerings made with humility, honesty and sincerity. Accept these gifts we bring and continue working on us as we strive to become your faithful people, focused on others and spreading your good news, for the sake of the world. Amen.

Prayers of the Church

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

L: We are quick to judge others based on external offenses, yet slow to truly examine the motives and content of our own hearts. Give us courage to look within and willingness to have our hearts transformed in order that we might serve you more faithfully. God of truth,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Nothing you have created is unclean, and all have a place within your kingdom. Curb our distaste for what we cannot appreciate nor understand, thereby helping us to accept those parts of ourselves which we also consider unlovable. God of truth,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We remember all those who have served as our nation's primary leader since the country's founding—humans both flawed and inspiring. Enable the current and next generation of leaders to serve with wisdom and humility, and empower us as citizens to carry out the work of justice alongside—and sometimes in spite of them. God of truth,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: You examined people's hearts, O Lord, and saw what truly motivated them. Cleanse us from our self-deception and encourage us to elevate our lives by living authentically. We ask your healing blessing upon those whom we know need it, (*especially...*). God of truth,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We recognize Philipp Melancthon, reformer and teacher of the faith, for his integrity and tenacity in spreading your word and teaching your people. Bless all educators, those whose mission it is to feed minds and promote understanding. God of truth,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: Hear our prayers and direct our paths, O Lord, that we might be part of the living answers which we seek. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

Eucharistic Invitation

You have made all things good, in your image, and worthy of redemption. Bless these gifts even as you bless us with the grace which they impart. Come now to receive the body and blood of our savior!



Liturgy

Litany

Left side: How quickly we judge,

Right side: And condemn one another.

L: You don't do as I do,

R: And so you are wrong.

L: Your practice is different,

R: Your habits are foreign,

L: You don't use my words,

R: And you aren't like me.

L: How quickly we draw

R: The lines of division.

L: I'm right and you're wrong,

R: You're crass and I'm careful.

L: You don't see my point,

R: And you clearly don't care.

L: We cannot agree,

R: So why bother trying?

L: I cannot convince you

R: To do things my way.

L: We're clearly too different

R: To bridge our divisions.

L: At least that's the way

R: It appears on the outside.

L: But really, what matters?

R: The external details?

L: So what if I practice

R: A slight variation

L: From what you observe.

R: Does it make a difference?

L: What matters is really

R: What's dwelling within:

L: Our fears and our judgments,

R: Our slow, seething anger,

L: Our envy and greed,

R: Our theft and deceit,

L: And what about laziness?

R: Slander and pride?

L: These things make a difference,

R: Prolonging the distance

L: And driving a wedge

R: In between you and me.

L: The heart is the matter,

R: And all that lives in it,

L: The things that we harbor

R: Will dictate our actions.

L: The thoughts that we nurture

R: Will carry the day.

L: They really don't matter,

R: Our external differences.

L: Once we admit

R: We're much more like each other,

L: With similar secrets

R: And common temptations,

L: Both struggling,

R: Both serving,

L: And seeking forgiveness.

R: Let's join with each other

L: In showing compassion

R: And acting out mercy—

All: For our Savior's sake!



Creative Expression

Skit

Characters: Gabby, DK, Jean

Props: Life saver/floatie

[Gabby is “drowning.” Jean and DK want to help, but were told not to go into the water.]

Gabby: Help! Help! I’m having trouble keeping afloat!

DK: Oh no! Gabby is going to drown! We have to go help her!!

Jean: We can’t go help her!

DK: [incredulous] What do you mean we can’t go help her? She’s having trouble swimming! What if she drowns? Don’t you want to help our friend? Are you harboring some evil death wish against her?

Jean: [urgent] No! I want to help her!

DK: Then why in the world are you saying we can’t help her?

Jean: Ms. Gates said we can’t go in the water. It’s against the rules. We’ll get in really big trouble if we go in. I want to help Gabby, but I do not want to get in trouble! It’s important to follow the rules adults set for us!

Gabby: Help!

DK: Oh, my goodness! I know rules are important, but don’t you think that it’s ok to break them in certain circumstances?

Jean: I don’t know...

DK: Well, I think that saving someone’s life outweighs the rule here.

Jean: Fine. Then you go in and save her.

DK: I can’t swim either! You can swim. I’ve seen you! You have to go in!

Jean: [really stressed out] But Ms. Gates was so adamant about not going in the water. I guess I can see why. Gabby’s really struggling out there.

Gabby: [struggling] Please, help me!!

DK: Listen, she’s not going to get mad at you when we explain what happened. You have to go in and get Gabby now! Here’s the life saver—please. Please go get her out!

Jean: Fine, I’m going, but if I get detention, you’re going down with me.

DK: For pete’s sake just go!

Jean: [going to get Gabby] Ok Gabby, let’s get to the side.

Gabby: [sputtering and panting when they make it “out”] Thank you so much Jean, you saved my life!

Jean: I didn’t, really.

DK: What she means is she didn’t want to. She was afraid of getting in trouble. It took forever for her to decide to go in after you!

Gabby: [slightly horrified] Is that why it took you so long to save me? You didn’t want to get in trouble for breaking the rules?

Jean: Well, that and...

DK: And what?!

Jean: The water was only three feet deep. You could have just put your feet down. But DK was sure you were in mortal danger, so I figured I had to help out.

DK: Oh man! I guess I should have paid attention to what those numbers mean on the side.

Gabby: And I need to stop panicking around water.

Jean: And now do you see why I wanted to follow the rules?

DK: I guess so...



Kids' Storytime

Main Message

We can nurture kind and loving hearts as we follow God's rules.

Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Megaphone/paper rolled up to look like a megaphone

Setting the Scene/Background

Rules are not a bad thing. They exist to protect people and create order. However, the Pharisees placed following the rules above loving others.

While following the rules is good for everyone, if we place following rules over loving people, we can cause them harm.

Help kids understand that words and actions matter. The most powerful tool they can use to share God's love is how they speak and act toward each other. Words and actions can give life, or they can tear others down. How can we make good choices with our words and actions?

Telling the Story

Tell the story using the *KidStuff* bulletin.

Activity

Welcome kids. After reading the story, ask them what they think are the most important tools they have to share God's love.

Remind them, it's our words and our actions! Use a megaphone to highlight that point.

Talk about how if our hearts are focused on God, we will choose kind words and action. If our hearts are focused on selfishness, we might choose unkind words or actions. God invites us to lift others up with what we say and do!

Reflection Questions

- If I hurt someone's feelings, can't I just say I'm sorry? Isn't that easier than using kind words and actions?
- Is it kind to tell someone they are hurting our feelings? What's the best way to communicate when there's a conflict?

Stuff to Consider

There are some kids and adults who are hearing impaired. Be aware that words aren't just from our mouths. Some folks use sign language to communicate, some use facial expressions, some use written word, etc. Be careful in your word choice to explain communication.

Next Week's Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Bright lamp/spot light



Planning Worksheet

Preaching Themes

Kids' Storytime Ideas

Skit or Creative Ideas

Worship Setting

Props for Kids' Storytime or Skit

Hymns

Special Events (Baptism, New Members)

Choral Music/Special Music

Guest Speakers/Announcements



Scripture Readings

Text: Mark 8:27—9:8

²⁷ Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” ²⁸ And they answered him, “John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” ²⁹ He asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Messiah.” ³⁰ And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

³¹ Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³² He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³ But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

³⁴ He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵ For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. ³⁶ For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷ Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸ Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

9 And he said to them, “Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with power.”

² Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, ³ and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth

could bleach them. ⁴ And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. ⁵ Then Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” ⁶ He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. ⁷ Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!” ⁸ Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

Secondary Text: Psalm 27:1-4

¹ The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid?

² When evildoers assail me
to devour my flesh—
my adversaries and foes—
they shall stumble and fall.

³ Though an army encamp against me,
my heart shall not fear;
though war rise up against me,
yet I will be confident.

⁴ One thing I asked of the Lord,
that will I seek after:
to live in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
to behold the beauty of the Lord,
and to inquire in his temple.

Pronunciation Guide

Caesarea Philippi: ses’uh-REE-uh fil-LIH-pai



Scripture Readings

Dramatic Reading of the Text

Readers: Narrator, Jesus, Disciples, Peter, Voice

Narrator: Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples,

Jesus: “Who do people say that I am?”

Narrator: And they answered him,

Disciples: “John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.”

Narrator: He asked them,

Jesus: “But who do you say that I am?”

Narrator: Peter answered him,

Peter: “You are the Messiah.”

Narrator: And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him. Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said,

Jesus: “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

Narrator: He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them,

Jesus: “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the

whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

Narrator: And he said to them,

Jesus: “Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with power.”

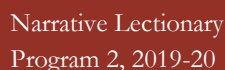
Narrator: Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus,

Peter: “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”

Narrator: He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice,

Voice: “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!”

Narrator: Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.



Transfiguration, Mark 8:27—9:8

[illegible]



Theme and Liturgy

Preaching Theme

Main Idea: Jesus' transfiguration is a magnificent mystery, even as it reveals to people Jesus' divinity for the first time.

There is great humor in this account of Jesus' transfiguration, as well as some splendor and magnificence. Jesus asked his disciples who they thought he was. Besides a reincarnation of John the Baptist or Elijah, as rumors had begun, the disciples knew Jesus was different. He was the Messiah, the one earlier prophets had told was coming to save them from oppression and exile. Although Peter resisted Jesus' proclamation that he would have to suffer greatly, Jesus didn't let Peter's lack of understanding and support deter him.

What comes next is cheeky. One can almost hear Jesus' thoughts—*You think I'm the Messiah? You ain't seen nothin' yet!*

Jesus took his closest friends up the mountain, where "he was transfigured before them." Jesus' clothes shined brightly and then Elijah and Moses both appeared. (How they knew it was Elijah and Moses, we'll never know—maybe the same way we recognize images of Jesus, even though we've never seen him.)

Here, Peter once again gives us an opportunity for a chuckle. Frightened and not knowing what else to do, Peter suggested that they build three tents—tents that would separate the people and conceal the vision before him. Peter's thoughts—*This is amazing and terrifying! Let's make it stop!* (Sure, he might also have been thinking of leaving a marker of the event, but Peter's not so bright.)

As if seeing dead prophets wasn't terrifying enough, they then heard a voice from heaven, "This is my Son." So, they thought Jesus was the Messiah. But Jesus was so much more. Jesus was God's son.

We have the luxury of knowing the end of the story, so we can look back and see what Jesus' life and story meant in light of him being God's son. Peter and the others didn't have that advantage. They were left wondering, "What does this mean?"

If we're being honest with ourselves, we are also left wondering, "What does this mean?" The event is so far

outside our realm of experience, we too, have no reference for making meaning of it. We know it was unique. We know it was of God. Beyond that, we must let our imagination weave in and out of the story's threads, and let its magnificence remain largely a mystery.

For supplementary preaching resources, please [visit our website access point](#). (Link: bit.ly/proclaim-it-nl)

Scripture Summary

Who was Jesus? The question was being tossed around quite a bit. John the Baptist? Elijah? The Messiah? Jesus' transfiguration would reveal his divinity, even as it remains largely a mystery.

Call to Worship

L: Enter God's house,

C: See the Lord's glory!

L: Our savior reflects

C: God's brilliant light!

L: Come to behold—

C: And worship the Lord!

Confession and Forgiveness

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Living God,

C: You have given us all we need to follow you, yet we doubt ourselves, criticize others, grasp for meaningless pleasures and seek hollow assurances. Forgive us for refusing to see what is in front of our faces. Restore us by the power of your son, Jesus Christ, amen.

P: The Son of Man is powerful, yet compassionate. Take heart in the pardon that he offers: you are forgiven. You are beloved children of God. Your faith has healed you. Amen.



Liturgy

Prayer of the Day

O Lord,
You showed yourself distinct from, but of one will, with
the ancient prophets when you appeared with them in
splendor. Show yourself also to us as the beloved one of
God, in whose name we pray, amen.

Offertory Prayer

Like Peter's confusion on the mountain, we do not always
know what to offer in response to your brilliant revelation,
O God. Accept these gifts which we have brought to your
altar in humility and thanksgiving, and use them to feed
and nurture a world in need of your gospel. Amen.

Prayers of the Church

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in
need.

A brief silence.

L: So much of what you reveal to us, Lord, remains a
mystery. Reach beyond our limited minds and touch
our willing hearts with the wonder of being part of
your merciful kingdom. God of glory,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Mighty mountains, terrifying clouds, and dazzling
lights: inexplicable marvels of your creation. Captivate
us with the immensity of this world you have created,
that we might begin to appreciate our own complexity
and coexistence within your vast universe. God of
glory,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We take one final moment to wonder at your holiness
before moving into the contemplative season of Lent.
Keep the vision of your splendor within our hearts to
sustain us in the somber days to come. God of glory,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Truth is healing, O Lord, and you refuse to give us
anything less. Cut through the artificial walls, excuses
and tactics which we devise to avoid responsibility and
thus keep ourselves cut off from your transforming
power. We offer a special prayer for the healing of
your children, (*especially...*). God of glory,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: In honor of Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, we
remember all the converts and martyrs of the early
Church, grateful for their faithful and unwavering
witness to your gospel. God of glory,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: When life goes beyond our understanding, we hand
over our cares to your capable hands. We trust you to
receive these prayers and care for us as you have
always promised to do: by the grace and mercy of your
Son, Jesus Christ, amen.

Eucharistic Invitation

It is good for us to be here, Lord. Feed us in the way that
you have chosen: through your body and blood, for the
forgiveness of all. Let us come now and gather around the
table of mercy!



Liturgy

Litany

L: Who do they say that I am?

C: John the Baptist?

L: Who else do they say that I am?

C: Elijah?

L: Who do they think that I am?

C: Just a prophet?

L: But who do *you* say that I am?

C: You, our teacher?

L: Yes, who do you say that I am?

C: The messiah!

L: And who is messiah to you?

C: Son of God?

L: The words that you're speaking are true!

C: Praise to God!

L: The Lord is my light,

C: A bright light—from the mountain!

L: The Lord is my salvation,

C: Come, save us!

L: Of whom shall I be afraid?

C: What terror is this?

L: The Lord is my stronghold,

C: And who are these prophets?

L: The strength of my life—

C: The wise, ancient messengers!

L: The Lord gives me comfort,

C: It's good that we're here!

L: Protects me from harm.

C: Shall we build you some tents?

L: Peace! No more nonsense!

C: But what could it mean?

L: Behold, the Lord's beauty!

C: A terrible beauty!

L: Do not be afraid!

C: What voice could this be?

L: This is my Son, the beloved!

C: Messiah?

L: Jesus, my Son—it is he!

C: Are you he?

L: Listen to him!

C: Son of God?

L: It is he!

C: Rejoice, for Messiah is here!



Creative Expression

Skit

Characters: Sage, Nick

[Sage and Nick are siblings—Sage is much younger, and crouched down to hide during a worship service when Nick finds her.]

Nick: Hey Sage! What are you doing down there??

Sage: [eager to be alone] Nothing. It's fine. Don't worry.

Nick: Well, I wasn't worried until just now when you said not to worry...what's going on?

Sage: I told you it's fine. [forcing a very bad fake smile]

Nick: You can't fool your big brother, Sage. It's ok, you can tell me what's wrong.

Sage: I don't think I can.

Nick: You can. I'm not going to love you any less. It's safe to tell me even if you are afraid it's embarrassing.

Sage: It's so embarrassing, though.

Nick: It's hard when something feels embarrassing, but I've been there too, Sage. You don't have to hide. I will understand. I promise.

Sage: You won't laugh at me?

Nick: No, of course not.

Sage: You won't love me less?

Nick: I don't think it's possible for me to stop loving you! Stop freaking out, Sage, just tell me what's going on!

Sage: Ok. [stands up, takes a deep breath to relax] Ok. I'm not sure I understand what is going on with Jesus.

Nick: [sort of confused] What do you mean what is going on with Jesus?

Sage: [said kind of in a hurry] Well, Jesus is the son of God, but he's also a dude walking around...and he is God, but he talks to God...and I'm just not sure how it all works and I'm worried that means I am not a good person of faith. [pants after done]

Nick: [grins to himself] That is a lot of things to think about. Thanks for being willing to share that with me.

Sage: You think I'm terrible, don't you?

Nick: Of course not! I think you are really normal.

Sage: You do?

Nick: Totally! It can be really confusing! Jesus is both human and God—and has conversations with God. It can be hard to understand for anyone! Did you listen close to the lesson today?

Sage: I thought I did...

Nick: Did you hear that the disciples didn't even understand what Jesus was talking about?

Sage: I guess I did hear that!

Nick: See? Even the people right there as Jesus was teaching on earth had a hard time always understanding how exactly that all works. But I think it's ok. We don't have to understand how it all fits together. We just have to trust it on faith. Make sense?

Sage: No. But I do feel better.

Nick: I'm glad.

Sage: Thanks for finding me and listening, big bro!



Kids' Storytime

Main Message

Jesus was both fully divine and fully human, which can be hard to wrap our brains around! When he was fully lit, it must have been a dazzling sight!

Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Bright lamp/spot light

Setting the Scene/Background

Jesus was trying to give his disciples an idea of what was going to happen but since they were only human, it was hard to understand everything Jesus said.

When Jesus shone brightly, it became more evident that he was not just a person, but truly the son of God.

It's ok to have a hard time understanding how Jesus can both be fully human and fully divine/God. Even the disciples had a hard time understanding this. Help kids to be curious about how this may work, and what signs show us Jesus as human or divine.

Telling the Story

Tell the story using the *KidStuff* bulletin.

Activity

Talk to kids about the word “divine” (being God).

Explain that Jesus is both fully human and fully divine/God at the same time!

Talk about how it was confusing for the disciples, and sometimes it might be confusing for us too.

Ask what happened in the story that shows us Jesus was human.

Ask what happened in the story that shows us Jesus is God.

When you talk about Jesus shining, turn on your lamp. Talk about how amazing that must have been to see!

Reflection Questions

- Think about being multiple things at once. Do you have multiple identities? Are you a child of you parents and a sibling to your siblings? Are you both a student and an athlete? What's it like to be many things at once?
- Why is Jesus both God and human?

Stuff to Consider

Be sure that your kids do not look right into the light! It can be very tempting but can cause vision damage as well as sensory problems. Try shining your light away from the group or towards the floor.

Next Week's Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin



Planning Worksheet

Preaching Themes

Kids' Storytime Ideas

Skit or Creative Ideas

Worship Setting

Props for Kids' Storytime or Skit

Hymns

Special Events (Baptism, New Members)

Choral Music/Special Music

Guest Speakers/Announcements



Scripture Readings

Text: Mark 9:30-37

³⁰ They went on from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; ³¹ for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again." ³² But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

³³ Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the way?" ³⁴ But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. ³⁵ He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all."

³⁶ Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, ³⁷ "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me."

Secondary Text: Psalm 32:1-5

¹ Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.

² Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

³ While I kept silence, my body wasted away
through my groaning all day long.

⁴ For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.

⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you,
and I did not hide my iniquity;

I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,"
and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

Pronunciation Guide

Capernaum: kuh-PUHR-nay-uhm

Selah: SEE-luh

Dramatic Reading of the Text

Readers: Narrator, Jesus

Narrator: They went on from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them,

Jesus: "The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again."

Narrator: But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him. Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them,

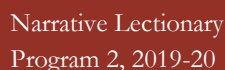
Jesus: "What were you arguing about on the way?"

Narrator: But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them,

Jesus: "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all."

Narrator: Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them,

Jesus: "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me."



Passion Prediction, Mark 9:30-37

[illegible]



Theme and Liturgy

Preaching Theme

Main Idea: Jesus calls the powerful to serve the vulnerable, and the vulnerable to serve as well.

Jesus and his disciples were well into their ministry by now. They were busy preaching, teaching, healing, and were amassing quite a following. It's understandable the disciples would have begun to see themselves as VIPs in their community. People flocked to them (to Jesus actually, but who's counting?), and they were local celebrities.

As their pride in themselves swelled, Jesus set his sights on a different path. He knew that their future was not filled with glory and fame, but with suffering and death. He told them so, but they didn't understand. Or maybe they didn't want to understand. Fame, glory, and power were far more attractive.

When they started to argue who was the greatest among them, Jesus had enough. He could see that their sights were set on themselves. Jesus' ministry was not about themselves—it was about all of God's children. He taught them that their greatest achievement would not be in power, but in servanthood—dirty, messy, ugly servanthood.

In our current political and cultural landscape, it seems that the major division point on many of the divisive topics comes down to this—is it best for me or best for the other?

If you are a healthy, non-addicted, law-abiding, legal citizen, then efforts to open the borders, make healthcare available to all, and send addicts through treatment will be potentially worse for you and better for the other. But you are powerful, and they are vulnerable. You are already great. Are you serving?

If you are sick, addicted, or living here without legal citizenship, then you are the vulnerable “them” (“all”) that Jesus strived to serve. But that doesn't mean you can't also serve. Perhaps you can serve by walking alongside those who struggle to see your perspective and your experience and teach them so that they can learn to love with understanding and acceptance.

What does it look like to be a servant in your context?

For supplementary preaching resources, please [visit our website access point](#). (Link: bit.ly/proclaim-it-nl)

Scripture Summary

When the disciples argued about who was the greatest, Jesus taught them that the greatest thing is to serve.

Call to Worship

L: Remember that you are dust.

C: To dust we shall return.

L: No one is greater than another,

C: For all are loved by God.

L: No one will live forever.

C: To dust we shall return.

Confession and Forgiveness

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Merciful God,

C: Forgive us, for we have fallen short of your vision for humanity. We have put ourselves before others, ignored the vulnerable, and forgotten you altogether. We have missed the point of your kingdom. Have mercy on us, for Jesus' sake, amen.

P: Children, your God has not forgotten you. Jesus knows your weakness and sees through your presence. You are made whole simply by seeking forgiveness. Receive the Lord's pardon and believe that it is true, by the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



Liturgy

Prayer of the Day

O Lord,
You have shown us that to be great in your kingdom
means to serve. Lead us to put others ahead of ourselves,
that we might follow in your path of grace, amen.

Offertory Prayer

There is no greater gift than your forgiveness, O Lord. In
your mercy accept these offerings we present before you,
in gratitude for all that you have given us which cannot be
returned. Use us and our lives to heal this broken world,
for the sake of Jesus, amen.

Prayers of the Church

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in
need.

A brief silence.

L: As we begin the somber season, take our
preoccupation away from ourselves and turn our souls
toward you, that we might be the faithful servants you
seek. Eternal God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: When we learn to see the sacred in the tiniest, most
vulnerable creatures, we begin to see as you do. Open
our eyes and hearts to the ones who need us to show
mercy and compassion, so that they can simply exist.
Eternal God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: In the mark of the ashes we know ourselves as mortal,
but in the sign of the cross we know ourselves as
beloved children. Bless us as we walk these forty days
with you. Eternal God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: When one suffers, all suffer. Tune our senses to all
those in pain, and use us as messengers of your healing
presence. We ask a special blessing this day, (*especially
for...*) Eternal God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Though your disciples were close to you, they were
fallible humans no different from us. Give us
conviction to follow where you are leading, that we
might share in their heavenly reward in the fullness of
time. Eternal God,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: Hold us close, and those for whom we pray even
closer, O God. We offer up these requests, relying on
your grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord, amen.

Eucharistic Invitation

You turn no one away from your table, O Lord. Give us
hearts that are open as yours, and compassion as deep as
our creator's. Let us join now at this sacred meal, which
will be our food for the journey ahead.



Liturgy

Litany

Left side: Who is greatest?

Right side: You or me?

L: I am older.

R: I have vigor!

L: I earn money.

R: I am generous.

L: I have many friends.

R: I've a strong family.

L: I've done many things.

R: I've learned many truths.

L: Who is greatest?

R: You or me?

L: I'm compassionate.

R: I have lovely things.

L: I'm a volunteer.

R: I don't break the law.

L: I've gained much respect.

R: People seek me out.

L: I'm responsible.

R: I don't cheat or lie.

L: I've a loyal spouse.

R: I'm content alone.

L: Who is greatest?

R: You or me?

L: I'm not sure;

R: What makes one great?

L: Is it honors?

R: Pleasing qualities?

L: Or accomplishments?

R: Generosity?

L: What did Jesus say?

R: He taught gentleness,

L: Mercy, gratitude,

R: And humility.

L: Did not Jesus say

R: To be truly great,

L: One should learn to serve,

R: Welcome weaker ones,

L: Look outside yourself

R: Into others' eyes?

L: Serving makes you great—

R: Nothing more than this!

L: Let us follow him

R: And his knowing words:

L: If we would be first,

R: We must serve the rest.

L: Jesus, humble us!

R: We are here to serve!



Creative Expression

Skit

Characters: Piper, Zoey, Mama

Optional Props: Plastic crown, cape

[Piper and Zoey are very young. Piper is the oldest in the family and trying to get some power over her sister in order to feel special.]

Piper: Today, I am Princess Piper, and I reign supreme over all the land! All my loyal subjects must follow my every command!

Zoey: I don't want to play princess right now, Piper.

Piper: That's great. We aren't playing princess, Zoey. I have just decided that I AM a princess.

Zoey: Oh. Ok. Want to play a game?

Piper: Yes, but because I am princess, you must let me win!

Zoey: That doesn't seem fair. Why should you win just because you're a princess?

Piper: Because I am the most important! I have the best jewels, my parents are King and Queen, and I must always be in first place to maintain order in the kingdom!

Zoey: But what happens if I win?

Piper: You shall be banished. No one may be more important than Princess Piper.

Zoey: Why do you think the princess has to be most important?

Piper: Because I have money.

Zoey: Money makes you important?

Piper: Yes. Money and jewels.

Zoey: That isn't fair. What if someone doesn't have money or jewels?

Piper: Then you cannot lead!

Zoey: But I'm too young to get money or jewels. It isn't fair.

Piper: That's too bad. The law of the land is you must have money in order to have power.

Zoey: Mommmmmmm!!

Piper: Don't go running to mom!

Zoey: You aren't being very fair right now.

Mama: Zoey, please don't shout in the house. What is it?

Piper: She's being a baby.

Zoey: I am not! Mama, Piper says she's the princess and the most important and we have to do what she says and let her win all the games because she has money. And she doesn't care that I'm too young to have any money and she just wants to have power!

Piper: It's only right.

Mama: Oh Piper—don't you know what Jesus says?

Piper: What does he say?

Mama: In order to love God, you must welcome the little child.

Zoey: Hah! Like me!!

Piper: Really? That seems strange...

Mama: Not really, honey. God doesn't care if you have money or power. God wants you to love everyone, even people who haven't got money or jewels. Now, play nice with your sister and no more trying to rule the house, ok?



Kids' Storytime

Main Message

Jesus doesn't value power or status. Everyone is precious in his sight, even a little child!

Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin

Setting the Scene/Background

Kids today have a lot more value than they did when Jesus walked the earth, but they still might feel like they aren't listened to or valued the same as adults.

Help kids to know that they are truly valuable just as they are, and that Jesus uses child-like faith to describe what faith can be like!

Telling the Story

Tell the story using the *KidStuff* bulletin.

Activity

Ask kids who is most important in their house. Is it the person who makes the rules? Makes the meals? Cleans? Reads you stories? Drives the biggest car?

Who is most important at school? Teachers? Principals?

Who does Jesus value the most? According to our story, Jesus wants us to value everyone, not just those in power or authority.

Even if you aren't the person who makes the rules or is in charge, you are still loved very much as you are!

Reflection Questions

- What might it have been like to be a child when Jesus was on the earth?
- How can we trust we are important when we don't feel very important?

Stuff to Consider

Some kids might not grow up to be independent adults, depending on how they are developing. They also may not learn the same way as others do and feel "less than smart." Try to avoid saying as you age you get smarter. Instead, as you age you will learn more and more. Avoid talking about what adulthood is like; each will have their own experience as adults.

Next Week's Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Play money



Planning Worksheet

Preaching Themes

Kids' Storytime Ideas

Skit or Creative Ideas

Worship Setting

Props for Kids' Storytime or Skit

Hymns

Special Events (Baptism, New Members)

Choral Music/Special Music

Guest Speakers/Announcements



Scripture Readings

Text: Mark 10:17-31

¹⁷ As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” ¹⁸ Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. ¹⁹ You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.’” ²⁰ He said to him, “Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.” ²¹ Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, “You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” ²² When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions. ²³ Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!” ²⁴ And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.” ²⁶ They were greatly astounded and said to one another, “Then who can be saved?” ²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, “For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible.”

²⁸ Peter began to say to him, “Look, we have left everything and followed you.” ²⁹ Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, ³⁰ who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. ³¹ But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.”

Secondary Text: Psalm 19:7-10

⁷ The law of the Lord is perfect,
reviving the soul;
the decrees of the Lord are sure,
making wise the simple;
⁸ the precepts of the Lord are right,
rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is clear,
enlightening the eyes;
⁹ the fear of the Lord is pure,
enduring forever;
the ordinances of the Lord are true
and righteous altogether.
¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold,
even much fine gold;
sweeter also than honey,
and drippings of the honeycomb.



Scripture Readings

Dramatic Reading of the Text

Readers: Narrator, Rich One, Jesus, Disciples

Narrator: As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him,

Rich One: “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

Narrator: Jesus said to him,

Jesus: “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.’”

Narrator: He said to him,

Rich One: “Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.”

Narrator: Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said,

Jesus: “You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.”

Narrator: When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions. Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples,

Jesus: “How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!”

Narrator: And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again,

Jesus: “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”

Narrator: They were greatly astounded and said to one another,

Disciples: “Then who can be saved?”

Narrator: Jesus looked at them and said,

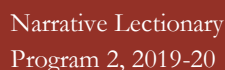
Jesus: “For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible.”

Narrator: Peter began to say to him,

Disciples: “Look, we have left everything and followed you.”

Narrator: Jesus said,

Jesus: “Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.”



First Last and Last First, Mark 10:17-31

[illegible]



Theme and Liturgy

Preaching Theme

Main Idea: We cannot earn eternal life, but God gives it to us as a gift.

For too long some have used this text to condemn the wealthy. But this text is not about money as much as it is about God.

A young, law-abiding young man approached Jesus and asked what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus instructed him to keep God's laws, and the man indicated that he was already doing so. Jesus challenged him also to sell all his possessions and give the money to the poor. Jesus had found the man's weakness—he was unwilling or unable to part with his wealth.

But Jesus wasn't condemning the man for his wealth. The man had asked what he must do to inherit eternal life. The answer is, there is nothing one can do to earn it. It is purely a gift from God. No one is able to follow God's laws so completely that they can earn their inheritance. This man's weakness was his money. Another's might be a relationship or social status. Everyone has something (many somethings) that keeps them from perfection—that keeps them human.

The good news in this story is that we are not expected to earn our inheritance. "For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible." We are given the gift of inheritance by our birthright as God's children.

Peter misread Jesus' words, just like we often do. He made sure Jesus knew he had given up everything (monetary) for Jesus. And Jesus praised him for the effort. But Peter's weakness was not money. His weakness would be his own pride and pull to be great. In the end, Peter's pride would cause him to deny his master. And his willingness to give up his worldly possessions would end in persecution. Once again, Jesus flipped the social structure on its head.

Whatever our own weaknesses, we don't need to beat ourselves up for them—we are only human. Instead, we can acknowledge and accept that we will never be perfect. We can pour more of our energy into the things we do well that contribute to society. And we can thank God for the gift of eternal life that is ours despite our inability to earn it.

For supplementary preaching resources, please [visit our website access point](#). (Link: bit.ly/proclaim-it-nl)

Scripture Summary

A rich young man asked Jesus how he might inherit eternal life, perhaps believing he was already on the right track. When Jesus challenged him to sell his possessions, he recoiled. But eternal life isn't a gift we can earn. It is a gift from God for whom "all things are possible."

Call to Worship

L: Come, learn of the law of the Lord!

C: It is renewing to the soul!

L: The ways of God are perfect,

C: And in them we rejoice!

L: God's grace is all that's needed,

C: To pardon and to save.

Confession and Forgiveness

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Merciful God,

C: Forgive us, for we have fallen short of your vision for humanity. We have put ourselves before others, ignored the vulnerable, and forgotten you altogether. We have missed the point of your kingdom. Have mercy on us, for Jesus' sake, amen.

P: Children, your God has not forgotten you. Jesus knows your weakness and sees through your presence. You are made whole simply by seeking forgiveness. Receive the Lord's pardon and believe that it is true, by the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



Liturgy

Prayer of the Day

Saving Lord,
You know there is nothing we can do to save ourselves.
Make us joyful in your promise of eternal life, which is
ours because you choose to give it, for the sake of Jesus
Christ, amen.

Offertory Prayer

Were we to place the whole of our fortunes upon your
altar, O God, still it would not be enough to buy our
redemption. Only, accept these gifts as a token of our
gratitude for all that you have already given us, and as
offerings in service to your mission on earth. In Jesus'
name, amen.

Prayers of the Church

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in
need.

A brief silence.

L: We cannot resist the human temptation, O Lord, to
point out all we've done for you and await your
approval. Assure us by the promise that you have
already wiped the slate clean, and that your mercy
comes to us without merit. Gracious God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: For you, nothing is impossible; we can see evidence of
it each day if we open our eyes. New life is emerging
in the midst of death, wounded and broken spirits
persevere, and we are constantly given the chance to
live a life which we could never have imagined for
ourselves. May we be bold to take the opportunities
which arise before us, and know the abundant life
which you offer freely. Gracious God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: St. David counseled his followers to be joyful and
keep the faith. May these simple but wise words guide
us as we celebrate the day of his feast, and rejoice for
the communities of faith which he founded. Gracious
God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Lift up the downtrodden and heal your wounded and
grieving children, showing them the care which you
have for all who are overlooked in this world. We ask
your presence with those in need, (*especially...*).
Gracious God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We celebrate George Herbert, priest and hymnwriter,
who glorified you with his talent and gifts. Use all of
us in the particular way which you have gifted us, to
glorify you in our corner of the world. Gracious God,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: Hear our prayers, heal our world, and make the
impossible come to pass, by the grace of Jesus Christ
our savior, amen.

Eucharistic Invitation

In a kingdom where the first are last and the last first,
make us humble to sit alongside all of our brothers and
sisters, regardless of class, rank or background. Gather us
now at your table: we come to enjoy what we could not
earn, and what the world cannot take from us.



Liturgy

Litany

L: What must we do to inherit God's kingdom?

C: Shall we follow the law?

L: Treat with honor God's name?

C: Not slander or kill?

L: Or steal from our neighbors?

C: What about sabbath?

L: Remember and keep it?

C: Or steer clear of fraud,

L: And stay true to our partners?

C: Honoring parents?

L: And loving our neighbors?

C: Will any or all of these things get us there?

L: No, none of these things can earn the Lord's favor.

C: What must we do to inherit the kingdom?

L: Shall we follow the path,

C: Once walked by disciples?

L: Leaving our homes

C: And all our possessions?

L: Denying ourselves

C: And taking our cross?

L: Shall we preach to the poor

C: And tend to the needy

L: With words of forgiveness,

C: Mercy and love?

L: Will this finally do it—

C: Securing our future

L: In heaven's fair city,

C: To dwell with our God?

L: No, not even this.

C: Not a life of discipleship?

L: Nor one of denial.

C: Or giving one's life?

L: Not even a martyr can earn God's salvation.

C: Then nothing!

L: Right! Nothing!

C: How could this be true?

L: There's nothing to do that would merit the kingdom,

C: Nor earn our inheritance?

L: Nothing indeed!

C: So, God gives it freely?

L: With no strings or prices,

C: No terms or conditions?

L: And no limit besides.

C: Praise God for salvation!

L: A gift, freely offered,

C: We never can earn it,

L: And never can lose it.

All: Praise God!



Creative Expression

Skit

Characters: Bernard, Alberto

Props: Play money

[Bernard is counting a big stack of money. Alberto comes in looking a little disheveled.]

Bernard: Nine hundred eighty, nine hundred ninety, one thousand. YES!

Alberto: Hey Bernard.

Bernard: Hey Alberto! I just realized I have enough money to buy myself that computer I wanted so I can play online with all my friends!

Alberto: That's nice.

Bernard: Want to play with us?

Alberto: I can't.

Bernard: Why not?

Alberto: I don't have a computer.

Bernard: Just get one then.

Alberto: I can't...

Bernard: Don't you have money?

Alberto: I do.

Bernard: Well then buy a computer!

Alberto: I can't. I have to save my money.

Bernard: Why?

Alberto: For college.

Bernard: Just make your parents pay for college.

Alberto: I don't think they can.

Bernard: Why not? My parents are paying for college so I can use my money for whatever I want. I deserve to have fun with my money. Saving is boring.

Alberto: Kind of...

Bernard: So why aren't your parents paying for college? Are they bums?

Alberto: [wincing, this hurts his feelings] No, Bernard. My dad is sick.

Bernard: [realizing his mistake] Oh...that's too bad.

Alberto: Yeah, he's got cancer. It's treatable, but it's making it so he can't really work right now.

Bernard: So, he can't save any money?

Alberto: No. And my mom is working, but all her money is going to pay his medical bills.

Bernard: Why don't you have insurance? If you had insurance it wouldn't be an issue.

Alberto: We do have it.

Bernard: Then why are your bills so high?

Alberto: Well, my mom's job doesn't have a great plan, so even with insurance, it's just really expensive.

Bernard: So, no computer.

Alberto: Honestly, we might not make rent next month. I'm kind of stressed out.

Bernard: [realizing that his computer is not a need] You know what? I can play online on my old computer. Maybe I could help your family with rent this month.

Alberto: You don't have to, we'll make it work.

Bernard: I know I don't have to, but my parents both have good jobs, and nobody is sick, so we aren't struggling with bills. And there will always be more opportunities to buy things. But you could use help right now. I want to help.

Alberto: [wiping away a tear] Wow, Bernard. Thank you so much! I know how much this meant to you!

Bernard: You mean more to me than anything I could buy, Alberto!

[they hug]



Kids' Storytime

Main Message

Money isn't bad, but loving money instead of God can cause us to make very bad choices.

Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Play money

Setting the Scene/Background

We have to remember that we use money to survive. Money is not evil. The love of money causes problems.

Jesus speaks very strongly about loving wealth being a barrier to heaven, because if we value money and things over God and other people, we will make choices that hurt others.

Help kids to understand that loving stuff/money leads to bad choices.

Telling the Story

Tell the story using the *KidStuff* bulletin.

Activity

Show the group your play money. Ask if it was real, what would they want to buy with that money?

Tell them of a game: if you push everyone else in the group on the floor, you can win the money. Ask: would you still want it?

It can be tempting to want money and stuff badly enough to hurt other people. Our life choices might not always be as obvious as the example today. But remember that loving stuff and loving money more than God and people can cause us to make choices that hurt others.

Reflection Questions

- Is it ok to love a thing? Why or why not?
- Does having money make you a bad person?

Stuff to Consider

Avoid shaming kids for loving things. Some children have comfort toys or love games that they play. Children with developmental delays might have things that provide comfort and that's ok. Help them to understand that it's healthy to love a stuffed animal or find comfort in a game, especially when it doesn't get in the way of our relationships.

Next Week's Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- A sign with a message asking for help on it



Planning Worksheet

Preaching Themes

Kids' Storytime Ideas

Skit or Creative Ideas

Worship Setting

Props for Kids' Storytime or Skit

Hymns

Special Events (Baptism, New Members)

Choral Music/Special Music

Guest Speakers/Announcements



Scripture Readings

Text: Mark 10:32-52

³² They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them what was to happen to him, ³³ saying, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death; then they will hand him over to the Gentiles; ³⁴ they will mock him, and spit upon him, and flog him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise again."

³⁵ James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." ³⁶ And he said to them, "What is it you want me to do for you?" ³⁷ And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." ³⁸ But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" ³⁹ They replied, "We are able." Then Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; ⁴⁰ but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."

⁴¹ When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. ⁴² So Jesus called them and said to them, "You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. ⁴³ But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

⁴⁶ They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. ⁴⁷ When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁸ Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁹ Jesus stood still and said, "Call him here." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; get up, he is calling you." ⁵⁰ So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. ⁵¹ Then Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "My teacher, let me see again." ⁵² Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

Secondary Text: Psalm 34:11-14

- ¹¹ Come, O children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the Lord.
¹² Which of you desires life,
and covets many days to enjoy good?
¹³ Keep your tongue from evil,
and your lips from speaking deceit.
¹⁴ Depart from evil, and do good;
seek peace, and pursue it.

Pronunciation Guide

Zebedee: ZEB-ih-dee
Jericho: JER-uh-koh
Bartimaeus: bahr-tuh-MEE-uhs
Timaeus: tuh-MEE-uhs



Scripture Readings

Dramatic Reading of the Text

Readers: Narrator, Jesus, Disciples, Blind One, People

Narrator: They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them what was to happen to him, saying,

Jesus: “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death; then they will hand him over to the Gentiles; they will mock him, and spit upon him, and flog him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise again.”

Narrator: James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him,

Disciples: “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.”

Narrator: And he said to them,

Jesus: “What is it you want me to do for you?”

Narrator: And they said to him,

Disciples: “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.”

Narrator: But Jesus said to them,

Jesus: “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”

Narrator: They replied,

Disciples: “We are able.”

Narrator: Then Jesus said to them,

Jesus: “The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.”

Narrator: When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. So Jesus called them and said to them,

Jesus: “You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Narrator: They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say,

Blind One: “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Narrator: Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly,

Blind One: “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Narrator: Jesus stood still and said,

Jesus: “Call him here.”

Narrator: And they called the blind man, saying to him,

People: “Take heart; get up, he is calling you.”

Narrator: So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. Then Jesus said to him,

Jesus: “What do you want me to do for you?”

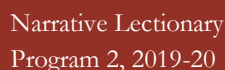
Narrator: The blind man said to him,

Blind One: “My teacher, let me see again.”

Narrator: Jesus said to him,

Jesus: “Go; your faith has made you well.”

Narrator: Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.



Bartimaeus Healed, Mark 10:32-52

[illegible]



Theme and Liturgy

Preaching Theme

Main Idea: Jesus is not a granter of wishes like a genie in a bottle, but Jesus can give people what they need.

If you've ever proposed to a partner and anxiously awaited their response, or if you've put an offer on a house and paced by the phone waiting for your realtor's call, or if you've sat in a hospital room watching a loved one suffer, then you've probably experienced pleading for Jesus to give you this one thing. You'll probably also have experienced Jesus' response to your prayer—which is likely far different from the thing you asked for.

James and John, two of Jesus' disciples, asked Jesus for something, too. They asked that him that they be granted to sit at Jesus' right and left hands (places of honor in the kingdom). Jesus challenged them—could they drink his cup and be baptized with his baptism? Yes, they believed they could, if it would grant them this glory. Although Jesus couldn't grant them to sit at his right and left hands, he did accept their willingness to follow in his footsteps. What they didn't know was that to drink Jesus' cup didn't mean glory, but suffering. Jesus couldn't give them what they wanted, but gave them what they needed and the world needed from them.

A bit later Bartimaeus, a blind man, asked Jesus for mercy and sight. This time Jesus granted the man just what he asked for, which was just what he needed—sight and faith.

Jesus can see the bigger picture in a way we never will. Jesus knows what we need more than we do. Jesus can see the consequences of decision and actions across time, where we can only speculate about things outside of the present. Often what we want is not what we need, but Jesus can see both. Sometimes what we need leads to healing. Other times what we need (or what the world needs from us) leads to suffering. Either way, we can have faith that Jesus is actively involved in our lives no matter our circumstances or consequences.

For supplementary preaching resources, please [visit our website access point](#). (Link: bit.ly/proclaim-it-nl)

Scripture Summary

The disciples wanted glory and they received the promise of suffering. Bartimaeus wanted mercy and was healed. Jesus knows what people need, and what the world needs from them.

Call to Worship

L: Bless the Lord, O my soul!

C: The one who came to serve.

L: Bless the Lord, O my soul!

C: The one who knows our need.

L: Bless the Lord, O my soul!

C: Who leads us into life.

Confession and Forgiveness

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Merciful God,

C: Forgive us, for we have fallen short of your vision for humanity. We have put ourselves before others, ignored the vulnerable, and forgotten you altogether. We have missed the point of your kingdom. Have mercy on us, for Jesus' sake, amen.

P: Children, your God has not forgotten you. Jesus knows your weakness and sees through your presence. You are made whole simply by seeking forgiveness. Receive the Lord's pardon and believe that it is true, by the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



Liturgy

Prayer of the Day

O God,
You know exactly what we need, even when we ourselves do not. Grant us the vision and strength to live as you have taught us, true disciples of Jesus, in whose name we pray, amen.

Offertory Prayer

Bless these gifts which we offer to your service, O Lord.
May the offerings of our heart meet the needs of the world, so that all your children might know your love.
Amen.

Prayers of the Church

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

L: We do not always desire the things which will benefit us. Teach us the way to abundant life, and to want what you want: a more just and peaceful world. God of wisdom,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We want to enjoy all the benefits and pleasures of your creation, but are slow to accept responsibility for its care and protection. Curb our immature impulses to take without giving back, and bring us back into balance with the natural world. God of wisdom,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: It is easy to point a finger at others when we perceive

greed and seeking after status. It is more difficult to see these same things in ourselves. Hold up a mirror of truth before us, and move us beyond petty desires into a deeper longing for reconciliation with all. God of wisdom,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Jesus healed the soul as well as the body. Open us to your grace in our lives, that we might be made whole again. We lift up all in need, (*especially...*). God of wisdom,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Bless all our ancestors in faith, those whom we never knew, and those who helped form us in our discipleship. May we in turn mentor others on their journey of life in the Spirit. God of wisdom,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: Your patience is infinite and your mercy unbounded. Thank you for hearing our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, amen.

Eucharistic Invitation

There are no favored places at this table, O Lord—only one eternal circle made up of all your children. Gather us now around this holy meal, where we find grace and see your love made visible.



Liturgy

Litany

L: In Jericho, a blind man sat.

C: Jesus! Son of David!

L: He heard the savior passing by.

C: Have mercy on me, Lord!

L: The road was packed with followers.

C: Behold, the teacher—let him through!

L: They mocked the beggar and his plea.

C: The teacher has no time for you!

L: They lacked compassion and were cruel.

C: Be quiet, Bartimaeus!

L: But on he shouted, louder still:

C: Son of David, hear my cry!

L: He wouldn't let the savior go.

C: I beg you, show me mercy!

L: And Jesus heard him through the crowd:

C: Who is this one that calls to me?

L: His footsteps ceased; he looked around.

C: Now find the man and bring him here.

L: Disciples did as they were asked:

C: Whoever calls the Lord, take heart!

L: They bid the man present himself:

C: Get up, for Jesus beckons!

L: He threw his cloak aside and came.

C: The healer is the one I seek!

L: Then Jesus turned and asked of him,

C: My child, what do you want?

L: The blind man did not hesitate:

C: Good teacher, let me see again!

L: The master knew his heart was true:

C: Go now; be on your way...

L: And offered him assurance:

C: Your faith has made you well!

L: And then, at once, the man could see.

C: My eyes have been restored!

L: He followed after, full of joy:

C: All praise be to the Lord!

L: And so, the savior knows our need,

C: And answers when we ask.

L: He may not give us all we want

C: But all that serves us best.



Creative Expression

Skit

Characters: Sadie, Elouise, Tina

Props: Sign asking for help, pretend money

[Tina holds a sign and stands off to the right and in front of Sadie and Elouise as they walk down the street talking.]

Elouise: Oh no, there's someone asking for help!

Sadie: Yeah, I really hate it when people beg on the street.

Elouise: That's not what I meant. I mean I feel so bad when people are struggling and feel like that's the only option they have.

Sadie: Oh...yeah. But...

Elouise: But what?

Sadie: Doesn't it bother you to have to look at people like that? I mean, get a job, don't beg.

Elouise: Maybe she has a job.

Sadie: Why would she be asking for help??

Elouise: Some jobs don't pay enough. I knew someone who worked at a store and couldn't afford both rent and groceries. And they had kids, so if they wanted their kids to eat, they had to ask for help.

Sadie: Oh. Well, don't they have places where people can go for help?

Elouise: They do, but sometimes they aren't safe and sometimes people have mental health issues that cause them to make choices that are not great. They get asked to leave. And sometimes, they make too much for assistance, even though it's not enough to pay the bills.

Sadie: Wow. That seems like a real mess. But what if you give them money and they just use it to buy drugs?

Elouise: I suppose that's a risk you take. But I think if that's really what they are doing, at least they have funds to do it and aren't robbing people out of desperation. It can be really hard to be addicted to something.

Sadie: I guess I wouldn't know.

Elouise: You are lucky! You have never even had to think about choosing between heat or dinner. You always have a nice outfit and designer shoes. You are really lucky.

Sadie: [starting to feel guilty] I guess.

Elouise: Which is why it is hard to be understanding when you see people asking for help.

Sadie: I guess that makes sense. And honestly...

Elouise: Yeah?

Sadie: I think I feel kind of uncomfortable when I see people asking for help. Like, maybe I'm too lucky. And seeing them makes me feel guilty. If I'm honest, I'd rather not be faced with that guilt.

Elouise: Wow. Thanks for being so honest with me.

Sadie: I've never admitted that before.

Elouise: It's good to look inside and understand ourselves better. So. What do you think?

Sadie: Let's go say hi and hear about her story and maybe give her some money.

Elouise: Sounds like a great plan!

Sadie & Elouise: [Approach Tina] Hello!

Tina: Hi there.

Elouise: My name is Elouise and this is Sadie. What's your name?

Tina: I'm Tina.

Sadie: We wanted to say hello and hear more about you!

Tina: Wow. Nobody ever wants to talk to me. It feels really good to know you want to hear my story!



Kids' Storytime

Main Message

Jesus gave attention to everyone, even the people that society doesn't think are important!

Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- A sign with a message asking for help on it

Setting the Scene/Background

Help kids to see that Jesus loves everyone even if we find it hard to understand why.

Many times, when we see people holding signs asking for help, we think the worst. They did something to get in that situation, or that they'll use money for bad things.

Jesus wouldn't ignore people asking for help. Jesus offered healing and a new way of life for Bartimaeus. Help kids to see that everyone is loved by God no matter what.

Telling the Story

Tell the story using the *KidStuff* bulletin.

Activity

After reading the story, hold up your sign and ask if anyone has ever seen someone outside asking for help with a sign.

Ask them to think about what they do. Do you avoid people? Do you offer them money? Are you worried to talk to them?

When Bartimaeus asked for help, he was much like the people we see. The people who were with Jesus tried to get him to leave Jesus alone, but Jesus spent time with him, healing him and helping him feel worthwhile!

It only takes a smile and hello to show people that they are worthy of our time!

Reflection Questions

- Does your family offer money to people? Why or why not?
- What can you give if you don't give money? A smile? A snack? Personal care products? Other things?

Stuff to Consider

Miracle healing stories might be hard to hear for people who have prayed for God to take away their disabilities, or by people who don't see their "disabilities" as disabling. Avoid equating being loved or healed by Jesus with physical ability. It can cause kids to feel like they are being punished because they have a disability, when really, they are loved as they are!

Next Week's Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Calculator
- Paper
- Pencil or pen



Planning Worksheet

Preaching Themes

Kids' Storytime Ideas

Skit or Creative Ideas

Worship Setting

Props for Kids' Storytime or Skit

Hymns

Special Events (Baptism, New Members)

Choral Music/Special Music

Guest Speakers/Announcements



Parable of the Tenants [Taxes to Caesar], Mark 12:1-12 [13-17]

Scripture Readings

Text: Mark 12:1-12 [13-17]

12 Then he began to speak to them in parables. “A man planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a pit for the wine press, and built a watchtower; then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. ² When the season came, he sent a slave to the tenants to collect from them his share of the produce of the vineyard. ³ But they seized him, and beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. ⁴ And again he sent another slave to them; this one they beat over the head and insulted. ⁵ Then he sent another, and that one they killed. And so it was with many others; some they beat, and others they killed. ⁶ He had still one other, a beloved son. Finally he sent him to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ ⁷ But those tenants said to one another, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ ⁸ So they seized him, killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard. ⁹ What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others. ¹⁰ Have you not read this scripture:

‘The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
¹¹ this was the Lord’s doing,
and it is amazing in our eyes?’”

¹² When they realized that he had told this parable against them, they wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowd. So they left him and went away.

[¹³ Then they sent to him some Pharisees and some Herodians to trap him in what he said. ¹⁴ And they came and said to him, “Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality, but teach the way of God in accordance with truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not? ¹⁵ Should we pay them, or should we

not?” But knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, “Why are you putting me to the test? Bring me a denarius and let me see it.” ¹⁶ And they brought one. Then he said to them, “Whose head is this, and whose title?” They answered, “The emperor’s.” ¹⁷ Jesus said to them, “Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” And they were utterly amazed at him.]

Secondary Text: Psalm 86:8-13

⁸ There is none like you among the gods, O Lord,
nor are there any works like yours.
⁹ All the nations you have made shall come
and bow down before you, O Lord,
and shall glorify your name.
¹⁰ For you are great and do wondrous things;
you alone are God.
¹¹ Teach me your way, O Lord,
that I may walk in your truth;
give me an undivided heart to revere your name.
¹² I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole
heart,
and I will glorify your name forever.
¹³ For great is your steadfast love toward me;
you have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.

Pronunciation Guide

Herodians: heh-ROH-dee-uhns
denarius: dih-NAIR-ee-uhs
Sheol: SHEE-ohl



Scripture Readings

Dramatic Reading of the Text

Readers: Narrator, Jesus, Tenants, Prophecy, [Pharisees]

Narrator: Then he began to speak to them in parables.

Jesus: “A man planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a pit for the wine press, and built a watchtower; then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. When the season came, he sent a slave to the tenants to collect from them his share of the produce of the vineyard. But they seized him, and beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. And again he sent another slave to them; this one they beat over the head and insulted. Then he sent another, and that one they killed. And so it was with many others; some they beat, and others they killed. He had still one other, a beloved son. Finally he sent him to them, saying,

Tenants: “They will respect my son.”

Jesus: But those tenants said to one another,

Tenants: “This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.”

Jesus: So they seized him, killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard. What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others. Have you not read this scripture:

Prophecy: “The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
this was the Lord’s doing,
and it is amazing in our eyes?”

Narrator: When they realized that he had told this parable against them, they wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowd. So they left him and went away.

[**Narrator:** Then they sent to him some Pharisees and some Herodians to trap him in what he said. And they came and said to him,

Pharisees: “Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality, but teach the way of God in accordance with truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not? Should we pay them, or should we not?”

Narrator: But knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them,

Jesus: “Why are you putting me to the test? Bring me a denarius and let me see it.”

Narrator: And they brought one. Then he said to them,

Jesus: “Whose head is this, and whose title?”

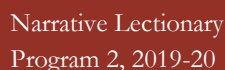
Narrator: They answered,

Pharisees: “The emperor’s.”

Narrator: Jesus said to them,

Jesus: “Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”

Narrator: And they were utterly amazed at him.]



Parable of the Tenants [Taxes to Caesar], Mark 12:1-12 [13-17]

[illegible]



Theme and Liturgy

Preaching Theme

Main Idea: We are stewards of God's creation. How we steward is up to us.

It may seem obvious, when Jesus tells a parable like this one, that the tenants were wicked. (It was obvious even to the Pharisees against whom Jesus spoke.) Not only did they squat on the owner's land, but they killed any slave sent to retrieve the owner's share of the produce. They even killed the owner's son. Who wouldn't acknowledge that these tenants were wrong and deserved punishment?

It's a little harder to acknowledge when we, as tenants and stewards of God's world, treat it with the same disrespect as the tenants in the parable. We have the responsibility to care for the earth and for its inhabitants.

How are we doing? [Global warming](#). Wars and [global conflict](#). The [Great Pacific Garbage Patch](#) (a floating trash heap twice the size of Texas and three times the size of France). [Human trafficking](#). [Modern day slavery](#).

Admittedly, part of the problem is the systemic nature of the events that lead to these atrocities, and the sheer size of the problems. How can I, as one person, make a dent in these calamities? Even if I manage to create for myself a [zero carbon footprint](#), will it make a difference? Would it have made a difference to Jesus if just one of the wicked tenants was slightly less wicked than the rest?

When the Pharisees figured out Jesus was talking to them, their response was immediate—they would entrap him to silence him. Their wickedness continued when they decided not to act for the betterment of God's creation.

Here's the good news. We are not destined to be them. We can choose differently. Instead of turning a blind eye or fighting to keep our systems dirty, we can make a difference. We can open ourselves to receiving the difficult condemnation that our actions are hurting this world. We can work to lessen our carbon footprint. We can vote for leaders that strive to cease wars and stop human trafficking. We can lessen the amount of stuff we accumulate that requires slave labor. We are not helpless, and our efforts can make a difference. We can become

good stewards of God's good creation, one carbon footprint at a time.

For supplementary preaching resources, please [visit our website access point](#). (Link: bit.ly/proclaim-it-nl)

Scripture Summary

God made people stewards of God's creation. When Jesus challenged the Pharisees' wicked management of creation, they sought to entrap and silence him.

Call to Worship

L: Teach us your ways, O Lord.

C: That we may walk in your truth.

L: For you, O Lord, are great,

C: And do wondrous things for us.

L: We give thanks to you, O God,

C: And glorify your name forever!

Confession and Forgiveness

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Merciful God,

C: Forgive us, for we have fallen short of your vision for humanity. We have put ourselves before others, ignored the vulnerable, and forgotten you altogether. We have missed the point of your kingdom. Have mercy on us, for Jesus' sake, amen.

P: Children, your God has not forgotten you. Jesus knows your weakness and sees through your presence. You are made whole simply by seeking forgiveness. Receive the Lord's pardon and believe that it is true, by the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



Liturgy

Prayer of the Day

Gracious God,
Your son was not always received with respect and acceptance. Reveal to us the places where we still resist the truth of his teaching today, that our hearts and lives might truly be transformed, for Jesus' sake, amen.

Offertory Prayer

We confess that we haven't been the best stewards of your gifts, O Lord. Receive and bless these offerings as a sign of our gratitude to you, and forgive us our shortcomings in managing your precious world. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

Prayers of the Church

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

L: It is easier to resist and ignore corrective words than to examine why they might be needed. Make us receptive to your commands as a thirsty person to a cup of water; lead us in your way of life. God our guide,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: When it comes to your creation, we are much like the unfaithful stewards of the vineyard, O Lord. Forgive us for our greed, mismanagement and negligence, and empower those making strides in conserving and cherishing what remains. God our guide,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: As another spring begins to show its face, remind us of your promises: ever new, ever emerging in the midst of a land that appeared dead. Plant and nurture the hope of your gospel within our hearts. God our guide,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Remind us that where there has been harm, there can also be healing, especially for wounded souls. Comfort and empower those who suffer in any way this day, (*especially...*). God our guide,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Even when our loved ones no longer share this earth with us, they are still a part of us within your great communion of saints. Bless and strengthen the bonds of all who call you Lord, both here and in heaven. God our guide,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: Gather our prayers and hold them in your grace, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

Eucharistic Invitation

Christ, our cornerstone, you anchor your people in the sure foundation of God's redemption: free to all and with no restrictions. Come to us now in this meal, a reminder of your steadfast love for us and for all people. Let us share in the supper of our savior!



Liturgy

Litany

Left side: A man built a vineyard,

Right side: With fences and towers,

L: He added a wine press,

R: Then leased it and left.

L: The tenants were greedy,

R: Unkind and unsavory.

L: Refusing to give the owner his due.

R: He sent to them messengers,

L: Requesting his payment,

R: Which rightly belonged to him.

L: They sent them away,

R: One by one,

L: Each rejected,

R: And beaten and insulted too.

L: Sometimes they were vicious,

R: Enough to be killers,

L: And murdered the servants he sent.

R: The owner was grieved,

L: And devising a plan,

R: He thought that he knew what to do.

L: "I'll send them my son,"

R: His one, only son.

L: But how do you think they reacted?

R: The tenants, still greedy,

L: Soon seized him as well—

R: The heir, the beloved—

L: To steal his inheritance,

R: Without thinking twice,

L: They laid hands upon him,

R: And murdered the owner's dear son.

L: So what will he do,

R: This sorrowful father,

L: At deeds so offensive

R: And outright rebellious?

L: Get rid of those tenants,

R: Who proved so unfaithful,

L: And vouchsafe his vineyard to others.

R: And why such a story?

L: What could it mean?

R: Indeed, God is able

L: To bless any person,

R: Regardless of background,

L: Or claims from the past.

R: We're called to be faithful,

L: Whatever we're given,

R: Respecting the blessings

L: Our God freely offers.

R: Keep watch, and be sensible,

L: Kind and responsible.

R: This earthly kingdom

All: Belongs to us all!



Creative Expression

Skit

Characters: Cliff, Zeke

Zeke: Well, Cliff, who are you going to vote for in the next election?

Cliff: Nobody.

Zeke: What? You aren't going to vote?

Cliff: Nope.

Zeke: Why on earth not?

Cliff: Well, I'm following God.

Zeke: That's great, but why aren't you going to vote?

Cliff: Because if I'm following God, I can't be following any leaders of the human government.

Zeke: Uh...ok?

Cliff: There shall be no other gods before God. You can't follow the leaders on earth and follow God.

Zeke: Are you sure about that?

Cliff: Yup. It's absolutely blasphemous to follow leaders or even vote.

Zeke: [chuckling] Ok then. Can I ask you a question?

Cliff: [annoyed] Sure.

Zeke: How fast do you drive when you are on highway 91?

Cliff: I drive 55 miles per hour.

Zeke: Really?

Cliff: Yes.

Zeke: That's great. Can I ask you why you go that speed?

Cliff: Well, that's the speed limit.

Zeke: Hmm...so you follow the speed limit rule?

Cliff: [realizing the issue] Oh. Yeah. But that's about safety, so I feel like God would be ok with me following that law.

Zeke: Great!! Do you steal?

Cliff: Of course not! Thou shall not steal!

Zeke: Exactly, but the government of this country has that rule, too. Is God ok with that?

Cliff: I...uh...argh.

Zeke: Ok, here's the deal. I think that God is ok with us following most of the laws of the government.

Cliff: I dunno...

Zeke: Jesus says to give to Caesar what is Caesar's. Laws of the government are usually put in place to help with order and safety.

Cliff: Yeah, but what about when the laws are bad?

Zeke: That's why we gotta vote, dude. We need to get people into the places of making those laws who will do things we agree with!

Cliff: Wow. I guess I never really thought of it that way. I was just going to protest and not follow any laws or vote. But I supposed if I want good leaders, I gotta go vote!

Zeke: Exactly!



Parable of the Tenants [Taxes to Caesar], Mark 12:1-12 [13-17]

Kids' Storytime

Main Message

It can be hard to know what to do with our money but Jesus gives us some advice.

Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Calculator
- Paper
- Pencil or pen

Setting the Scene/Background

Often the subject of money is tricky. Many of us avoid it, or find it tacky to talk about!

We can be especially afraid to talk about money when we are at church. We hear so many messages about not loving money, we may have shame and fear when it comes to the topic, especially if we spend our money on things we aren't sure God would like.

Here's the thing: Jesus talks about money dozens of times—about how we use money, where it should go and whether or not it's the most important thing.

Help kids to get comfortable with the topic of money and how their faith can inform their spending when they get older.

Telling the Story

Tell the story using the *KidStuff* bulletin.

Activity

Take out your paper, pencil and calculator. Write down a number on your paper.

Ask kids what they would do if they had that amount in dollars.

If they answer they would buy something fun, say it's nice to buy treats, but we have responsibilities. If they say something about bills, praise them and ask if it's ok to spend money on fun things.

Talk about making a budget. There can be money for taxes to help pay for schools and roads and fire departments. Talk about using money for a house, for food and clothing. Then talk about giving money away. The Bible suggests giving 10% back to God.

We can lean into our faith for our instructions on money. If we have extra, treats are great! God wants us first to help others who don't have enough.

Reflection Questions

- Why do some people have more money than others?
- If money causes problems, why do we have it?

Stuff to Consider

Some people don't have a lot of extra money even if they are making their basic payments monthly. Avoid shaming people who do not give away money charitably. Use gentle encouragement to share when we can, but also to be mindful to take care of basics!

Next Week's Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Jelly beans



Planning Worksheet

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Skit or Creative Ideas

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Props for Kids' Storytime or Skit

Hymns

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Choral Music/Special Music

Guest Speakers/Announcements



Scripture Readings

Text: Mark 12:28-44

²⁸ One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, “Which commandment is the first of all?”

²⁹ Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; ³⁰ you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ ³¹ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” ³² Then the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that ‘he is one, and besides him there is no other’; ³³ and ‘to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,’ and ‘to love one’s neighbor as oneself,’—this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” ³⁴ When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” After that no one dared to ask him any question.

³⁵ While Jesus was teaching in the temple, he said, “How can the scribes say that the Messiah is the son of David?

³⁶ David himself, by the Holy Spirit, declared,

“The Lord said to my Lord,
“Sit at my right hand,
until I put your enemies under your feet.””

³⁷ David himself calls him Lord; so how can he be his son?” And the large crowd was listening to him with delight.

³⁸ As he taught, he said, “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect

in the marketplaces, ³⁹ and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets! ⁴⁰ They devour widows’ houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.”

⁴¹ He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. ⁴² A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. ⁴³ Then he called his disciples and said to them, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. ⁴⁴ For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

Secondary Text: Psalm 89:1-4

¹ I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord, forever;
with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.

² I declare that your steadfast love is established forever;
your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.

³ You said, “I have made a covenant with my chosen one,
I have sworn to my servant David:

⁴ ‘I will establish your descendants forever,
and build your throne for all generations.’”



Scripture Readings

Dramatic Reading of the Text

Readers: Narrator, Scribe, Jesus

Narrator: One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him,

Scribe: “Which commandment is the first of all?”

Narrator: Jesus answered,

Jesus: “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

Narrator: Then the scribe said to him,

Scribe: “You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that ‘he is one, and besides him there is no other’; and ‘to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,’ and ‘to love one’s neighbor as oneself’—this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

Narrator: When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him,

Jesus: “You are not far from the kingdom of God.”

Narrator: After that no one dared to ask him any question. While Jesus was teaching in the temple, he said,

Jesus: “How can the scribes say that the Messiah is the son of David? David himself, by the Holy Spirit, declared,

“The Lord said to my Lord,
“Sit at my right hand,
until I put your enemies under your feet.”

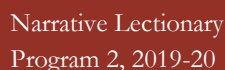
David himself calls him Lord; so how can he be his son?” And the large crowd was listening to him with delight.

Narrator: As he taught, he said,

Jesus: “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets! They devour widows’ houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.”

Narrator: He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them,

Jesus: “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”



Great Commandment, Mark 12:28-44

[illegible]



Theme and Liturgy

Preaching Theme

Main Idea: Love is demonstrated by an outward expression of action.

The religious leaders of Jesus' day worked hard to do what was needed to make God happy with them. Unfortunately, their efforts were so inwardly focused (and outwardly judgmental), they missed the mark by a mile.

When questioned by a scribe about the greatest commandment (read: which commandment will earn me the most brownie points?), Jesus lifted up two from the [Deuteronomic Shema](#): love God, and from Leviticus 19:18, love others. While Jesus clearly modeled loving self also, he didn't lift it up here, and certainly never suggested loving self over others. (For the sake of our own health, let's be clear: self-care can be necessary for loving self *for the sake of* others—we cannot care for others if we neglect caring for ourselves.)

Loving God and loving others looked quite different from what the religious leaders of the day thought. It was not about public displays of grand religious gestures. It was in the subtler, unrecognized displays of gratitude, generosity, and selflessness as shown by the poor widow who gave more than she could really afford. Although the amount was smaller, the percentage was much greater. Her offering would be a greater sacrifice than the offerings of those with plenty to give.

The widow's gift was more [equitable than equal](#) to the leaders' gifts. Maybe even today we might stop comparing ourselves to others about what we are able to offer to God and to God's children. We might think we are better or worse than others at giving of ourselves. But we need only compete against ourselves. Can I do better for me regardless of what others are doing? Am I giving God and God's world the best of me?

For supplementary preaching resources, please [visit our website access point](#). (Link: bit.ly/proclaim-it-nl)

Scripture Summary

Two commandments are greater than any others. Love God. Love others. Jesus showed how a poor widow modeled selfless love.

Call to Worship

L: Come and worship the God of love!

C: Let us love the Lord, our God!

L: With heart and soul, with mind and strength.

C: Let us love our neighbors, too!

L: In equal measure as ourselves.

C: Come and worship the God of love!

Confession and Forgiveness

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Merciful God,

C: Forgive us, for we have fallen short of your vision for humanity. We have put ourselves before others, ignored the vulnerable, and forgotten you altogether. We have missed the point of your kingdom. Have mercy on us, for Jesus' sake, amen.

P: Children, your God has not forgotten you. Jesus knows your weakness and sees through your presence. You are made whole simply by seeking forgiveness. Receive the Lord's pardon and believe that it is true, by the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



Liturgy

Prayer of the Day

O Lord,
Your greatest command to love can also be most difficult.
Give us the same heart as you have for the world and
everything in it, that we might be the living presence of
your love. In Jesus' name, amen.

Offertory Prayer

All too often we give out of our abundance, Lord, with no
discomfort or second thought. Nevertheless we ask you to
accept these gifts we bring and bless them on behalf of a
world which experiences life radically different from ours.
Unite us as one people and open our eyes to the needs of
others, for the sake of our savior Jesus, amen.

Prayers of the Church

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in
need.

A brief silence.

L: We speak often of love, O Lord, and yet we know so
little of the sacrificial kind which you desire. May your
ways of empathy, sympathy and deep compassion
govern our actions and transform our lives into a truer
reflection of the one who created us. Loving God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Bless the animals with whom we share our lives, and
the bonds which form between us. May we contribute
as much to their lives as they do to ours, accepting our
place within this vast web of creation. Loving God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: To observe this solemn season does not mean failing
to experience joy in the midst of it. May we indeed
take delight in being your children: forgiven, beloved
and blessed. Loving God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: There are many among us with trials and struggles
which may not be known to us. May we deal gently
with one another, presuming the best intentions of
them, and offering support without always being
asked. We ask that you tend to those whose needs we
do know, (*especially...*). Loving God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We lift up Jonathan Edwards, teacher and missionary,
and all those who genuinely struggle with your word
and its application to living. Make each of us a living
embodiment of your mercy, regardless of our
individual opinions. Loving God,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: You have promised to hear and answer our prayers, O
Lord, and for this we are grateful. Please grant these
things we ask, for the sake of the one who showed us
what love looks like, Jesus our Lord, amen.

Eucharistic Invitation

When we make our lives about love, we are not far from
the Kingdom of God. Let us join now in the feast which
our Lord offers, as a sign of God's care for us. Come fill
yourselves with your creator's goodness: the body and
blood of salvation!



Liturgy

Litany

Group 1: Beware of those

Group 2: Who only think of

Group 3: Glory for themselves.

1: For day and night

2: They walk around

3: So others will admire them.

1: Beware of those

2: Who want respect

3: From everyone they meet.

1: They look for perks,

2: And signs of rank

3: To boost their reputations.

1: Beware of those

2: Who make their fortunes

3: Off of others' lack.

1: They spend with ease,

2: Unethically,

3: Ignoring those with less.

1: Beware of those

2: Who put on airs

3: And seem to act devoutly,

1: They say their prayers

2: With booming voice

3: So others think they're holy.

1: Beware of those

2: Who don't think twice

3: When folks around are suffering.

1: They fake concern

2: But do not care

3: For others' sad misfortunes.

1: Beware, when we

2: Look in the mirror

3: And see that it is we

1: Who serve ourselves

2: And leave behind

3: The ones less fortunate.

1: For all are tempted

2: Not to care

3: When we are not at risk.

1: And all can fail

2: To show God's love

3: When it's too difficult.

1: Come, sisters, brothers—

2: Let us love

3: The way that Jesus did:

1: With mercy

2: And humility,

3: So all may simply live!



Creative Expression

Skit

Characters: Kendra, Holly

Props: An offering plate, play paper money, play paper change

[Kendra approaches the offering plate with many bills as Holly approaches with change.]

Kendra: Well, it's been a great year at work, I have a lot of money to put into the offering plate this week!

Holly: [embarrassed, sheepish, looks at change in her hand.] Well, I lost my job. It's been kind of hard to pay my bills, but I found some change in the couch. But I guess I didn't need to bother if you were going to give so much.

Kendra: What do you mean?

Holly: Well, you have so much to put into the plate. All I have is change. It's so embarrassing.

Kendra: It's not embarrassing!

Holly: Easy for you to say.

Kendra: Holly, I've been there. Sometimes we have a lot of money and sometimes we don't. It doesn't mean you shouldn't bother!

Holly: I just wish I had more to give.

Kendra: You are giving as much as you possibly can! That's an even better donation than any large amount someone can put in!

Holly: Really?

Kendra: Yes! They don't even have to think about giving money when they have a ton. I mean, I didn't give as much as I probably could have if I'm honest. But you are giving so much out of love.

Holly: Am I?

Kendra: You are struggling to pay bills and you still found some spare change to give away. That seems really giving and loving to me!

Holly: Even if it's not that much? Even if it makes an embarrassing clink when it drops in?

Kendra: Of course! It isn't about the amount. It's about what is in your heart and your heart wants to give no matter what. That's loving! You are showing love of God and love of others by being so generous. Thank you for being such a loving example!

Holly: Wow. I never thought of it that way. Thank you, Kendra!



Kids' Storytime

Main Message

God likes when we are generous and giving with loving hearts.

Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Jelly beans

Setting the Scene/Background

Help kids see that God doesn't care how much you are giving. God cares if you give from a good and loving heart. Giving or doing God's work for praise is not the right way to honor God.

Use this exercise to help kids see that we can't measure a good heart by the number of resources someone has to give.

Telling the Story

Tell the story using the *KidStuff* bulletin.

Activity

Tell kids the scribes liked to pray loudly and showed off how much money they would give so people would think they were cool.

Tell kids God wants us to give because of our love for God, not to impress people.

Hand out the jelly beans. Give more to some kids than others (have extra to hand out when the exercise is over).

Tell kids to pretend there's a charity drive. Jelly beans will help find homes for puppies.

Ask if you gave all the jelly beans you had, how many would you give?

Once everyone has given all their jelly beans, ask: Who has the most important donation? Nobody! If we give what we have, it's an important donation!

Reflection Questions

- What if I don't want to share?
- Why can't God make everyone have enough money?

Stuff to Consider

Be sure to be aware of the food allergies in your crew. Gluten-free jelly beans can help so everyone can eat the treat. It's also important to be sure they are peanut safe, if necessary. Separate treats are ok, but it's nice to give everyone the same treat if you can.

Next Week's Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Cootie catcher—option to have written numbers/fortunes inside



Planning Worksheet

Preaching Themes

Kids' Storytime Ideas

Skit or Creative Ideas

Worship Setting

Props for Kids' Storytime or Skit

Hymns

Special Events (Baptism, New Members)

Choral Music/Special Music

Guest Speakers/Announcements



Scripture Readings

Text: Mark 13:1-8, 24-37

13 As he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!” ² Then Jesus asked him, “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.”

³ When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, ⁴ “Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?”

⁵ Then Jesus began to say to them, “Beware that no one leads you astray. ⁶ Many will come in my name and say, ‘I am he!’ and they will lead many astray. ⁷ When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come. ⁸ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs.

²⁴ “But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened,

and the moon will not give its light,

²⁵ and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

²⁶ Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. ²⁷ Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

²⁸ “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹ So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates.

³⁰ Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³² “But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

³³ Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴ It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch.

³⁵ Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, ³⁶ or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷ And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

Secondary Text: Psalm 102:12-17

¹² But you, O Lord, are enthroned forever;
your name endures to all generations.

¹³ You will rise up and have compassion on Zion,
for it is time to favor it;
the appointed time has come.

¹⁴ For your servants hold its stones dear,
and have pity on its dust.

¹⁵ The nations will fear the name of the Lord,
and all the kings of the earth your glory.

¹⁶ For the Lord will build up Zion;
he will appear in his glory.

¹⁷ He will regard the prayer of the destitute,
and will not despise their prayer.



Scripture Readings

Dramatic Reading of the Text

Readers: Narrator, Disciple, Jesus

Narrator: As he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him,

Disciple: “Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!”

Narrator: Then Jesus asked him,

Jesus: “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.”

Narrator: When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately,

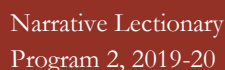
Disciple: “Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?”

Narrator: Then Jesus began to say to them,

Jesus: “Beware that no one leads you astray. Many will come in my name and say, ‘I am he!’ and they will lead many astray. When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs.

But in those days, after that suffering,
the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light,
and the stars will be falling from heaven,
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

Jesus: “Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”



End of the Age, Mark 13:1-8, 24-37

[illegible]



Theme and Liturgy

Preaching Theme

Main Idea: Jesus' words about the end of all things taught us more about the things happening now.

The end of all things has always fascinated the imagination of humanity. From the [zombie apocalypse](#) to the [destruction of the earth by meteor](#) to [Left Behind](#) series that imagined a literal interpretation of Revelation, people have always wondered about what the end will look like. Perhaps it's because no one has survived a terminal end and returned to tell about it. Even death, which is a more personal end than the end of all things, frightens and intrigues us at the same time.

Jesus' account of the end of all things drew no less intrigue. The darkening of the sun, the stars falling from heaven, the Son of Man coming in clouds—these are all quite vivid and terrifying events. Are they literal or metaphor? Was Jesus referring to the end of all things or simply the [end of his time on earth](#)? We may never know exactly what Jesus meant.

Whatever the exact meaning, we can be certain of a few things.

- There will be some who claim to own the knowledge of the end of all things (remember the [Y2K conspiracy](#))—even some who will claim to be the chosen. They will be wrong.
- No one on the earth has the power to predict the end (or the beginning or the middle, for that matter). That knowledge is only for God.
- Ending is a process, not an event (“the beginning of the birth pangs”). This rings true—every loss we experience either builds, lingers, or both.
- We are called to be ready for the end—ready for anything, then. Jesus didn't stand for complacency. He encouraged diligence, watchfulness, and action.

Ultimately, Jesus' words about the end of all things taught us more about the things of now. Life is happening all around us. If we are not awake and watchful, we'll miss it.

For supplementary preaching resources, please [visit our website access point](#). (Link: bit.ly/proclaim-it-nl)

Scripture Summary

Jesus taught the disciples about the end of all things. But in his words, they learned about the things of now. Be awake and watchful. Life is happening all around us.

Call to Worship

L: Let us worship the Lord, who is enthroned forever,

C: Whose name endures for all generations.

L: Nations fear the name of the Lord,

C: And all its leaders God's glory.

L: Praise the Lord, who answers prayer,

C: Whose love endures forever.

Confession and Forgiveness

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Merciful God,

C: Forgive us, for we have fallen short of your vision for humanity. We have put ourselves before others, ignored the vulnerable, and forgotten you altogether. We have missed the point of your kingdom. Have mercy on us, for Jesus' sake, amen.

P: Children, your God has not forgotten you. Jesus knows your weakness and sees through your presence. You are made whole simply by seeking forgiveness. Receive the Lord's pardon and believe that it is true, by the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



Liturgy

Prayer of the Day

O Lord,

No one on earth knows the hour of your return. Only keep us watchful and awake, that we might always be at work in your kingdom, for the sake of Jesus, amen.

Offertory Prayer

The things which we value are rarely eternal ones, O God. Teach us to let go of worldly temptations and to offer what resources we have: time, abilities, and wealth, to your service. Bless these gifts we bring before you, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

Prayers of the Church

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

L: There are many who claim to have special knowledge of your plan to redeem the earth, O Lord. Do not allow us to be led astray, keeping us focused instead upon all the ways you are calling us to live out our discipleship here and now. Eternal God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We take our clues from nature to know what season it is. May we be as keenly aware of other people and when the time is right to share your word and mediate your grace and love to them. Eternal God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We pray for veterans of the war in Vietnam, who faced the distress of combat, the judgment of many, and subsequent injuries and traumas which impact them to this day. May we care for them to the best of our ability, and not allow them to be forgotten. Eternal God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We ask your healing power upon all those who are dealing with addictions and impulses difficult to control. Send your Spirit also to those whom we know are suffering, (*especially...*). Eternal God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We celebrate Hans Nielsen Hauge, who renewed the church in Norway, promoted a living faith among its members, and advocated for working people's rights. Bless all who follow in his example. Eternal God,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: Bless all for whom we pray this day, and keep us alert to the ways you are working in the world. In Jesus' name, amen.

Eucharistic Invitation

Heaven and earth may pass away, but your word will endure forever, O Lord. May we trust the truth made real to us in this holy sacrament: that you have come to redeem all, and desire that no one be left out. Let us come now to our savior's table!



Liturgy

Litany

(20 years and) Older: The world we know is changing,

(19 years and) Younger: Stay awake!

O: The things of old have crumbled,

Y: Stay awake!

O: Do not be led astray,

Y: Stay awake!

O: Ignore the false imposters,

Y: Stay awake!

O: Do not be scared of rumors,

Y: Stay awake!

O: But know that I am with you,

Y: Stay awake!

O: The heavens will be shaken,

Y: Stay awake!

O: The Son will come in glory,

Y: Stay awake!

O: The angels will be summoned,

Y: Stay awake!

O: The faithful will be gathered,

Y: Stay awake!

O: Come, learn the fig tree's lesson:

Y: Stay awake!

O: Its leaves foretell the summer,

Y: Stay awake!

O: These signs precede the Savior,

Y: Stay awake!

O: But no one knows the hour,

Y: Stay awake!

O: You cannot predict his coming,

Y: Stay awake!

O: Keep alert, for he's coming,

Y: Stay awake!

O: All at once, unexpected,

Y: Stay awake!

O: Do your work; don't be sleeping,

Y: Stay awake!

O: Watch and wait, God is coming:

All: Stay awake!



Creative Expression

Skit

Characters: Lu, Penny

[Penny is freaking out as Lu approaches.]

Lu: Hey Penny!

Penny: [hugging herself] Um...hi, Lu.

Lu: Oh, no. Penny, what's wrong?

Penny: Nothing...

Lu: Something's wrong. You can tell me. Maybe I can help!

Penny: I'm just so worried.

Lu: I'm sorry. What are you worried about?

Penny: The end of the world!

Lu: That is a scary thought!

Penny: I'm just so scared. Is it going to be fire? Wind? Floods? All three?

Lu: Gee, I don't know.

Penny: Is it going to be tomorrow?

Lu: Uhhh...

Penny: Next week?

Lu: I, uh....

Penny: [sounding more panicked with each phrase] Next month? Next year? Five years? When I'm ninety? When?!

Lu: Penny, Penny! Calm down!

Penny: How can I stay calm! There's so much unknown! There's predictions everywhere. I searched it online, but everybody says something different.

Lu: Oh, Penny.

Penny: And it's so hard to know. Do I want to stock up food and supplies and survive, or just "let go and go with God" when the time comes? What if God doesn't want me? It's all so much!

Lu: That really is a lot!

Penny: So how can I possibly calm down?

Lu: Well, does it help that only God knows when the time will come?

Penny: [pauses a beat] No!. How does that help?

Lu: Well, if you know that none of those predictions are right, you can focus on what's really important.

Penny: What is that?

Lu: Following God's word, loving God and your neighbor.

Penny: It's just so anticlimactic.

Lu: Maybe. But I don't think God gave us life for a bunch of worry and drama. I think life is a gift and God wants us to enjoy what we can, and help who we can and love God while we are here...

Penny: [relaxing] You really think that God wants us to enjoy life?

Lu: Of course, I do! It's a gift! Enjoy it!

Penny: Phew! I will do my best!



Kids' Storytime

Main Message

Jesus says everything may change, but God's word will be around forever. Signs will come to tell us things are happening, but only God knows the future!

Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Cootie catcher—option to have written numbers/fortunes inside

Setting the Scene/Background

Jesus mentions the end of the world. He shares the things that will happen; what will be destroyed; what will last. But in the end, only God knows when this all will happen.

What's important is to pay attention to God's word and to live our best lives for God.

Use this exercise to talk about how our fear might hold us back, but none of us can know the future.

Telling the Story

Tell the story using the *KidStuff* bulletin.

Activity

Talk to kids about what is going to happen in the future. There are a lot of predictions in the Bible.

Ask if we can tell the future with fortune telling. Play a round with the cootie catcher. Maybe have a silly message inside to help illustrate your point.

Tell kids we can't know the future, but God knows. The best thing we can do is follow God's word and live each day filled with love.

Reflection Questions

- Why doesn't God tell us what will happen in the future?
- Are fortune tellers real? Why or why not?

Stuff to Consider

Cootie catchers are a common toy, and it's ok to pretend to tell fortunes. Help kids understand the difference between fun games and trying to tell the future for real. Games are ok and kids don't need to feel bad about that.

Next Week's Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Palm leaves
- Coats/towels



Planning Worksheet

Preaching Themes

Kids' Storytime Ideas

Skit or Creative Ideas

Worship Setting

Props for Kids' Storytime or Skit

Hymns

Special Events (Baptism, New Members)

Choral Music/Special Music

Guest Speakers/Announcements



Scripture Readings

Text: Mark 11:1-11

11 When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples ² and said to them, “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. ³ If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.’” ⁴ They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, ⁵ some of the bystanders said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” ⁶ They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. ⁷ Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. ⁸ Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. ⁹ Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,

“Hosanna!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

¹⁰ Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

¹¹ Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor.” And they scolded her. ⁶ But Jesus said, “Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. ⁷ For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me. ⁸ She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. ⁹ Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.”

Secondary Text: Psalm 118:25-29

²⁵ Save us, we beseech you, O Lord!

O Lord, we beseech you, give us success!

²⁶ Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

We bless you from the house of the Lord.

²⁷ The Lord is God,

and he has given us light.

Bind the festal procession with branches,
up to the horns of the altar.

²⁸ You are my God, and I will give thanks to you;
you are my God, I will extol you.

²⁹ O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever.

Text: Mark 14:3-9

³ While he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head. ⁴ But some were there who said to one another in anger, “Why was the ointment wasted in this way? ⁵ For this ointment could

Pronunciation Guide

Bethphage: BETH-fuh-jee

denarii: dih-NAIR-ee-i



Scripture Readings

Dramatic Reading of the Text:

Mark 11:1-11

Readers: Narrator, Jesus, Bystander, Crowds

Narrator: When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples and said to them,

Jesus: “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.’”

Narrator: They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, some of the bystanders said to them,

Bystander: “What are you doing, untying the colt?”

Narrator: They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,

Crowds: “Hosanna!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

Narrator: Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

Dramatic Reading of the Text:

Mark 14:3-9

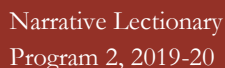
Readers: Narrator, Crowd, Jesus

Narrator: While he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head. But some were there who said to one another in anger,

Crowd: “Why was the ointment wasted in this way? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor.”

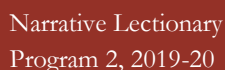
Narrator: And they scolded her. But Jesus said,

Jesus: “Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me. She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.”



Triumphal Entry [Anointing at Bethany], Mark 11:1-11 [Mark 14:3-9]

[illegible]



Triumphal Entry [Anointing at Bethany], Mark 11:1-11 [Mark 14:3-9]

[illegible]



Theme and Liturgy

Preaching Theme

Main Idea: Jesus is a king unlike any we could imagine.

The people of Israel were in desperate need of a savior—one who would free them from their oppression by Rome. [It had been some time since a Jewish king reigned.](#) King Saul was the first, although was quickly replaced by David when Saul lost his mind. Following David, his son, Solomon, and then Solomon's son, Rehoboam, the kingdom split. Israel and Judah both had a succession of kings. It was a turbulent time for Israel; they were conquered by Assyria, then Babylonia, and then Persia. The Persian king helped Israel reestablish Jerusalem but retained governing control. For a time, a Jewish rebel group, the Maccabees, took control, forcing conversions and reestablishing the Jewish religion. About 60 years before Jesus' birth, Rome came into power, and allowed Jewish High Priests to act as governing bodies, but still under Roman control. It was into this turbulent, uncertain political landscape that Jesus entered.

Over the three years of Jesus' ministry, he stirred things up quite a bit. By the time he entered Jerusalem, people believed he could overthrow Rome and restore Israel's power and independence. The people shouted, "Hosanna!" ("Save, we pray!"), encouraging Jesus to rise up and conquer the city. What they didn't know, and couldn't know, was that Jesus was a different kind of king. He was a king that would set right, not the earthly reign of Israel, but the universal reign of God over all things. To do so would be messy and ugly, and it would require the ultimate sacrifice—Jesus' very life. His anointing would not be for earthly reign, but for burial.

Israel now has a prime minister, not a king. Many other developed and developing countries have prime ministers or presidents, dictators, and yes, even several queens and kings. Universally, all people have a supreme ruler, God, who is unlike any on earth. Jesus' death and resurrection established a new covenant that God would reign over all people, not just Jews. God's reign would ensure the eternal salvation that is even greater than the earthly salvation Jesus' followers sought. God's reign is ultimate, intimate, universal, and personal. No kingdom will ever defeat the reign of God.

For supplementary preaching resources, please [visit our website access point](#). (Link: bit.ly/proclaim-it-nl)

Scripture Summary

When the people of Israel called for Jesus to save them, they could not have imagined that Jesus would save them from sin and death. Jesus was not only king over Israel, but king over all.

Call to Worship

L: To the one who comes in glory:

C: Save us, O God!

L: To the one who comes in humility:

C: Save us, O God!

L: To the one who sacrifices all:

C: Save us, O God!

Confession and Forgiveness

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Merciful God,

C: Forgive us, for we have fallen short of your vision for humanity. We have put ourselves before others, ignored the vulnerable, and forgotten you altogether. We have missed the point of your kingdom. Have mercy on us, for Jesus' sake, amen.

P: Children, your God has not forgotten you. Jesus knows your weakness and sees through your presence. You are made whole simply by seeking forgiveness. Receive the Lord's pardon and believe that it is true, by the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



Liturgy

Prayer of the Day

O God,
You give us the king we need. May we follow where he
leads, even when it is not where we want to go. For the
sake of Jesus we pray, amen.

Offertory Prayer

We lay our gifts—and our hearts—upon your table in
gratitude and thanksgiving. May all the world know your
gentle mercy, and that you have come to make all things
new. In Jesus' name, amen.

Prayers of the Church

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in
need.

A brief silence.

L: As people once raised palms, so we raise our song and
prayers to you, O Lord, as we follow throughout this
crucial week. Assure us that you are always with us and
your promises are true. Beloved King,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: A donkey bore the weight of the world's deliverance.
Show us the value of humble things, and teach us your
kingdom's logic-defying order. Beloved King,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Even in the midst of anticipated sorrow there is
celebration. Send us joy in all things, that we might
never run out of reasons to praise your name. Beloved
King,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Be with all those who have lost role, function or
ability, and those who fear they no longer have the
purpose they once did. Transform our reality into
something we never could have imagined. Send your
healing to those whose names we bring before you,
(*especially...*). Beloved King,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: You kept your dear ones close during your last week,
O Lord. Join us all as one fellowship of witnesses to
your faithfulness, both living and departed. Beloved
King,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: Accept our prayers and hear our cries when we call to
you. We ask these things in the mercy of our savior
Jesus Christ, amen.

Eucharistic Invitation

You are a wise and gracious ruler, O Lord. We gather
around your table as redeemed children, hungry for the
gifts of your presence and peace in our lives. Come and be
fed on the food of salvation!



Liturgy

Litany

L: They sought a king,

C: You sent a baby,

L: Born in stark humility.

C: Not swaddled up in luxury.

L: They sought a king,

C: You sent a teacher,

L: Full of truth and wisdom,

C: Defying strict convention.

L: They sought a king,

C: You sent a healer,

L: Gentle and forgiving,

C: Compassionate and loving.

L: They sought a king,

C: To rise above

L: The rulers and the leaders.

C: But Jesus conquered evil.

L: They sought a king

C: To be supreme,

L: And strong beyond all others.

C: But Jesus was a servant.

L: They sought a king

C: To show the world

L: His excellence and glory,

C: But yours rode on a donkey.

L: They sought a king

C: To challenge all

L: The rulers and the leaders.

C: But yours preferred forgiveness.

L: They sought a king

C: To finally

L: Throw off their vile oppressors,

C: But Jesus offered blessings.

L: They sought a king

C: To rule them all,

L: But yours sought only truth,

C: And so gave up his life.

L: We seek a king

C: To be our all,

L: The things that we desire,

C: But you give us a savior.

L: We praise you, King

C: For doing nothing

L: As you were expected,

C: But calling us beloved.

L: Praise to the king

C: Who saves us.

All: Praise to the king who saves us!



Creative Expression

Skit

Characters: Josh, Marty

Props: Palms

[Josh is super into Palm Sunday but Marty is being dragged along for the ride. We enter with Josh having palms in both hands shouting hosanna, and Marty just twirling a palm by his side.]

Josh: Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest! Christ is coming, let's celebrate! All glory, laude, and honor! Woo!

Marty: [very unenthusiastically] Woo.

Josh: [finally noticing Marty isn't waving his palm or celebrating] Hey Marty, what's going on?

Marty: Nothing. Just celebrating Palm Sunday.

Josh: You don't seem that excited about it?

Marty: I'm not.

Josh: Ok, why not?

Marty: Because it's the same every year. Jesus triumphantly processes into Jerusalem just to be killed. Why are we celebrating this? Why aren't we sadder?

Josh: That's a good question. I think we have plenty of time to be sad later this week.

Marty: What do you mean?

Josh: Well, on Thursday we remember the night he was betrayed...

Marty: Wait, what?

Josh: And on Friday we remember that Jesus was killed. You know, Good Friday?

Marty: Hold up hold up! We do what on Thursday and Friday?

Josh: We have worship services, remember? Where we remember the sad parts of Jesus's death before he rises on Easter morning?

Marty: I didn't know that!

Josh: Yeah—we try and space it out. Celebrate the entry into Jerusalem just like they did way back when Jesus was on earth, and then we wait to be somber and remember the sad parts during the week.

Marty: I had no idea there was worship during the week!

Josh: Yeah, it happens every year before Easter! They call it Holy Week!

Marty: The pastor is here the whole time?

Josh: Yup!

Marty: That's wild!

Josh: Ha, ha, I guess so...

Marty: So, if I come later in the week, I can do my mourning then?

Josh: Exactly.

Marty: Ok, let's celebrate!

Josh: Yes!! [Both start wildly waving their palms] Hosanna!

Marty: Hosanna!



Kids' Storytime

Main Message

Everyone celebrated Jesus as he came to Jerusalem. Let's all celebrate Jesus!

Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Palm leaves
- Coats/towels

Setting the Scene/Background

We know Jesus was going to be in trouble when he got to Jerusalem, but there was a moment on Palm Sunday when everyone was excited to celebrate Jesus!

Help kids feel the energy and what it might have been like that day!

Telling the Story

Tell the story using the *KidStuff* bulletin.

Activity

Tell kids the story of Jesus and all the people who celebrated his arrival. Ask what it's like to have a really exciting celebration.

Invite kids to have a mini celebration, waving palm branches and making a path of coats.

Let them take turns walking the path or pretending to be Jesus.

Invite them all to shout Hosanna—Hooray for Jesus!

Reflection Questions

- Do you like worship when it's celebratory? Why or why not?
- Is worship ever sad?

Stuff to Consider

Some kids cannot move as fast as their friends, or may need space for a wheelchair or walking support. Be sure to have the space ready for all to process together!

Props for Maundy Thursday

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Communion bread
- Communion wine or juice

Props for Good Friday

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- A nail (option to give one to each student)
- A metal bowl or bucket

Next Sunday's Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin



Planning Worksheet

Preaching Themes

Kids' Storytime Ideas

Skit or Creative Ideas

Worship Setting

Props for Kids' Storytime or Skit

Hymns

Special Events (Baptism, New Members)

Choral Music/Special Music

Guest Speakers/Announcements



Scripture Readings

Text: Mark 14:22-42

²² While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." ²³ Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. ²⁴ He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. ²⁵ Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

²⁶ When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. ²⁷ And Jesus said to them, "You will all become deserters; for it is written,

'I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep will be scattered.'

²⁸ But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee."

²⁹ Peter said to him, "Even though all become deserters, I will not." ³⁰ Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times." ³¹ But he said vehemently, "Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you." And all of them said the same.

³² They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." ³³ He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. ³⁴ And he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake." ³⁵ And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.

³⁶ He said, "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want." ³⁷ He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? ³⁸ Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but

the flesh is weak." ³⁹ And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. ⁴⁰ And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him. ⁴¹ He came a third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴² Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand."

Secondary Text: Psalm 116:12-19

¹² What shall I return to the Lord
for all his bounty to me?

¹³ I will lift up the cup of salvation
and call on the name of the Lord,

¹⁴ I will pay my vows to the Lord
in the presence of all his people.

¹⁵ Precious in the sight of the Lord
is the death of his faithful ones.

¹⁶ O Lord, I am your servant;
I am your servant, the child of your serving girl.
You have loosed my bonds.

¹⁷ I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice
and call on the name of the Lord.

¹⁸ I will pay my vows to the Lord
in the presence of all his people,

¹⁹ in the courts of the house of the Lord,
in your midst, O Jerusalem.

Praise the Lord!

Pronunciation Guide

Gethsemane: geth-SEM-uh-nee



Scripture Readings

Dramatic Reading of the Text

Readers: Narrator, Jesus, Peter

Narrator: While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said,

Jesus: "Take; this is my body."

Narrator: Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. He said to them,

Jesus: "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

Narrator: When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. And Jesus said to them,

Jesus: "You will all become deserters; for it is written,

‘I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep will be scattered.’

But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee."

Narrator: Peter said to him,

Peter: "Even though all become deserters, I will not."

Narrator: Jesus said to him,

Jesus: "Truly I tell you, this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times."

Narrator: But he said vehemently,

Peter: "Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you."

Narrator: And all of them said the same. They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples,

Jesus: "Sit here while I pray."

Narrator: He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. And he said to them,

Jesus: "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake."

Narrator: And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said,

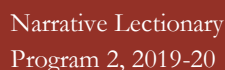
Jesus: "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want."

Narrator: He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter,

Jesus: "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Narrator: And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him. He came a third time and said to them,

Jesus: "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand."



Lord's Supper/Prayer in Gethsemane, Mark 14:22-42

Tag Cloud





Theme and Liturgy

Preaching Theme

Main Idea: There can peace and strength in surrendering to truth and love.

The disciples could see that the political landscape was getting hot. They knew that Jesus was upsetting Roman and Jewish leaders, and that there would soon be a battle. Although Jesus warned them that they would lose their resolve and bail when things got ugly, they continued to believe they would fight, and they would win.

They were unprepared, however, for the reality of the next few days. They were unprepared to remain aware of their surroundings when Jesus went off by himself to pray. (Even though they knew soldiers could arrive at any time to take Jesus, they managed to sleep when they were supposed to be watching.) And they were unprepared for the lack of fighting when Jesus was finally arrested. Jesus called for them to put down their weapons, and to let the arrest and following events happen as they will. They were ready to drink the cup of battle that might lead to their deaths, but they were not ready to drink the cup of passive—but fierce—love that would definitely lead to their deaths.

It is still easier for some (most of us, if we're honest) to fight than to surrender to truth and love. It can be easier to be angry at the people we've hurt than to own our part and apologize. It can be easier to sue our neighbor than to forgive and let it go. It can be easier to beat ourselves up for our weight, our debt, our broken relationships than to surrender to our reality and learn to love ourselves despite our faults. What we may not realize is there can be tremendous peace and strength in surrender. Jesus knew it. The disciples didn't get it until after Jesus' death and resurrection. We can learn it, too. We can accept the peace of letting go.

For supplementary preaching resources, please [visit our website access point](#). (Link: bit.ly/proclaim-it-nl)

Scripture Summary

The disciples were ready for a battle. But on the night of Jesus' arrest, they were unprepared to surrender to truth and love.

Call to Worship

L: The hour of our Lord draws near.

C: Stay here, and stay awake!

L: Do not desert him while he prays.

C: Stay here, and stay awake!

L: Our savior wants us by his side.

C: Stay here, and stay awake!

Confession and Forgiveness

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Merciful God,

C: Forgive us, for we have fallen short of your vision for humanity. We have put ourselves before others, ignored the vulnerable, and forgotten you altogether. We have missed the point of your kingdom. Have mercy on us, for Jesus' sake, amen.

P: Children, your God has not forgotten you. Jesus knows your weakness and sees through your presence. You are made whole simply by seeking forgiveness. Receive the Lord's pardon and believe that it is true, by the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



Liturgy

Prayer of the Day

O Lord,
Your disciples were not prepared for the events of your final days. Give us the perspective which they lacked, that we might stay present during this week of sorrows, knowing that you are leading us down the right path. In Jesus' name, amen.

Offertory Prayer

Of all the offerings we could bring, O God, you most desire our faithful hearts. Bless these gifts as signs of our gratitude for all that you have done and continue to do for us, for the sake of your beloved Son, amen.

Prayers of the Church

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

L: Your struggle was not one of swords and weapons, O Lord, but a battle for hearts and souls. Give us your peace as we face our own challenges, knowing that you are ever beside us with the Spirit's power. God of surrender,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We do not always understand the art of harmonizing with nature's design rather than trying to resist or conquer it. We think we can defy aging, consume endlessly with no consequence, or ignore the real effects which our impractical lives have on the earth. Radically transform our relationship with the creation which houses us and with which we share a common identity. God of surrender,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: As our Jewish sisters and brothers begin their celebration of Passover, so we remember that night when you spent one final meal with your disciples. Remind us again of the covenant made in your blood, which we also share and which cannot be broken. God of surrender,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We place ourselves and our lives into your healing hands, knowing that you have the power to mend all that is broken within us. Look after those whom we know need your care, (*especially...*). God of surrender,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: For your beloved servant Dietrich Bonhoeffer we give you thanks. May his inspiring sacrifice for the sake of truth and faithfulness be the model to which we look in times of challenge and hardship. God of surrender,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: As you heard the prayers of your only son on the night of his betrayal, so hear us now as we bring before you all that is in our hearts. We offer it all in the name of our faithful Lord, Jesus Christ, amen.

Eucharistic Invitation

We drink the cup in one moment and deny you in the next. You know our failings, O Lord, yet you love us still. Pour your compassion and mercy upon us in this meal, and unite us as one family of your beloved children. Let us come now and join our savior at his table.



Liturgy

Litany

L: When the shepherd is struck,
C: The sheep will be scattered.
L: Disciples, well meaning
C: Could not understand.
L: They'd followed his leading
C: And taken his teaching,
L: But still they were stopped
C: At the weight of his words.
L: When the shepherd is struck,
C: The sheep will be scattered.
L: The good teacher knew
C: His recruits would desert him
L: But they could not fathom,
C: Nor trust it was true.
L: So flawed their idea
C: Of what was in store.
L: When the shepherd is struck,
C: The sheep will be scattered.
L: Our Lord's most beloved
C: Could not be prepared

L: For what was before them:
C: Their teacher's surrender.
L: They looked for a battle,
C: And so they brought swords.
L: When the shepherd is struck,
C: The sheep will be scattered.
L: The moments spent waiting
C: Seemed endless to them,
L: Their Lord wanted company,
C: But they were tired,
L: And heavy with sleep,
C: They soon drifted away.
L: When the shepherd is struck,
C: The sheep will be scattered.
L: Too soon, the betrayer
C: Approaches with spite.
L: The time is now over
C: For watching and waiting.
L: Our Lord is now facing
C: His loneliest hour.



Creative Expression

Skit

Characters: Jenny, Peter

Props: Hymnals, bulletins

[We join Jenny in Peter mid-worship, holding their books talking in stage whispers since they are in church.]

Peter: I don't get it...

Jenny: What don't you get?

Peter: Pastor says this is Jesus' body and blood.

Jenny: Yeah?

Peter: But every time I go up to take communion, it's just a dry cracker and wine.

Jenny: [smirking] Right, what's your point?

Peter: Well, why are we saying the bread is Jesus' body and wine is his blood? It doesn't make any sense.

Jenny: That's what Jesus did in the Bible story.

Peter: Wait—that's a Bible story?

Jenny: Yeah—he has supper with his disciples, and when he gives them bread, he says, "This I my body." You know, all the stuff the pastor repeats?

Peter: I had no idea!!

Jenny: And then they share wine and he says it's his blood, a new covenant, shed for all.

Peter: Well that's kind of a relief. I thought that maybe they were doing some weird eating people thing...

Jenny: It's not like that, sheesh, Peter!

Peter: I'm sorry, I'm just still learning all this stuff!

Jenny: I can't believe you thought that! What are we, zombies?

Peter: I was honestly kind of wondering for a little bit.

Jenny: Well stop! It's bread and it's wine.

Peter: Then why do we say its body and blood?

Jenny: You know, I'm not sure...is it maybe a symbol?

Peter: Maybe...

Jenny: But if it was a symbol, why wouldn't he say it represents his body and blood?

Peter: That's a good question...

Jenny: And I think I remember pastor saying something about Jesus being in the bread and wine.

Peter: Inside it? How is that even possible?

Jenny: Umm...

Peter: I mean, how would it even work? Wouldn't we run out at some point??

Jenny: Maybe pastor meant spiritually?

Peter: Huh?

Jenny: You know, Jesus' spirit is with the bread and the wine, so we are taking Jesus into ourselves, but in a spiritual sense?

Peter: That would work I suppose. I'm still confused...

Jenny: I think it's just a confusing subject. Maybe we don't have to understand it for it to work.

Peter: I think you're right!



Kids' Storytime

Main Message

Jesus served communion to the disciples, and we remember in worship!

Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Communion bread
- Communion wine or juice

Setting the Scene/Background

We celebrate communion in worship on Sunday. Whether you do it every week, once a month, or even just a few times a year, we hear words that Jesus spoke to his disciples in the Bible.

Use this time to teach kids about how your church celebrates communion!

Telling the Story

Tell the story using the *KidStuff* bulletin.

Activity

If you choose to have a more formal teaching, you may bring kids to the altar to show how the table is set. However, it might be nicer to have something down on their level with elements they can touch and not offend the rest of the community who will be eating the bread and wine later.

Explain why we have communion. Talk about what your tradition believes is happening when you eat the bread and drink the wine. Talk about what age people in your church normally have communion. Talk about the elements. Are they magic? Do they change? What happens in the words of institution?

The most important idea? These are for you!

Reflection Questions

- Some churches think different things about communion—who is right?
- Why does Jesus say this is his body and blood? Why not just, “have this snack to remember me?”

Stuff to Consider

Bread can be an allergy trigger for some kids. Even touching gluten can be an issue for some. If you use real elements, use gluten-free to keep everyone safe!

Props for Good Friday

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- A nail (option to give one to each student)
- A metal bowl or bucket

Next Sunday's Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin



Planning Worksheet

Preaching Themes

Kids' Storytime Ideas

Skit or Creative Ideas

Worship Setting

Props for Kids' Storytime or Skit

Hymns

Special Events (Baptism, New Members)

Choral Music/Special Music

Guest Speakers/Announcements



Scripture Readings

Text: Mark 15:16-39

¹⁶ Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. ¹⁷ And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. ¹⁸ And they began saluting him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ¹⁹ They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. ²⁰ After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

²¹ They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. ²² Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). ²³ And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. ²⁴ And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.

²⁵ It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. ²⁶ The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." ²⁷ And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left. ²⁹ Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, ³⁰ save yourself, and come down from the cross!" ³¹ In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. ³² Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also taunted him.

³³ When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. ³⁴ At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ³⁵ When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "Listen, he is calling for Elijah." ³⁶ And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down." ³⁷ Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. ³⁸ And the curtain of the temple was torn

in two, from top to bottom. ³⁹ Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

Secondary Text: Psalm 22:1-2, 14-21

¹ My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?

² O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer;
and by night, but find no rest.

¹⁴ I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint;
my heart is like wax;

it is melted within my breast;
¹⁵ my mouth is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to my jaws;
you lay me in the dust of death.

¹⁶ For dogs are all around me;
a company of evildoers encircles me.
My hands and feet have shriveled;

¹⁷ I can count all my bones.

They stare and gloat over me;

¹⁸ they divide my clothes among themselves,
and for my clothing they cast lots.

¹⁹ But you, O Lord, do not be far away!
O my help, come quickly to my aid!

²⁰ Deliver my soul from the sword,
my life from the power of the dog!

²¹ Save me from the mouth of the lion!

From the horns of the wild oxen you have rescued me.

Pronunciation Guide

Cyrene: si -REE-nee

Rufus: ROO-fuhs

Golgotha: GOL-guh-thuh

Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani: AY-lo-ee, AY-lo-ee, LAH-mah sah-BAHK-tah-nee



Scripture Readings

Dramatic Reading of the Text

Readers: Narrator, Soldiers, Inscription, Crowd 1, Crowd 2, Jesus, Centurion

Narrator: Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. And they began saluting him,

Soldiers: "Hail, King of the Jews!"

Narrator: They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him. They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take. It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read,

Inscription: "The King of the Jews."

Narrator: And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying,

Crowd 1: "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!"

Narrator: In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying,

Crowd 2: "He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe."

Narrator: Those who were crucified with him also taunted him. When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice,

Jesus: "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?"

Narrator: which means,

Jesus: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Narrator: When some of the bystanders heard it, they said,

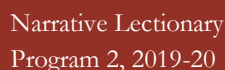
Crowd 1: "Listen, he is calling for Elijah."

Narrator: And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying,

Crowd 2: "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down."

Narrator: Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said,

Centurion: "Truly this man was God's Son!"



Crucifixion, Mark 15:16-39

[illegible]



Theme and Liturgy

Preaching Theme

Main Idea: Jesus was utterly alone in his final moments.

On the last day of Jesus' life, he was utterly alone. Even though he was surrounded by people, there was no love for him among any of them. (In Mark's gospel, there is no reference to Jesus' disciples being present. In fact, Mark's gospel goes out of its way to emphasize how alone and despised Jesus was, especially in this moment.) The soldiers and cohort mocked him and beat him, putting "royal" clothing on him. They robbed him of his clothing by lot before he was even dead. The crowds mocked and derided him, making fun of him for his helplessness. The chief priests mocked and despised him, challenging him to save himself the way the people had hoped he would save them. Even the centurion watching his final breath mocked him, making fun of Jesus' claim to be God's son. (A common reading makes the centurion's statement one of faith, but such a reading is inconsistent with the rest of the text.)

It would seem even God abandoned Jesus in the time of his darkest need. Jesus cried out, "My God, why have you forsaken me?" (Some interpret this as Jesus reciting a verse from the psalms that he would have learned by memory from childhood. Even so, it doesn't negate the impetus behind his words—he felt utterly and completely alone.)

But Jesus wasn't truly abandoned. God had an eye on these events, and when Jesus died, the curtain in the temple was torn in two. The curtain represented the barrier that separated God from humanity. (It was not only to keep people from God, but also to protect people from God. God was dangerous and unpredictable—people died simply from looking upon God!) Upon Jesus' death, the barrier between God and people was torn in two—God was loose in the world in way God never had been before! It was God's presence—God's response to the saving work of Jesus. It was proof that, even when Jesus felt utterly alone, God was still watching and waiting for the end, which would become a brilliant and unexpected new beginning.

For supplementary preaching resources, please [visit our website access point](https://www.narrativelectionary.org/visit-our-website-access-point). (Link: bit.ly/proclaim-it-nl)

Scripture Summary

Jesus' final moments were frightening and isolating. People mocked him, and he felt utterly alone.

Call to Worship

L: Do not desert us, O Lord!

C: Be never far away!

L: You are the one we trust;

C: Come quickly to help us!

L: Deliver us from harm,

C: And protect us from danger.

Confession and Forgiveness

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Merciful God,

C: Forgive us, for we have fallen short of your vision for humanity. We have put ourselves before others, ignored the vulnerable, and forgotten you altogether. We have missed the point of your kingdom. Have mercy on us, for Jesus' sake, amen.

P: Children, your God has not forgotten you. Jesus knows your weakness and sees through your presence. You are made whole simply by seeking forgiveness. Receive the Lord's pardon and believe that it is true, by the name of Jesus Christ, amen.



Liturgy

Prayer of the Day

Eternal God,
Your son lost everything when he gave himself up to be killed. May we remember his final hour with compassion and gratitude for all that we have received as a result of his selfless act. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

Offertory Prayer

All belongs to you, O God, and so we offer it back to the giver. Take our lives and transform us into people of mercy and grace, even as we have been shown your love through Jesus our Savior, amen.

Prayers of the Church

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

L: When the companion to the lost and outcast is in his hour of greatest need, there is no one to support him. Have mercy on us, O God, for our rejection of your son, and may we see in him the embodiment of your grace, which we cannot earn. Merciful God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: When disaster strikes and we are at its mercy, nature can seem cruel. Deliver us from despair when we are faced with hardships too great to fathom, and show us your compassion when we cry to you. Merciful God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We have come to the darkest moment of this somber season, O Lord. May we not turn away from you in your hour of suffering and death, but turn our hearts with gratitude toward your cross. Merciful God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: For all who know true suffering, with seemingly no respite: prisoners, abuse and violence victims, people in chronic pain and others, we pray this day, remembering those whose names we bring before you, (*especially...*). Merciful God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We remember Mikael Agricola, Bishop of Turku, and all who worked to spread your gospel and reform your Church. Count us among the faithful when you gather us all in the fullness of time. Merciful God,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: For all which we ask, and all which do not know how to ask, we pray this day, trusting only in your unfailing mercy, through the gift of your Son, Jesus, Christ, amen.

Eucharistic Invitation

Even though you were deserted in your darkest hour, you never leave us, Lord. Remind us of all you gave for us, represented here in your gifts of bread and cup. Gather us together, and bless us with your mercy. Come and join your savior at the table.



Liturgy

Litany

L: Though thousands had gathered

C: To hear what he taught,

L: Had sought and admired him,

C: Asked for his wisdom,

L: He suffered alone

C: In the end.

L: Though many had followed,

C: And found a new life,

L: Had asked and been granted,

C: Both mercy and healing,

L: He suffered alone

C: In the end.

L: Though hundreds had seen him

C: And knew of his story,

L: Could name his disciples

C: And where he had come from,

L: He suffered alone

C: In the end.

L: Though followers promised

C: To never desert him,

L: Convinced that their loyalty

C: Couldn't be shaken,

L: He suffered alone

C: In the end.

L: Though crowds of well-wishers

C: And jubilant faithful

L: Had cheered his arrival

C: A few short days prior,

L: He suffered alone

C: In the end.

L: Through mocking and taunting

C: And hostile saluting,

L: Through blows and through beating

C: And false acclamation,

L: He suffered alone

C: In the end.

L: Though many were gathered

C: And witnessed his beating,

L: His cruel derision

C: And harsh crucifixion,

L: He suffered alone

C: In the end.

L: Though Jesus had come

C: To be our companion,

L: To live life beside us,

C: And never desert us,

L: He suffered alone

C: In the end.



Creative Expression

Spoken Word

Read this poem after scripture reading, followed by silence for meditation.

Re-reading the passion

You realize

We continue to fashion

Ways to crucify

Jesus

Over and over again

In our history there

Isn't one point when

We stopped hurting

The poorest among us

We elect power grabbing

Leaders who continue

To hurt you,

Jesus

In children with poisonous water

Chemicals, bombs, refusal

To feed and serve those we deem

Do not deserve

We kill you again and again

Oh, God

We never stop our

Evil actions

Oppressing families of color

Drawing factions

Stealing and poisoning land

Belonging to first nations

We let money drive us

Greed rule us

Satan enters us

We kiss our Lord with worship

And tonight, he breathes no more...



Kids' Storytime

Main Message

Jesus knew what it was like to feel pain, and to be frustrated with God.

Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- A nail (option to give one to each student)
- A metal bowl or bucket

Setting the Scene/Background

Sometimes things happen in our lives that are just plain rotten. Many people feel angry at God but immediately feel shame for having felt that anger.

Help kids see that even Jesus felt frustrated with God. Jesus knows what it's like to feel sad, and we can see that God will love us even if we get angry.

Telling the Story

Tell the story using the *KidStuff* bulletin.

Activity

Tell kids that it was sad, but Jesus died on the cross.

Before he died, he cried out, "My God, why have you forsaken me?" He felt like God abandoned him. He was frustrated.

We might get angry too, but God will still love us.

We can also see that Jesus knows what it's like to be human, to feel sad, and to be angry.

Hold up the nail or hand each child a nail. Tell them that it represents the suffering of Jesus on the cross. Drop the nail in the bucket or invite them to drop their nails in the bucket. It will make a harsh noise, but it reminds us that Jesus understands suffering, and understands how we feel when we are sad.

Reflection Questions

- Why did Jesus die? Did God need that? Was it humans that made it happen? Why couldn't he avoid it?
- Is it important that Jesus knows what it's like to be human? Why or why not?

Stuff to Consider

Some kids have serious sensitivities to sound. Offer the option for those who might be bothered by loud noises to move back and/or cover their ears before you start making the noise.

Next Week's Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin



Planning Worksheet

Preaching Themes

Kids' Storytime Ideas

Skit or Creative Ideas

Worship Setting

Props for Kids' Storytime or Skit

Hymns

Special Events (Baptism, New Members)

Choral Music/Special Music

Guest Speakers/Announcements



Scripture Readings

Text: Mark 16:1-8

16 When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. ² And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. ³ They had been saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?” ⁴ When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. ⁵ As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. ⁶ But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. ⁷ But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.” ⁸ So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Secondary Text: Psalm 118:21-27

²¹ I thank you that you have answered me
and have become my salvation.
²² The stone that the builders rejected
has become the chief cornerstone.
²³ This is the Lord’s doing;
it is marvelous in our eyes.
²⁴ This is the day that the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.
²⁵ Save us, we beseech you, O Lord!
O Lord, we beseech you, give us success!
²⁶ Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.
We bless you from the house of the Lord.
²⁷ The Lord is God,
and he has given us light.
Bind the festal procession with branches,
up to the horns of the altar.

Pronunciation Guide

Magdalene: MAG-duh-leen

Nazareth: NAZ-uh-ruhth

Dramatic Reading of the Text

Readers: Narrator, Mary, White Robed One

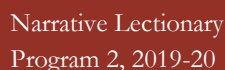
Narrator: When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another,

Mary: “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?”

Narrator: When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them,

White Robed One: “Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.”

Narrator: So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.



Resurrection, Mark 16:1-8

[illegible]



Theme and Liturgy

Preaching Theme

Main Idea: Jesus listens to the silenced voices.

Mark's gospel is filled with urgency and fear. Although the women caring for Jesus had to wait for the sabbath to end, they moved quickly to attend to Jesus' body. They were on their way to the tomb before they even considered how they might roll away the massive stone covering the entrance. When they got there, the stone had already been removed, there was no body in the tomb, but there was a man in a white robe (and angel, perhaps?) sitting there. With the same sense of urgency that rings throughout Mark's entire gospel, the man told them Jesus had been raised, and that he was already on his way to Galilee. There was no time to waste. The women were to tell the disciples to meet him there.

The women were terrified. Who wouldn't be? Considering how rapidly the events took place, it's likely their fear also escalated quickly, so by the time the man had finished speaking, they were already running—away from the empty tomb, away from the frightening man, and away from their responsibility to share what they had seen. (Mark tells us “they said nothing to anyone.”) It would seem urgency and terror make a deadly combination that can result in voices being silenced.

Many who have been victims of terrifying crimes have found themselves unable to speak about their experiences. Many who are oppressed or abused find they have no voice. Marginalized groups too, often find they have lost their voice. There will be many in your congregation that have lost their voices. It is to these silenced ones that Jesus enters. It is to these voiceless that the word is proclaimed, “He has been raised... [and] you will see him.” The promise comes with an invitation, “Go, tell.” In other words, “speak, let your voice be heard.” On this Easter, remind your congregation, friends, and family, that you are listening—that God is listening—and their voices are worth hearing.

For supplementary preaching resources, please [visit our website access point](#). (Link: bit.ly/proclaim-it-nl)

Scripture Summary

Early in the morning, the women fled Jesus' tomb, their voices silenced by fear. But their voices would be heard, and all would know that Jesus is alive!

Call to Worship

L: The Lord is risen!

C: He is risen, indeed!

L: This is the day that God has made;

C: Raise your voices and rejoice!

L: The Lord is risen!

C: He is risen, indeed!

Confession and Forgiveness

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Risen Lord,

C: We see the miracle of your resurrection, yet so often live as though we are still lost in our sins. We rely on our own feeble will, we stay mired in the past, and we refuse that which is too uncomfortable or unfamiliar. Forgive us, and open our hearts again to your freedom. Amen.

P: Praise God—Christ is arisen! We have a new life, and the old has fallen away. Rejoice that we are truly forgiven, and go out and proclaim the grace that is free to all, in Jesus' name, amen.



Liturgy

Prayer of the Day

Holy God,
The news of your resurrection was shocking and surprising when it was first heard. May our joy at these glad tidings give voice to our witness and hope to our hearts. In the name of our risen Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.

Offertory Prayer

As the women brought you spices, the best of what they had, so we too offer up these gifts for the work of your Church. Bless them and use us as instruments of your good news, for the furthering of your gospel message. For Jesus' sake we pray. Amen.

Prayers of the Church

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

L: You give a voice to all your children, even when we are frightened into silence. Empower all those who work with people struggling to make themselves heard, and to remember what their own voices sound like. Risen Lord,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Blooming and growing things begin to greet us in this season of resurrection. May we see in them your eternal promise to renew all of creation, according to your great vision of life. Risen Lord,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Like the impossibly heavy stone at Jesus' tomb, we often perceive great obstacles to what we are meant to do. Show us that you always provide a way, and that joys beyond our imagining await us when we are faithful. Risen Lord,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Your new life also gives us life, great Creator. Bestow your healing spirit upon all those who need it this day, *(especially...)*. Risen Lord,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: All your saints in heaven and on earth join together to rejoice at your resurrection. Make us joyful in our communion with them, and grateful that because of you, we also have a place in your eternal kingdom. Risen Lord,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: In sadness and in joy, you hear our prayers, O God. Hold in your hands all these things for which we ask, trusting in the mercy of the one who defeated death, Jesus Christ, amen.

Eucharistic Invitation

Jesus is risen! The whole world rejoices, and his children come together for the feast of celebration. Let us approach the table with joy, knowing that the risen lamb is the one who invites us.



Liturgy

Litany

Left side: Sad and heavy-hearted,

Right side: Who will roll away the stone?

L: Lost in thought and grieving,

R: The women come with spices,

L: Saying to each other,

R: Who will roll away the stone?

L: Dreading the encounter.

R: Focused on their duty,

L: The first day of the week.

R: Who will roll away the stone?

L: Uttered, with no answer.

R: The women make their way.

L: Looking up before them,

R: Who has rolled away the stone?

L: Strange and unexpected.

R: The obstacle removed.

L: Entering the cavern,

R: Who has rolled away the stone?

L: A stranger sits within,

R: Wearing just a white robe,

L: Jesus' body missing—

R: Who has rolled away the stone?

L: They are filled with fear.

R: Offering assurance:

L: You are seeking Jesus,

R: But he is no longer here.

L: Even more confusion:

R: Who has rolled away the stone?

L: Do not be afraid!

R: He was dead but now is raised!

L: Here is where they laid him.

R: You must tell the others.

L: Tell them what you've seen here,

R: That your Lord is risen,

L: And he goes before you,

R: Just as he has said.

L: Go on to Galilee!

R: Terror and amazement:

L: What to say? What can we do?

R: Fleeing from the tomb.

L: Too afraid to speak.

R: Jesus, have compassion

L: When terror takes us over,

R: Fierce and paralyzing.

L: Spirit, give us voices,

R: Joyful and resounding,

L: So to spread your tidings:

R: Jesus is arisen!

L: May we share the good news:

R: Jesus is arisen!

L: Joining all our voices:

All: Jesus is arisen!



Creative Expression

Skit

Characters: Ali, Tim

Props: A sign that says “Hallelujah!”

[Tim is celebrating and shouting as Ali approaches him.]

Tim: Hallelujah! Christ is risen!

[If audience/congregation is willing, bring them in with your cheering—you can say “Christ is Risen” and prompt them to respond, “Christ is Risen Indeed! Hallelujah!”]

Ali: Hey Tim, what’s going on?

Tim: I’m just so excited! We finally get to shout Hallelujah!

Ali: Oh yeah, I guess it’s Easter, isn’t it?

Tim: Yes! Aren’t you excited?

Ali: Sure! Christ is risen and that’s awesome!

Tim: Hallelujah!

Ali: Ok, ok, ok. What’s the deal with this Hallelujah? Why Hallelujah? Why not Wahoo or Yippee?

Tim: You don’t know?

Ali: Know what?

Tim: We buried the word, “Hallelujah” all of Lent.

Ali: You what?

Tim: We buried the word.

Ali: [looking around] I don’t see any dirt...

Tim: We didn’t literally bury the Hallelujah—it’s not like we put the word in dirt to hide.

Ali: Then what are you talking about?

Tim: Well, usually, on Ash Wednesday, we stop saying Hallelujah in worship. It’s the beginning of the season of Lent.

Ali: Lint?

Tim: No, Lent—with an E.

Ali: Ok...

Tim: It’s the time before Easter where we remember Jesus 40 days in the desert being tempted. We tend to be more somber and serious and reflective during this season, so we stop saying Hallelujah, essentially putting the word away or “burying” it for that season.

Ali: Wow. I guess I never really noticed before!

Tim: Well, that’s the reason I’m so excited to say it today! I love the word, “Hallelujah,” and I love the celebration of Christ rising from the dead!

Ali: It really is pretty exciting!

Tim: Wanna cheer it with me?

Ali: Yeah, sure!

Both: [cacophonous, while dancing] Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Ali: [to crowd] Say it with us!

Tim: [use sign to run across front to prompt different sections to say it with you!] Hallelujah!

Ali: Christ is Risen!

Tim: Christ is Risen, Indeed!

Both: Hallelujah!



Kids' Storytime

Main Message

The women who found that the tomb was empty were too afraid to tell anyone, but we don't have to be afraid to tell others about Jesus!

Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin

Setting the Scene/Background

The Gospel of Mark ends with Mary and Mary running away from the tomb and not saying anything. It's a sharp contrast to the message we get from other resurrection stories where they relate exactly what they saw.

Help kids think about telling others about their faith. Is it too amazing and terrifying to share? How can we be braver?

Telling the Story

Tell the story using the *KidStuff* bulletin.

Activity

Ask kids if they've ever been scared. If yes, of what?

Ask what their reactions are. Do they scream? Run? Hide? Other?

Talk about the women who found the empty tomb. They saw an angel who told them Jesus had risen! They were so scared, they didn't say anything to anyone!

What would you have done?

Is it easy to tell others about our faith? It might be scary, but we can be brave to tell others the good news!

Reflection Questions

- In some versions, the women tell others. Why are there multiple versions of the same story?
- How do you tell others about your faith? Is it scary? Why or why not?

Stuff to Consider

Some kids struggle socially and some are afraid to talk to people. When encouraging students to be brave, try to include the message that it's ok if they are afraid to talk to others. God will always love them.

Next Week's Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Stuffing for blankets or pillows (fluffy cloud material)



Planning Worksheet

Preaching Themes

Kids' Storytime Ideas

Skit or Creative Ideas

Worship Setting

Props for Kids' Storytime or Skit

Hymns

Special Events (Baptism, New Members)

Choral Music/Special Music

Guest Speakers/Announcements



Scripture Readings

Text: Acts 1:1-14

1 In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning ²until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. ⁴While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. “This,” he said, “is what you have heard from me; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

⁶So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority.

⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” ⁹When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

¹⁰While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them.

¹¹They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

¹²Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day’s journey away. ¹³When they had entered the city, they went to the

room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

Secondary Text: Mark 6:7-13

⁷He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. ⁸He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; ⁹but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. ¹⁰He said to them, “Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. ¹¹If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.” ¹²So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. ¹³They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

Pronunciation Guide

Theophilus: thee-OFF-uh-luhs

Judea: joo-DEE-uh

Samaria: suh-MAIR-ee-uh

Bartholomew: bahr-THOL-uh-myoo

Alphaeus: al-FEE-uhs

Zealot: ZELL-uh



Scripture Readings

Dramatic Reading of the Text

Readers: Narrator, Jesus, Follower, White Robed Ones

Narrator: In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father.

Jesus: “This,”

Narrator: he said,

Jesus: “is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

Narrator: So when they had come together, they asked him,

Follower: “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?”

Narrator: He replied,

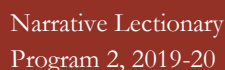
Jesus: “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you;

and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Narrator: When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said,

White Robed Ones: “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

Narrator: Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day’s journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.



You Shall Be My Witnesses, Acts 1:1-14

[illegible]



Theme and Liturgy

Preaching Theme

Main Idea: The disciples became witnesses of the moments that would restore Israel and all humanity.

The disciples were still waiting for Jesus to restore the kingdom of Israel from its oppression from Rome. Even after Jesus' death and resurrection, when Jesus appeared to them and gave them instructions regarding continuing his ministry, they were still focused on the political endgame.

But Jesus' words and actions never were about defeating Rome. His message was far more impactful. Jesus challenged individuals to defeat their inner demons. He challenged communities to cease violence and war. He challenged classes and races to look upon all people as equal.

It shows the complex nature of Jesus' words and actions. The disciples wanted concrete answers. Jesus wouldn't give them the answers they sought. There would be no single moment when Israel would be restored. Israel's (and humanity's) restoration would happen one moment at a time. The moment an unlikely relationship was formed. The moment a sword was put down. The moment a widow was fed.

The disciples (and we) were charged with making these moments happen. They and we are challenged to witness and share the moments when others make them happen. Jesus' disciples prepared their hearts and minds to be in tune with the moments by "constantly devoting themselves to prayer." Through prayer, they opened their hearts and minds to awareness of the things of God happening in the world around them every day, and courage to speak of what they witnessed. We are invited to do the same.

For supplementary preaching resources, please [visit our website access point](#). (Link: bit.ly/proclaim-it-nl)

Scripture Summary

The disciples wanted a concrete plan for the restoration of Israel. They learned restoration would come one blessed moment at a time. They would become makers of and witnesses to those moments.

Call to Worship

L: Let us rejoice and worship God,

C: We have seen the risen Lord!

L: Who does great things for us.

C: We have seen the risen Lord!

L: Let us praise God's holy name,

C: We have seen the risen Lord!

Confession and Forgiveness

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Risen Lord,

C: We see the miracle of your resurrection, yet so often live as though we are still lost in our sins. We rely on our own feeble will, we stay mired in the past, and we refuse that which is too uncomfortable or unfamiliar. Forgive us, and open our hearts again to your freedom. Amen.

P: Praise God—Christ is arisen! We have a new life, and the old has fallen away. Rejoice that we are truly forgiven, and go out and proclaim the grace that is free to all, in Jesus' name, amen.



Liturgy

Prayer of the Day

Loving Lord,
You never left your disciples without the tools they needed to follow your way. So equip us that we might be found faithful witnesses to the joy of your resurrection life. In Jesus name, amen.

Offertory Prayer

We bring our prayer, our praise and our thanksgiving before you, O God. Accept also these gifts of love toward the work of your kingdom, one which strives to see all things reconciled to you, for the sake of your Son Jesus, amen.

Prayers of the Church

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

L: The first resurrection witnesses were inspired by what they experienced, even though they didn't fully understand the direction their ministry would take. Give us their zeal for spreading the message of your merciful kingdom. God of Life,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: As a cloud obscured Jesus when he was being taken back to heaven, so we often feel confused by a lack of clarity in how to approach the issues of our day. Give us your guidance when the way forward seems uncertain. God of Life,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: As our Orthodox sisters and brothers celebrate the feast of your resurrection this day, we too continue in our Easter hope and joy, knowing that the redemption you offer in Christ transcends all boundaries of time, culture and tradition. God of Life,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: In your presence there is healing, even for that which we didn't know was making us unwell. Remove all the barriers which stand between ourselves, you and others, and make us one again. Grant healing to those we know need it, (*especially...*). God of Life,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We lift up the lives of Olaus and Laurentius Petri, Swedish reformers and faithful proclaimers of your gospel. Empower us to spread the good news wherever in the world we happen to be. God of Life,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: We thank you, O Lord, that you hear our prayers even before we speak them, or know what we want to say. Accept all these things for the sake of our risen Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.

Eucharistic Invitation

As the disciples found strength and comfort in one another's company after your death and resurrection, so we gather together around your table of grace. Feed us now and forevermore on the bread and cup of eternal life. Come and eat!



Liturgy

Litany

L: Our Lord has risen from the dead.

C: Jesus is alive!

L: His followers were filled with joy.

C: Jesus is alive!

L: They gathered in the upper room,

C: Jesus is alive!

L: Assured of their creator's might.

C: Jesus is alive!

L: He showed himself to those he loved,

C: Jesus is alive!

L: So they would know that death had lost.

C: Jesus is alive!

L: He spoke of kingdom things to them,

C: Jesus is alive!

L: And stayed with them for forty days,

C: Jesus is alive!

L: They gathered in Jerusalem;

C: Jesus is alive!

L: He ordered them to watch and wait.

C: Jesus is alive!

L: For soon the Spirit would come forth,

C: Jesus is alive!

L: A fire baptism would be theirs.

C: Jesus is alive!

L: But still they did not understand,

C: Jesus is alive!

L: And wondered when their Lord would act

C: Jesus is alive!

L: To overthrow the government.

C: Jesus is alive!

L: Their teacher had a different plan,

C: Jesus is alive!

L: To spread his message to the world.

C: Jesus is alive!

L: And they would be the witnesses,

C: Jesus is alive!

L: The voice with which the Lord would speak.

C: Jesus is alive!

L: And so, we go, where they left off,

C: Jesus is alive!

L: To be disciples in our day,

C: Jesus is alive!

L: To keep proclaiming Gospel truth,

C: Jesus is alive!

L: And tell the world what gives us joy:

C: Jesus is alive!



Creative Expression

Spoken Word

*Use this poem as a reflective exercise after the scripture is read,
allowing for silent reflection after it has been read.*

You will be a witness
A witness to what?
I saw Jesus risen
It's wonderful but
So strange to behold
How can it be real
When this story is told
How will people feel
Will they think I'm not well
Will they question my mind
Will they think that I've made up
A story to find
More attention and fame
Or will they be able to see

My wonder is the same
That they can trust me
To speak truth on this topic
Jesus has come back to life
What a strange biopic
To end a story filled with strife
On such an unbelievable note so high
Our savior rising on cloud
To the sky
Till he left from our sight
Two angels to say
He won't be coming back
that way
It will never be like this again
We will be given the Spirit as a friend
For today
We sit and pray
Until we find our way.



Kids' Storytime

Main Message

Jesus came back to life. His journey to heaven was called the ascension.

Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Stuffing for blankets or pillows (fluffy cloud material)

Setting the Scene/Background

It can be hard to wrap our heads around Jesus rising from the dead, and being fully embodied on his ascent to heaven, but that is the story we have.

Help kids learn the story and the word, “ascension”. Also, think about how nice it might be to float on a fluffy cloud!

Telling the Story

Tell the story using the *KidStuff* bulletin.

Activity

Tell the story with the fluff on your lap.

Talk to kids about Jesus coming back from the dead. Is it confusing? What was that like for the disciples?

Stress that Jesus was fully alive. He had his body back and everything. If you want to mention the word ghost, you can talk about how Jesus was not a ghost. He was alive!

Talk about what it might have been like to watch him go to heaven on a cloud. Let kids touch the fluff and imagine.

Teach them the word, “ascension”. Have them practice it, and tell them that is what we call Jesus’ journey to heaven after his resurrection.

Reflection Questions

- Why did Jesus come back to life?
- Is heaven in the clouds? Why or why not?

Stuff to Consider

The word, “ghost” can be a trigger for some kids. Some kids are worried about ghosts and wonder if they are real. Ghosts can be scary. Treat that topic with caution if you aren’t sure how your crew will react. Alternate ideas to help make the point Jesus was fully alive is that he wasn’t pretend or a hologram.

Next Week's Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin



Planning Worksheet

Preaching Themes

Kids' Storytime Ideas

Skit or Creative Ideas

Worship Setting

Props for Kids' Storytime or Skit

Hymns

Special Events (Baptism, New Members)

Choral Music/Special Music

Guest Speakers/Announcements



Scripture Readings

Text: Acts 3:1-10

3 One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, at three o'clock in the afternoon. **2** And a man lame from birth was being carried in. People would lay him daily at the gate of the temple called the Beautiful Gate so that he could ask for alms from those entering the temple. **3** When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked them for alms. **4** Peter looked intently at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." **5** And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. **6** But Peter said, "I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk." **7** And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. **8** Jumping up, he stood and began to walk, and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. **9** All the people saw him walking and praising God, **10** and they recognized him as the one who used to sit and ask for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

Secondary Text: Mark 6:53-56

53 When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. **54** When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, **55** and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. **56** And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

Pronunciation Guide

Nazareth: NAZ-uh-ruhth

Gennesaret: gih-NES-uh-ret

Dramatic Reading of the Text

Readers: Narrator, Peter

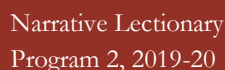
Narrator: One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, at three o'clock in the afternoon. And a man lame from birth was being carried in. People would lay him daily at the gate of the temple called the Beautiful Gate so that he could ask for alms from those entering the temple. When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked them for alms. Peter looked intently at him, as did John, and said,

Peter: "Look at us."

Narrator: And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said,

Peter: "I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk."

Narrator: And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. Jumping up, he stood and began to walk, and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. All the people saw him walking and praising God, and they recognized him as the one who used to sit and ask for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.



Peter Heals in Jerusalem, Acts 3:1-10



Theme and Liturgy

Preaching Theme

Main Idea: Peter and John healed more than a disabled man's legs—they gave him a community.

Peter and John were entering the gate of the temple called “the Beautiful Gate” when they encountered a man born unable to walk. Although there’s some debate as to which gate the “Beautiful Gate” might be, it is likely the gate separated the Gentile court from the court of women. The [layout of the temple included](#), from outside in: the court for Gentiles, court for women, court for ritually pure Jewish men, court for priests, the court for burnt offerings, and the temple building. If the man was left at the Beautiful Gate, it meant, due to his disability, he lacked access to any court beyond that of the Gentiles (the outermost court). Beautiful Gate also could be interpreted as the gate “[happening at the right time](#)” or gate of ripeness. Clearly, Peter and John were ripe for taking on the full (including healing) ministry of Jesus.

When Peter and John encountered the man, they would have known at a great distance that the man was disabled and in need of physical healing. But when they approached him, both “looked intently at him.” It was as if they needed to look into his soul to determine the type of healing the man needed the most.

As it turned out, what the man needed was more than strength to walk. When they healed his legs, they also gave him, for the first time, inclusion into the inner courts of the temple. For the first time in the man’s life, he entered the inner court as an equal (to those also allowed in the inner courts). It’s no wonder he entered the temple “walking and leaping and praising God.” He was no longer an outcast. He was invited in.

Often healing comes when we are invited in. Anyone who’s been excluded knows how devastating that isolation can be. We were created to be in healthy relationships. When we are outcast, we are damaged and in need of healing. Peter and John gave the man more than physical healing—they gave him a community. We don’t need the power of healing to give the gift of community. We have it within us to create community through our hospitality, generosity, and gratitude for others.

For supplementary preaching resources, please [visit our website access point](#). (Link: bit.ly/proclaim-it-nl)

Scripture Summary

Peter and John healed a disabled man, who then entered the temple leaping and praising God. But they gave him more than his legs—they gave him a community.

Call to Worship

L: Enter the beautiful house,

C: Enter the house of the Lord.

L: Come join with your sisters and brothers,

C: Together in praise to the Lord.

L: Sing praises to the one who heals,

C: To the one who makes us whole.

Confession and Forgiveness

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Risen Lord,

C: We see the miracle of your resurrection, yet so often live as though we are still lost in our sins. We rely on our own feeble will, we stay mired in the past, and we refuse that which is too uncomfortable or unfamiliar. Forgive us, and open our hearts again to your freedom. Amen.

P: Praise God—Christ is arisen! We have a new life, and the old has fallen away. Rejoice that we are truly forgiven, and go out and proclaim the grace that is free to all, in Jesus’ name, amen.



Liturgy

Prayer of the Day

O God,
You gather us into your community, regardless of our imperfections. May we be so gracious with one another, showing all your heart of mercy, made known to us in Jesus Christ, amen.

Offertory Prayer

Accept these gifts we bring, O Lord, and bless the gift we are to one another. May we truly look to see what we may offer our sisters and brothers, without judgment or avoidance, and thus be your hands at work in the world. In Jesus' name, amen.

Prayers of the Church

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

L: Forgive us, Lord, when we perpetuate systems of exclusion and make others feel as though they don't belong. Teach us the way of your kingdom, where no one is left out and all are one in Christ. God of wholeness,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Bless the work of those who rescue and rehabilitate animals who suffer from harm, injury and neglect. Strengthen the sacred connections between us and your natural world, of which we are an inescapable part. God of wholeness,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: For those who cannot let go of the past, we pray, O Lord. Ground us in the here and now, neither vilifying nor glorifying what has gone before, and help us to move forward in faith. God of wholeness,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: For all those who feel excluded, ignored or minimized, we ask your presence and strength. Open our eyes to the ones right in front of us whom we have been passing over. We lift up today (*especially...*). God of wholeness,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Your saints were often persecuted and despised, O Lord, but still they persisted. May their faith and determination inspire us always to do whatever we can, wherever we are. God of wholeness,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: For these things and whatever else you see that we need, we pray, O God. You know our hearts and you hold us all within yours, in the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

Eucharistic Invitation

You raise us up to wholeness in you, dear God. You turn no one away from your table. Let us come now—one and all—to share the fellowship which you desire for us and for all creation. Come and share in the Lord's supper.



Liturgy

Litany

Right side: Sitting in our hopelessness,

Left side: In a company of one,

R: We wallow in ourselves,

L: Excluded from the world.

R: No one understands our pain,

L: No one else will stand for us.

R: This is our world,

L: A world of many.

R: Divided and alone.

L: We look for scraps

R: From passers-by:

L: A glance, a word, a smile.

R: Though nothing reaches far enough

L: To save us

R: From ourselves.

L: But Jesus looks

R: Into our soul

L: And sees what's written there.

R: He will not let us wallow

L: In the gloom

R: of our sad story.

L: Jesus calls us

R: Out of shame,

L: And from our loneliness.

R: He takes our hand

L: And raises us

R: Up out of our despair.

L: Restoring us to wholeness,

R: Our Lord renews our place

L: Among the people

R: Whom we know

L: And to whom we belong.

R: For no one is disposable

L: Amongst the fellowship

R: Of those who know

L: Our healing Lord,

R: And call upon his name.



Creative Expression

Skit

Characters: Layla, Gabe

Layla: Didn't you love that story of healing today, Gabe?

Gabe: I guess so.

Layla: I mean it's just so amazing to think that the disciples could help others. Healing them in the name of Jesus!

Gabe: Yup.

Layla: That man couldn't walk his entire life, and then one day, just by chance, two disciples walk his way and BAM, his life is changed forever!

Gabe: Uh huh.

Layla: He can go in the temple. He can dance! He's just so happy! I just think it's an amazing story!

Gabe: Yeah, I get it.

Layla: What's the matter?

Gabe: I hate that story.

Layla: You do? Sad! Why?

Gabe: Because.

Layla: You gotta have a reason to hate it. I mean, that's a strong feeling. It's gotta be more than "because."

Gabe: [heavy sigh] Ok. If you must know, I hate that story because of the healing.

Layla: Because of the healing?

Gabe: Yes.

Layla: I don't get it.

Gabe: Listen. I love that Jesus heals people and that the disciples do it, too. But I have never been healed and it makes me feel bad.

Layla: You need healing?

Gabe: Well, yeah. I have diabetes.

Layla: Oh, I didn't know that.

Gabe: Yeah. I'm kind of embarrassed about it. Sometimes if I am not super careful, it can make me feel dizzy. One time, I passed out in class.

Layla: Oh no! Did you hurt yourself falling?

Gabe: No, it was ok. But everyone freaked out and I was really embarrassed.

Layla: I'm sorry, Gabe, that's hard.

Gabe: It is. So I pray every night that Jesus will heal my diabetes.

Layla: [feeling really empathetic] I see.

Gabe: And every day, I wake up and still have to take insulin and check my blood sugar.

Layla: Wow, I didn't know you were praying for that, my friend.

Gabe: Understand why I hate it now?

Layla: I really do. That's a lot to carry in your heart.

Gabe: It feels good to share it, though. Thanks for listening.

Layla: Thanks for trusting me.

Gabe: You know what just occurred to me?

Layla: What's that?

Gabe: Maybe the healing isn't just about physical stuff. Maybe it's about feeling loved and included.

Layla: You might be right!

Gabe: And I feel loved and included now that you know my story.

Layla: That's great!

Gabe: So, maybe God is answering my prayers. Not in the exact way I wanted or expected, but in a way that helps me feel heard!



Kids' Storytime

Main Message

The disciples heal the man by offering him community.
We can offer healing love to others by inviting them in to our group!

Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin

Setting the Scene/Background

People are naturally cliquy. We divide into groups by interest, by age groups, by how we look—we can't seem to help but create divisions.

Divisions can hurt. The man who was healed in the story couldn't enter the temple because he couldn't walk. When he was healed, he was invited into the group.

Because Jesus loves and invites us, we too can invite others to participate and belong. Including others can be one of the most loving and emotionally healing action we can do.

Telling the Story

Tell the story using the *KidStuff* bulletin.

Activity

Have kids stand in a circle holding hands.

Tell kids when the man in the story was healed, he was invited in to the temple.

We are all loved by Jesus and we can be like the disciples and invite everyone in.

Start a game by being on the outside and ask them to "invite you" into the circle. Give them time to figure out how to invite and let you in. If you have time and space, you can have others take turns.

Remind kids to invite everyone in wherever they are!

Reflection Questions

- Why wasn't the man allowed in the temple? Is it just that he couldn't get himself inside, or were there other reasons?
- When have you been left out? Was anyone able to help make you feel included? Have you helped others feel included?

Stuff to Consider

Some children don't enjoy group games or activities. Autistic children, in particular, may find challenges in working with others. Find ways to include them in the game in their own way. Perhaps they can be seated just inside the circle, or not hold hands when they stand next to others. It's very important to have everyone included in a way that helps them feel comfortable.

Next Week's Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Mr. Potato Head® and parts—or other toy/puzzle where body parts can be separated as part of the toy and not be scary



Planning Worksheet

Preaching Themes

Kids' Storytime Ideas

Skit or Creative Ideas

Worship Setting

Props for Kids' Storytime or Skit

Hymns

Special Events (Baptism, New Members)

Choral Music/Special Music

Guest Speakers/Announcements



Scripture Readings

Text: Acts 17:1-9

1 After Paul and Silas had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. ² And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three sabbath days argued with them from the scriptures, ³ explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, “This is the Messiah, Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you.” ⁴ Some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women. ⁵ But the Jews became jealous, and with the help of some ruffians in the marketplaces they formed a mob and set the city in an uproar. While they were searching for Paul and Silas to bring them out to the assembly, they attacked Jason’s house. ⁶ When they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some believers before the city authorities, shouting, “These people who have been turning the world upside down have come here also, ⁷ and Jason has entertained them as guests. They are all acting contrary to the decrees of the emperor, saying that there is another king named Jesus.” ⁸ The people and the city officials were disturbed when they heard this, ⁹ and after they had taken bail from Jason and the others, they let them go.

Text: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,
To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Grace to you and peace.

² We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly ³ remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴ For we know, brothers and sisters beloved by God, that he has

chosen you, ⁵ because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of persons we proved to be among you for your sake. ⁶ And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit, ⁷ so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. ⁸ For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it. ⁹ For the people of those regions report about us what kind of welcome we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.

Secondary Text: Mark 13:9-11

⁹ “As for yourselves, beware; for they will hand you over to councils; and you will be beaten in synagogues; and you will stand before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them. ¹⁰ And the good news must first be proclaimed to all nations. ¹¹ When they bring you to trial and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say; but say whatever is given you at that time, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.”

Pronunciation Guide

Amphipolis: am-FIP-uh-lis

Apollonia: ap'uh-LOH-nee-uh

Thessalonica: thes'uh-luh-NI -kuh

Silvanus: sil-VAY-nuhs

Macedonia: mas'uh-DOH-nee-uh

Achaia: uh-KAY-uh



Scripture Readings

Dramatic Reading of the Text: Acts 17:1-9

Readers: Narrator, Paul, Crowd

Narrator: After Paul and Silas had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three sabbath days argued with them from the scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying,

Paul: “This is the Messiah, Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you.”

Narrator: Some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women. But the Jews became jealous, and with the help of some ruffians in the marketplaces they formed a mob and set the city in an uproar. While they were searching for Paul and Silas to bring them out to the assembly, they attacked Jason’s house. When they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some believers before the city authorities, shouting,

Crowd: “These people who have been turning the world upside down have come here also, and Jason has entertained them as guests. They are all acting contrary to the decrees of the emperor, saying that there is another king named Jesus.”

Narrator: The people and the city officials were disturbed when they heard this, and after they had taken bail from Jason and the others, they let them go.

Dramatic Reading of the Text: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Readers: Reader, Congregation

Reader: Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

Congregation: To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Reader: Grace to you and peace.

Congregation: We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers,

Reader: constantly remembering before our God and Father

Congregation: your work of faith and labor of love

Reader: and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Congregation: For we know, brothers and sisters beloved by God, that he has chosen you,

Reader: because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction;

Congregation: just as you know what kind of persons we proved to be among you for your sake.

Reader: And you became imitators of us and of the Lord,

Congregation: for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit,

Reader: so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.

Congregation: For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia,

Reader: but in every place your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it.

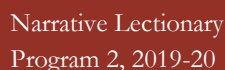
Congregation: For the people of those regions report about us what kind of welcome we had among you,

Reader: and how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God,

Congregation: and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—

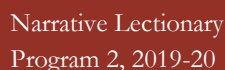
Reader: Jesus,

Congregation: who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.



Church at Thessalonica, Acts 17:1-9; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

[illegible]



Church at Thessalonica, Acts 17:1-9; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

The word cloud is shaped like the letters 'OSDS' in a bold, serif font. The letters are filled with various words and phrases in different sizes and orientations, creating a dense, textured effect. The words are primarily in shades of gray and black, with some white text for contrast. The overall composition is a visual representation of the text content of the page.



Theme and Liturgy

Preaching Theme

Main Idea: We can participate in the building of a healthy church community.

Building a church is not an easy business; not in Paul's time, and not today. By the time Paul was preaching the gospel, the word had spread throughout Israel. But Paul was bringing the word beyond the borders of God's country. Thessalonica was a city in Greece, the Roman capital in the kingdom of Macedon. It was along the trade route to the east, so there were many opportunities to bring Jesus' message to people who could take the word far. There was a Jewish synagogue in the city, and Paul started there.

Many Jews heard Paul's words and joined their cause. But Paul also reached devout Greeks and women (not the Jews' usual favorites). The conversions upset the Jews, so they stirred up a mob. When they couldn't find Paul and Silas, they instead arrested one of their supporters, Jason, and held him until he posted bail.

Often people speaking the truth upset others. People are creatures of habit—we like things to stay the same. When a voice is heard that threatens our status quo, our feathers get ruffled. Voices in the church are no exception. It can be hard to listen to a voice that speaks a truth opposite our own truth. In the world, the struggle can look like political battles played out onscreen and online. In the church, it can look like debates at council, arguments in the parking lot, people who stop attending worship because they're hurt or upset.

Hurt feelings didn't stop Paul and Silas from proclaiming their truth. Can we, the church, see past our own hurt feelings and open ourselves to the truths of others? How can we build the church without jealousy, anger, or resentment?

For supplementary preaching resources, please [visit our website access point](#). (Link: bit.ly/proclaim-it-nl)

Scripture Summary

Paul and Silas were busy building a healthy church community. But others were not as excited to hear their truth.

Call to Worship

L: Praise be to God,

C: Who builds up the Church.

L: Praise be to God,

C: Who heals our divisions.

L: Praise be to God,

C: Who gathers us as one.

Confession and Forgiveness

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Risen Lord,

C: We see the miracle of your resurrection, yet so often live as though we are still lost in our sins. We rely on our own feeble will, we stay mired in the past, and we refuse that which is too uncomfortable or unfamiliar. Forgive us, and open our hearts again to your freedom. Amen.

P: Praise God—Christ is arisen! We have a new life, and the old has fallen away. Rejoice that we are truly forgiven, and go out and proclaim the grace that is free to all, in Jesus' name, amen.



Liturgy

Prayer of the Day

Loving Lord,
Your followers were faithful even in the face of strong opposition. Give us their courage and conviction to be worthy proclaimers of the Gospel of grace, in Jesus' name, amen.

Offertory Prayer

We offer these gifts to your kingdom, and our lives to your service. Bless them and use us where we are most needed, as co-creators of your world made new by Christ, in whose name we pray, amen.

Prayers of the Church

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

L: We are quick to take offense, O Lord, and slow to listen when our assumptions are questioned. Open our minds to the transforming power of your word, new to us each day. Empowering God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Too often we use the resources of this planet for our own enjoyment, entertainment, and convenience, without thought of the damage we might be doing. Forgive us and turn us back to the one who created all things, that we might responsibly resume the role of your faithful stewards. Empowering God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Your early disciples relied heavily on the Spirit's power to guide them through every obstacle they faced. Give us a faith like theirs, which enables us to take bold risks for the sake of spreading the gospel.
Empowering God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Give your tender care and healing to all who need it this day, (*especially...*). Empowering God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We stand in a long line of saints who dedicated their lives to spreading your truth and standing for mercy and grace. Inspire us by their witness and make us the kind of followers who encourage others to embrace your mission. Empowering God,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: We offer these prayers to your safekeeping, and trust that you have heard us, for the sake of our risen savior Jesus Christ, amen.

Eucharistic Invitation

From near and far you gather us, O Lord, around your table to receive this meal of grace. May it feed us now and strengthen us for the journey which lies ahead. Come and enjoy the welcome of your savior!



Liturgy

Litany

Higher voices: When trials come,
Lower voices: And you are scared,
H: When life is testing
L: Your convictions,
H: And you do not have the words
L: To speak in your defense,
H: Do not be afraid,
L: Do not worry for yourself,
H: For you are guided,
L: You are known,
H: You are in good hands.
L: You may be handed over
H: To councils or officials,
L: Questioning your actions,
H: Suspicious of your motives.
L: The ones who think they're holy
H: May meet you with mistrust.
L: May even threaten violence
H: Or promise your expulsion.
L: Do not let them scare you
H: Nor undermine your courage.
L: For you are well attended
H: And shown the way through danger,

L: Though all seem to despise you
H: Or turn themselves against you.
L: You'll stand before the great ones,
H: And leaders who have power,
L: They'll question your beliefs
H: And test your inner courage.
L: But God will be your witness,
H: And stand as your protector.
L: No matter what
H: Or who you face,
L: The Spirit goes before
H: To stir up and to bless,
L: To stand at your right hand,
H: And give you words to speak
L: When none of yours will come.
H: The Spirit gives us power
L: To stand at any trial
H: And witness to the Gospel
L: Which gives us our conviction.
H: Praise God for never leaving,
L: Sustaining us forever,

All: Praise the Lord!



Creative Expression

Skit

Characters: Uchenna, Mike

Uchenna: Can you believe how awful people were when they heard that Paul and Silas were building a new church?

Mike: They had some pretty strong reactions.

Uchenna: It's awful! Why would people act like that? Don't they know that they were just trying to do something to help other people?

Mike: I think they were scared.

Uchenna: So what?

Mike: Well, when people get scared, they tend to make bad choices.

Uchenna: What is so scary about a new church?

Mike: Well, sometimes new churches mean new rules and new ways of acting. That can be really hard if you are used to doing things a certain way. Remember when we added a formal liturgical worship service on Sunday morning?

Uchenna: Oh yeah....

Mike: Yeah—people loved the contemporary service, they loved the new songs and all the dancing and when we started doing a formal service, people freaked out!

Uchenna: Right. They thought that a new style of worship meant that we were going to start believing differently and it would change how we talk about God.

Mike: But what was different after we did that?

Uchenna: Nothing, really. We literally just started using hymns and some chanted liturgy. The sermons were the same. The way we prayed was the same. Just the song and style were different.

Mike: Exactly, but how did people act?

Uchenna: Kind of mean, actually. I remember a lot of yelling.

Mike: Yes. Remember who?

Uchenna: Some of them. Really good people who I think of as friends.

Mike: Yup. Are they bad people now?

Uchenna: No.

Mike: They were just making bad choices and why?

Uchenna: Because they were afraid of what it all meant!

Mike: Exactly. Sometimes we react badly when we are afraid. But the best thing we can do is listen.

Uchenna: Even if it's sort of ridiculous?

Mike: I think especially so! Because if people are sounding ridiculous, they are probably really worked up. And nothing helps you feel better than being heard.

Uchenna: Yeah, I know I like it when people listen to how I feel about stuff.

Mike: It's so helpful to feel like your thoughts matter.

Uchenna: So we just gotta let people be nasty?

Mike: No. We can ask for good behavior. Mobs are bad.

Uchenna: [chuckles] We can probably all agree on that.

Mike: But we should be able to share how we feel with calm voices and clear hearts.

Uchenna: Something to work on, for sure!

Mike: Exactly!



Kids' Storytime

Main Message

The most important part of building community is learning to communicate well and lead with love.

Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Mr. Potato Head® and parts—or other toy/puzzle where body parts can be separated as part of the toy and not be scary

Setting the Scene/Background

When people are hurt or scared or offended, they often go into attack mode.

If we could learn to communicate clearly, to talk about what we feel and listen without getting nasty, we could avoid conflict and move forward together more easily.

Help kids understand what's most important when building the church: listening ears and big hearts filled with patience!

Telling the Story

Tell the story using the *KidStuff* bulletin.

Activity

Tell kids Paul and Silas were trying to build Christ's church.

Set out Mr. Potato Head® and pieces and ask what's the most important body part you use for building the church.

Affirm kids' answers. Point out that ears are one of the best things we can use. The church isn't the building, it's the community of people, and listening to others and loving them will help us to be church together well!

Reflection Questions

- When you hear the word church do you think of a building or of people? Why?
- What does it feel like when someone really listens? How can you be a good listener?

Stuff to Consider

Be sensitive with kids with physical disabilities such as hearing loss, missing limbs, etc. When we say ears are most important, what we really mean is listening to people, whether we do that with our ears, or eyes if we use sign language.

Next Week's Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- An art piece that is mosaic-like—many colors come together to make one, beautiful piece, such as stained glass or a tile piece



Planning Worksheet

Preaching Themes

Kids' Storytime Ideas

Skit or Creative Ideas

Worship Setting

Props for Kids' Storytime or Skit

Hymns

Special Events (Baptism, New Members)

Choral Music/Special Music

Guest Speakers/Announcements



Scripture Readings

Text: Acts 18:1-4

18 After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. ² There he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, ³ and, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them, and they worked together—by trade they were tentmakers. ⁴ Every sabbath he would argue in the synagogue and would try to convince Jews and Greeks.

Text: 1 Corinthians 1:10-18

¹⁰ Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose. ¹¹ For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. ¹² What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." ¹³ Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? ¹⁴ I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵ so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. ¹⁶ (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) ¹⁷ For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power.

¹⁸ For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Secondary Text: Mark 9:34-35

³⁴ But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. ³⁵ He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all."

Pronunciation Guide

Corinth: KOR-inth

Aquila: AK-wih-luh

Pontus: PON-tus

Priscilla: pri-SIL-uh

Claudius: KLAU-dee-uhs

Chloe: KLOH-ee

Apollos: uh-POL-uhs

Cephas: SEE-phus

Crispus: KRIS-puhs

Gaius: GAY-uhs

Stephanas: STEF-uh-nuhs



Scripture Readings

Dramatic Reading of the Text: Acts 18:1-4

Readers: Reader

Reader: After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. There he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, and, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them, and they worked together—by trade they were tentmakers. Every sabbath he would argue in the synagogue and would try to convince Jews and Greeks.

Dramatic Reading of the Text: 1 Corinthians 1:10-18

Readers: Reader, Congregation

Reader: Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Congregation: that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you,

Reader: but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose.

Congregation: For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters.

Reader: What I mean is that each of you says,

Congregation: "I belong to Paul,"

Reader: or "I belong to Apollos,"

Congregation: or "I belong to Cephas,"

Reader: or "I belong to Christ."

Congregation: Has Christ been divided?

Reader: Was Paul crucified for you?

Congregation: Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

Reader: I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius,

Congregation: so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name.

Reader: (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas;

Congregation: beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.)

Reader: For Christ did not send me to baptize

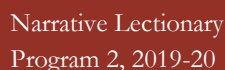
Congregation: but to proclaim the gospel,

Reader: and not with eloquent wisdom,

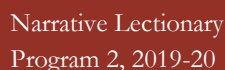
Congregation: so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power.

Reader: For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing,

Congregation: but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.



Church at Corinth, Acts 18:1-4; 1 Corinthians 1:10-18



Church at Corinth, Acts 18:1-4; 1 Corinthians 1:10-18

[illegible]



Theme and Liturgy

Preaching Theme

Main Idea: Paul preached against “us vs. them” and for a united kingdom under Christ.

As Paul preached in Gentile communities, differences and divisions became even more pronounced. Paul established a Christian community in Corinth, which once had been a wealthy, culturally rich, thriving city. It had suffered many wars over the centuries, and by the 300's BC, it was destroyed. About 45 years before Jesus, Corinth was rebuilt by Julius Caesar and became once again a culturally and religiously diverse city, housing Romans, Greeks, and Jews.

The diversity of Corinth soon became problematic, as factions within the Christian community began to fight. Some followed Paul; others Apollos; and others Cephas. These were other missionaries bringing the word of Christ but interpreting Christ's word quite differently. As the divisions deepened, Paul wrote to condemn the arguing and the separation, and encouraging the communities to learn to live together under Christ.

Still today, Christian communities are divided and disagree on how to interpret Christ's words and actions. The divisions are in part responsible for the cultural exodus from Christianity. People question the relevance of Christianity to their daily lives. Worship, Bible study, personal faith growth, the strengthening of faith communities—all of these are suffering.

It's right here you're hoping for a word that will make it all better. But there is no easy answer. Perhaps one of the challenges churches face is that churches have clung so tightly to what they've always believed and done, that they have failed to listen to what the needs of people truly are. Christianity is no longer the only mainstream option for faith growth in our culture. The search for spirituality is as present as ever, but as people are not finding opportunities for spiritual, communal, and faith growth within their churches, they are looking elsewhere.

Perhaps our churches, like Paul's, would thrive if we let go of our musts and our shoulds, if we stopped comparing ourselves to everyone else, if we stopped bickering about who's right. Maybe if we learned to listen, and accepted

that we're not always right, we might once again become not only relevant, but also garner the capacity necessary for faith growth and development, for spirituality and community.

For supplementary preaching resources, please [visit our website access point](#). (Link: bit.ly/proclaim-it-nl)

Scripture Summary

The church in Corinth that Paul founded struggled because of divisions within their churches. But Christ still had and has a message of hope for all willing to hear it.

Call to Worship

- L: Blessed be God, who makes us one.
- C: Let us unite as sisters and brothers,**
- L: Gathered around one table, one altar.
- C: Let us renew our bonds of love,**
- L: Forged for us by Christ our Lord.
- C: Blessed be God, who makes us one!**

Confession and Forgiveness

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

- P: Risen Lord,
- C: We see the miracle of your resurrection, yet so often live as though we are still lost in our sins. We rely on our own feeble will, we stay mired in the past, and we refuse that which is too uncomfortable or unfamiliar. Forgive us, and open our hearts again to your freedom. Amen.**
- P: Praise God—Christ is arisen! We have a new life, and the old has fallen away. Rejoice that we are truly forgiven, and go out and proclaim the grace that is free to all, in Jesus' name, amen.



Liturgy

Prayer of the Day

O Lord,

You have made it clear that you desire your Church to be united. Break down the walls which separate us and build us back up again as one body in Jesus Christ, through whom we pray, amen.

Offertory Prayer

Serving you is the greatest honor, O Lord. Receive these gifts as signs of our gratitude to be part of your fellowship, and fellow workers in your kingdom, for the sake of the world which you love. In Jesus' name, amen.

Prayers of the Church

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

L: Regardless of background, opinion, theology or ability, we all belong to you, O Lord. Speak over our stubbornness and certainty that we are right, and show us instead what it looks like to practice a radical love which truly listens to and respects others. Uniting God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Your creation is a perfect model of the interdependence we all share as your children. When we fail to acknowledge our fundamental connections, everyone and everything suffers as a consequence. Bring us back to ourselves, to each other, and to you. Uniting God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Bless all who celebrate Mother's Day, and give strength and guidance to all who parent or mentor the young. As you tend and care for us, so may we look after those who are depending on us. Uniting God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Send the power and comfort of your healing Spirit to all those whom we know need it, (*especially...*). Uniting God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Together with all your saints in light, we join our voices in praise to the one who forgives, redeems, and joins us all in one eternal fellowship. Uniting God,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: May all these things be granted in the name of our Savior Jesus, who earnestly prayed that we might all be one, amen.

Eucharistic Invitation

There is one bread and one body in Christ. Bring us together now to witness to your uniting love and immeasurable grace. Let us join our brothers and sisters at the Lord's table!



Liturgy

Litany

Group 1: We are divided,

Group 2: By faith and belief,

Group 3: By thought and opinion,

1: Where none can agree.

2: I know I'm right,

3: And you are mistaken,

1: And no matter how much

2: You argue with me,

3: I will not waver,

1: Nor have my mind altered.

2: So strong my position,

3: And fixed my opinion.

1: Because of this difference,

2: We cannot be one.

3: We are divided

1: By places we come from,

2: And things we've experienced,

3: People we know.

1: I'm from one country

2: And you're from another;

3: Our customs are different,

1: Language diverse.

2: Our food and our habits,

3: Our musical preference,

1: Our ways of expressing

2: What matters to us.

3: Because of these differences,

1: We are still separate,

2: Divided in culture,

3: Still many, not one.

1: But—we have a God

2: Who would wish us united,

3: Not stuck in our difference,

1: Refusing to move.

2: Our Lord is the maker

3: Of all of creation,

1: And not just of people,

2: But animals, too.

3: And nature, the cosmos,

1: All interconnected

2: And interdependent:

3: My life affects yours.

1: So in that one Spirit,

2: Why not come together

3: And celebrate unity,

1: One in community,

2: Joined by one maker

3: One Savior,

1: One Spirit,

2: To witness the promise

3: That God most desires:

All: That all would be one!



Creative Expression

Monologue

Props: desk, chair, pen, a small stack of paper

Items in quotation marks are contents of the letter the writer is composing.

[muttering to self]

Jews or Greeks. Jews or Greeks. I know! Both!

[holds head]

What was I thinking!

[exasperated]

In the name of the Lord: Agree with each other! Is that too much to ask?

[sits and begins writing]

"I hear you're fighting again. Stop it!"

[correcting self]

No. Strike that.

"I hear you're fighting again. I urge..."

—no,

"...encourage you to stay united."

"By the way, Chloe ratted you out."

No, strike that, too.

"Chloe's people gave me some information about these fights, and you need to cut it out."

No. Too strong.

[balls up paper and starts again]

[gets increasingly sarcastic in tone as the next paragraph is being written]

"I've heard you're taking sides against one another, setting up rival groups. Let me be clear: you are not on team Paul or team Apollos or team Messiah. Last time I checked, the Messiah hadn't been chopped up into little bits for your benefit. For the love of God..."

OK, maybe that's a little bit too much. Thank God I only baptized a couple of them, so they can't reel me into this stupidity.

"...I am a preacher of the good news. I will not muddy it up with clever words. This is not about you. This is about the message of the cross—which may seem foolish, but that is where you'll find the saving power of God."

[pause to read, as if editing the final version]

Yes. That's it.

[put down pen, fold paper, put it in envelope, and seal it while exiting]



Kids' Storytime

Main Message

Even if we don't agree, we can all still be part of one community.

Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- An art piece that is mosaic-like—many colors come together to make one, beautiful piece, such as stained glass or a tile piece

Setting the Scene/Background

It can be so easy to separate ourselves by what we believe—look at all the denominations that exist in our world!

Paul went into communities and spent time with people who believed differently. His goal was to convince them to change their minds, but we don't hear that he ever stopped being friends with them or being in community with people he disagreed with.

Help kids see that there is beauty in diversity when we all come together to make one body of Christ.

Telling the Story

Tell the story using the *KidStuff* bulletin.

Activity

Ask your kids if they have a hard time hanging out with people who disagree with them—i.e. maybe you love video games, but your friends hate them.

What would happen if you never spent time with people who thought differently? (Life would be so boring.)

Show kids the piece of art. All the different pieces come together as a whole to make something beautiful.

We need each other even in our differences, because together, we make the body of Christ something wonderful and exciting!

Reflection Questions

- How can you work with someone you disagree with? What are some good strategies?
- What if your friends aren't the same faith as you? How does God feel about us being friends with people of other faith?

Stuff to Consider

More kids are colorblind than you might realize. If you are talking about the differences in colors in your art piece, point to different parts as you name colors to help give words for those who might not see the same.

Next Week's Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Construction paper—at least one for each kid
- Crayons—at least one for each kid



Planning Worksheet

Preaching Themes

Kids' Storytime Ideas

Skit or Creative Ideas

Worship Setting

Props for Kids' Storytime or Skit

Hymns

Special Events (Baptism, New Members)

Choral Music/Special Music

Guest Speakers/Announcements



Scripture Readings

Text: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

13 If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

⁴ Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant ⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. ⁷ It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸ Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. ⁹ For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; ¹⁰ but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways.

¹² For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. ¹³ And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Secondary Text: Mark 12:28-31

²⁸ One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, “Which commandment is the first of all?” ²⁹ Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one;’ ³⁰ you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ ³¹ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”



Scripture Readings

Dramatic Reading of the Text

Readers: Reader, Congregation

Reader: If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels,

Congregation: but do not have love,

Reader: I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

Congregation: And if I have prophetic powers,

Reader: and understand all mysteries and all knowledge,

Congregation: and if I have all faith,

Reader: so as to remove mountains,

Congregation: but do not have love, I am nothing.

Reader: If I give away all my possessions,

Congregation: and if I hand over my body so that I may boast,

Reader: but do not have love,

Congregation: I gain nothing.

Reader: Love is patient;

Congregation: love is kind;

Reader: love is not envious

Congregation: or boastful

Reader: or arrogant

Congregation: or rude.

Reader: It does not insist on its own way;

Congregation: it is not irritable or resentful;

Reader: it does not rejoice in wrongdoing,

Congregation: but rejoices in the truth.

Reader: It bears all things,

Congregation: believes all things,

Reader: hopes all things,

Congregation: endures all things.

Reader: Love never ends.

Congregation: But as for prophecies,

Reader: they will come to an end;

Congregation: as for tongues,

Reader: they will cease;

Congregation: as for knowledge,

Reader: it will come to an end.

Congregation: For we know only in part,

Reader: and we prophesy only in part;

Congregation: but when the complete comes,

Reader: the partial will come to an end.

Congregation: When I was a child,

Reader: I spoke like a child,

Congregation: I thought like a child,

Reader: I reasoned like a child;

Congregation: when I became an adult,

Reader: I put an end to childish ways.

Congregation: For now we see in a mirror, dimly,

Reader: but then we will see face to face.

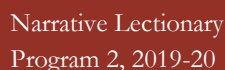
Congregation: Now I know only in part;

Reader: then I will know fully,

Congregation: even as I have been fully known.

Reader: And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three;

Congregation: and the greatest of these is love.



Faith, Hope, and Love, 1 Corinthians 13:1-13



Theme and Liturgy

Preaching Theme

Main Idea: Where everything else fades, love endures.

For some reason, people have a strange tendency to accumulate things that do not last. Paul knew it. He lived and traveled in a world brimming with trade, an exchange of ideas, power, politics, art and culture. Before his conversion, Paul had many of these things, but his heart was filled with hate. After coming to know and follow Jesus, Paul learned to love. He could see in a radical and immediate way that the things he strived for paled compared to the gift of love.

Even today, it is tempting to strive for things that fail to satisfy; things that are temporary or breakable. We live in a culture that also values trade, information, and things we can accumulate. Unfortunately, none of those endure. The things we collect break. Our system of free trade is often precarious. And the things we learn slowly fall out of our heads as we age.

Years ago I had the opportunity to do CPE (intern) in an Alzheimer wing of a nursing home. I wrestled with the entire experience. Being at the front end of my life, building my value as a human being with education and knowledge, it was hard to wrap my head around losing one's self by losing one's memories. I asked a lot of difficult questions. When a person dies, will they enter heaven as their younger, knowledgeable selves or their older, lost selves? At what point in their life will their consciousness endure in heaven?

These questions haunted me. But they were making a wrong assumption about the value of a person. I was too concerned with a person's knowledge, which fades like our collectibles. What doesn't fade is love.

The people I worked with all had one thing in common—they were all loved; if not by family, then by their caregivers or communities. Not one lived unloved. In that facility, Paul's words came alive. "Love is patient; love is kind... it is not irritable or resentful." Residents who were as vulnerable as the ones I worked with were particularly in need of Paul's definition of love. It seems the selves that will endure for eternity are not the ones that remember, but the selves that were loved.

For supplementary preaching resources, please [visit our website access point](https://www.proclaim-it.nl/). (Link: [bit.ly/proclaim-it-nl](https://www.proclaim-it.nl/))

Scripture Summary

In Corinth, Paul saw a world brimming with trade, an exchange of ideas, power, politics, art and culture. But the only thing that will endure forever is love.

Call to Worship

L: Hear, O people:

C: The Lord our God is one!

L: Hear, O people:

C: The Lord our God is love!

L: Come, you people,

C: And praise the God of love!

Confession and Forgiveness

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Risen Lord,

C: We see the miracle of your resurrection, yet so often live as though we are still lost in our sins. We rely on our own feeble will, we stay mired in the past, and we refuse that which is too uncomfortable or unfamiliar. Forgive us, and open our hearts again to your freedom. Amen.

P: Praise God—Christ is arisen! We have a new life, and the old has fallen away. Rejoice that we are truly forgiven, and go out and proclaim the grace that is free to all, in Jesus' name, amen.



Liturgy

Prayer of the Day

O God,
You have shown that all we truly need is to love. Expand our hearts to embrace your world and show ourselves as children of a compassionate God, for the sake of your Son Jesus, amen.

Offertory Prayer

More than any gifts of wealth or possessions, you desire the sacrifice of a humble heart, O God. Bless these offerings as you bless our lives, that we too might be signs of grace to others, and receivers of their blessings to us. We pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Prayers of the Church

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

L: When our words and deeds are impressive but our hearts are empty, we are useless to others, O Lord. May we learn to begin all things in love, and allow our actions to follow. Loving God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: The world around us is bursting with signs that it was made good, by a compassionate creator. Ignite our zeal to honor and protect this amazing planet on which we live, and to guard against misuse and irresponsible treatment of wildlife and resources. Loving God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Everything that we know, own, accomplish and treasure will all come to an end one day. Teach us again and again that the only thing which truly endures across years, miles, and other barriers is love. May we live as though it is so. Loving God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Love bears and endures all things, even those times when we doubt our ability to withstand adversity. Grant us your Spirit's strength, and give your healing breath to all who need it, (*especially...*). Loving God,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Your holy saints devoted their lives to loving as Jesus showed love, and we long to reflect this in our lives as well. Join us forever in unbreakable bonds held together by you, dear Creator. Loving God,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: In you we live and have our being, O God. Accept and grant these prayers which we bring before you, by the grace of Jesus Christ our savior, amen.

Eucharistic Invitation

Now we know only in part; in the time to come we will know fully. Now we share a foretaste of the feast which in time will never end. Come and join God's family around the table, and rejoice in the banquet of love!



Liturgy

Litany

L: Speaking well,

C: And acting well,

L: And living well

C: Are nothing.

L: If when we speak

C: And when we act

L: We do it

C: Without love.

L: Prophetic powers,

C: Abilities,

L: And fervent faith

C: Are nothing.

L: If prophecy,

C: Ability,

L: And faith are

C: Without love.

L: Love is patient,

C: Kind and gentle,

L: Finding joy in truth.

C: It doesn't envy,

L: Boast or brag,

C: Or force its own way through.

L: Love bears, believes,

C: Endures all things,

L: And hopes for what is best.

C: It doesn't find its joy in wrong

L: Or nurse resentful moods.

C: The world is full of noble things,

L: Achievements to be made,

C: And goals to reach,

L: And things to learn,

C: And knowledge to impart.

L: Milestones to accomplish,

C: And wonders to create,

L: Legacies to institute

C: And memories to make.

L: But all these things will pass away,

C: Not one will last forever.

L: And when our lives are at an end

C: Just one thing can endure:

L: And that's the love we gave away

C: And which was shown to us,

L: God made just one eternal thing:

C: The endless power of love!



Creative Expression

Skit

Characters: Patty, Rosa

Props: Red paper (heart shaped if you like) marker/writing utensil

[Rosa is writing on the paper, saying what she is writing out loud as Patty approaches.]

Rosa: You are smart and nice and very helpful during school projects. Love, Rosa.

Patty: Hey Rosa!

Rosa: Hey Patty!

Patty: What are you doing?

Rosa: Writing love notes.

Patty: [in a good-natured teasing tone] Oooooooh to who?

Rosa: Everyone in our class.

Patty: What? Rosa? Are you trying to work an angle for a date or something?

Rosa: Huh?

Patty: You said you're writing love note to everyone.

Rosa: Yeah.

Patty: Are you trying to see how many people in the class like you and would date you?

Rosa: No. Why on earth would you think that?

Patty: You're writing everyone a love note.

Rosa: Yes, I am.

Patty: And when you love someone, you want to date them.

Rosa: Not necessarily.

Patty: Why not?

Rosa: Well, God loves us all, and I'm pretty sure God doesn't want to date us.

Patty: Ok, that's true.

Rosa: And my parents love me and don't want to date me.

Patty: Yes, but—

Rosa: [interrupts] It's possible to love someone in a nonromantic way, even if they aren't your parents!

Patty: Huh. I guess you are right.

Rosa: I am. And I think we could all use a little more love in our lives. I was listening to our class and everyone is so hard on themselves.

Patty: Yeah, I've heard that, too.

Rosa: So I thought it might be nice to write a nice little note to each person saying they are loveable, and list some reasons why, to help them feel a little better.

Patty: That's a great idea! And if they feel loved, I bet they'll start showing love to other people.

Rosa: Exactly. It will be an epidemic. Only a good kind!

Patty: [laughing] Ha, ha, I love it! Can I have some paper? I think I'm going to write some love notes, too!

Rosa: Awesome!

[They high five.]



Kids' Storytime

Main Message

Love is a gift from God. It will never run out, so let's keep sharing!

Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Construction paper—at least one for each kid
- Crayons—at least one for each kid

Setting the Scene/Background

Love is from God, and it's not something we have to worry about using up.

When we approach all things with God's love, we will be our kindest and best selves.

Help kids notice who shows them love, and practice giving some love back with a note!

Telling the Story

Tell the story using the *KidStuff* bulletin.

Activity

When we talk about love from God do we mean mushy romantic love? No!

Use the story to help kids understand what love is. Love from God is patient, kind, etc.

Ask who shows them that kind of love.

Invite them to take a piece of paper and crayon(s) and write a love note to the person they thought of. It can be a picture or a letter of thanks.

Love will never run out. There is always enough to share. Love is a gift from God!

Reflection Questions

- Can you love people you don't really like?
- How can God love me if I am not perfect?

Stuff to Consider

Love is an abstract construct and might be hard for those on the autism spectrum to grasp fully. Think of tangible examples of what love is and how it feels to help everyone understand.

Next Week's Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Photo of a loved one or pet who has passed away



Planning Worksheet

Preaching Themes

Kids' Storytime Ideas

Skit or Creative Ideas

Worship Setting

Props for Kids' Storytime or Skit

Hymns

Special Events (Baptism, New Members)

Choral Music/Special Music

Guest Speakers/Announcements



Scripture Readings

Text: 1 Corinthians 15:1-26, 51-57

15 Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, ² through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain.

³ For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, ⁴ and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶ Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸ Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. ⁹ For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. ¹¹ Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

¹² Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead?

¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; ¹⁴ and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain. ¹⁵ We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ—whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised.

¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. ¹⁷ If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. ²¹ For since death came

through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; ²² for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. ²⁴ Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

⁵¹ Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled:

“Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

⁵⁵ “Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?”

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Secondary Text: Mark 12:26-27a

²⁶ “And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the story about the bush, how God said to him, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? ²⁷ He is God not of the dead, but of the living; you are quite wrong.”

Pronunciation Guide

Cephas: SEE-phus



Scripture Readings

Dramatic Reading of the Text

Readers: Reader 1, Reader 2

Reader 1: Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain.

Reader 2: For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

Reader 1: Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ—whom he did not raise if it is true that the

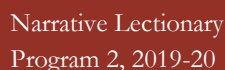
dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

Reader 2: But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Reader 1: Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled:

Reader 2: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”
“Where, O death, is your victory?
Where, O death, is your sting?”

Reader 1: The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.



Death Swallowed in Life, 1 Corinthians 15:1-26, 51-57

[illegible]



Theme and Liturgy

Preaching Theme

Main Idea: Jesus promised death would not have the final say.

Before Jesus, Jews and Greeks believed that all who died went to a single place. Jews called the place, “Sheol,” and Greek literature called it “Hades.” It was a dark place where people lived a shadowy existence. There was no distinction between good and evil people entering—it was for all, and it was a place best to avoid as long as possible.

Apocalyptic Christian writers helped introduce the concept of two separate places for those who die—one place for the wicked, and one for the righteous. Soon this idea took hold in the culture, and we still largely hold to this notion today.

Paul’s challenge in writing to early churches was first to combat Jewish thought that any could be raised from the dead. Their imagination allowed only for a single death and then largely nothingness. Paul insisted there is an afterlife—particularly important for grasping a concept of Jesus raised from the dead. (He’d have to continue to live—in the afterlife, at least—if he was going to return.) If there’s no life after death, then there’s no resurrection, and if no resurrection, then Jesus couldn’t have been raised, thus nullifying any faith in Christ Paul was trying to nurture in people.

Jesus’ promise is this—death will not be the end. Instead, death will be a gateway to a life even more important and lasting than this one. Jesus’ promise offered a word of hope for eternal life that went far beyond anything they had previously imagined. More than that, sin, which puts the sting in death, would also be defeated. Love will win.

Today we have a more solid framework for envisioning the afterlife. But there is still a sting in death. Most of us don’t know what to do with the fear of finality and loss that comes with death. Such fear can profoundly shape us, dictating our thoughts, words, and actions as we strive to avoid death. But Jesus promised death would not have the final say. What might our lives look like if we thought, spoke, and acted as if we were free from death? Might we take more chances for the sake of love? Would we move right through fear instead of flee from it?

For supplementary preaching resources, please [visit our website access point](#). (Link: bit.ly/proclaim-it-nl)

Scripture Summary

Paul expressed Jesus’ promise that death would not have the final say. Sin and death would be defeated by love.

Call to Worship

L: Praise to God, who raises the dead!

C: Death has been defeated!

L: Bringing Jesus back to life,

C: Death has been defeated!

L: Where’s the sting of dying?

C: Death has been defeated!

L: Praise our God, the Lord of life!

C: Death has been defeated!

Confession and Forgiveness

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Risen Lord,

C: We see the miracle of your resurrection, yet so often live as though we are still lost in our sins. We rely on our own feeble will, we stay mired in the past, and we refuse that which is too uncomfortable or unfamiliar. Forgive us, and open our hearts again to your freedom. Amen.

P: Praise God—Christ is arisen! We have a new life, and the old has fallen away. Rejoice that we are truly forgiven, and go out and proclaim the grace that is free to all, in Jesus’ name, amen.



Liturgy

Prayer of the Day

O Christ,

You have indeed, been raised from the dead. Therefore, let us live as though death no longer holds us hostage, putting our hope in the one who goes before us, both in death and in eternal life, our Savior, Christ, amen.

Offertory Prayer

Because you live, O Lord, we know the joy of your kingdom of life. Bless these gifts we bring out of our gratitude for your salvation, and as fuel for your great mission on earth. For Jesus' sake, amen.

Prayers of the Church

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

L: It seems too good to be true, but you have conquered death, O Lord, and removed its sting. May this truth give us hope, courage, and freedom to live bold lives as your disciples. God of Life,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: As one thing dies, another is born; the cycle of death and rebirth is imprinted into your creation. Teach us to let go of what wants to pass on, so that we might embrace what is waiting to emerge. God of Life,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: As another academic year draws to a close and we pause to acknowledge the successes and disappointments of the past year, we give you thanks for all the opportunities you give us to grow. May we take what is good and bring it forward into our future, and learn from past mistakes. God of Life,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Our suffering in this life is but the blink of an eye compared with the eternal peace which awaits us. When trials overshadow us, give us perspective and hope for wholeness perfected in you. Today we offer prayers (*especially for...*). God of Life,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We celebrate the lives of Nicolaus Copernicus and Leonhard Euler, and give thanks for the scientists in our midst, who study your world and try to make order of it. May we use their discoveries to improve ourselves, our lives and the way we care for the planet. God of Life,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: Risen Lord, you give us hope in all things, and we entrust our prayers to your grace, knowing that you have heard us. In Jesus' name, amen.

Eucharistic Invitation

By your grace O Lord, we are what we are, and for this we give thanks. We come to your table exactly as you have created us, receiving this sacrament of love, so that our lives might then witness to others. Let us come now, to be fed by our risen Lord!



Liturgy

Litany

Left side: If Jesus has been truly raised,

Right side: His tomb was vacant on that morn,

L: And he appeared to many,

R: In his resurrected body—

L: Then why do some make argument

R: That there is no eternal life?

L: If resurrection isn't real,

R: And Christ was not returned to life,

L: Everything we say is false,

R: All our faith has been in vain,

L: And no one will be raised.

R: And if there is no life beyond,

L: Then Jesus also does not live,

R: And we still live in sin,

L: And those who've gone before us

R: Have no everlasting hope.

L: If, for this life alone

R: Our hope has been in Christ,

L: Then we are surely doomed,

R: Deserving sympathy.

L: But we know it isn't so:

R: Jesus has, in fact been raised.

L: He represents the first fruits

R: Of those who follow after.

L: His death and life are human;

R: Therefore, we shall have them too.

L: For as we die in Adam,

R: We shall be raised in Christ.

L: He has destroyed his enemies,

R: The last of which is death.

L: And when the time has ripened,

R: Our perishable bodies

L: Will take on immortality

R: And life that's permanent.

L: The sting and victory of death

R: Are blotted out forever!

L: Thanks be to God

R: Who give us hope

L: That we shall live eternal.

R: Praise to the God of life!

L: Who triumphs over death!

All: Praise to the God of life!



Creative Expression

Skit

Characters: Kit, Nick

Props: Box of tissues

[Kit dabs her eyes as Nick approaches.]

Nick: Oh, Kit, are you ok?

Kit: No.

Nick: I am so sorry you are upset. Can I ask what happened?

Kit: I just found out my grandpa got a bad diagnosis. He's only got a few months left to live.

Nick: [gives her a hug] I'm so sorry to hear that, that's so hard. Are you pretty close to your grandpa?

Kit: We are so close. He calls me his little "Kitty Cat" and we always made cookies together and played backgammon. He made the best chili and I can't believe he's not going to be around anymore.

Nick: Oh, Kit, I'm so sorry. It's so hard to lose someone you love.

Kit: I don't know what I'm going to do.

Nick: Well, for now, you spend as much time as you can with him, and make sure you say you love him a lot.

Kit: I will. But what happens when he's gone?

Nick: Well, I know when my grandma died, I was so sad for a really long time.

Kit: Really?

Nick: Yeah. It was so hard. I cried a lot. I even missed a few days of school. I was so upset and my parents said that it was ok for me to spend time grieving.

Kit: But you got over it?

Nick: Well, I wouldn't say I'm over it. I'm still sad, and I really miss her a lot. But I do feel less like I need to cry all day now.

Kit: Really?

Nick: Yeah. It took some time, but each day it got a little easier, and I had a lot of support from my family and close friends.

Kit: That's helpful to hear.

Nick: Yeah, I think what was most helpful was when people who had gone through it before were there to support me. Nobody said I had to get over it or just be happy she was in heaven. They all understood.

Kit: Yeah, someone told me I should be grateful he won't be suffering anymore.

Nick: Ooooh, ouch.

Kit: I mean, I'm glad he won't be in pain, but I'm still really sad.

Nick: I think that's fair. Even Jesus was sad when his friend Lazarus died. And he even raised him from the dead!

Kit: You're right! He raised him from the dead, but not before crying first!

Nick: Exactly. Jesus rose from the dead so we could all live eternally in Heaven with him, but that doesn't mean you won't feel sad even if you know you'll be together again someday.

Kit: Than you Nick. I really needed to have someone help me feel like I was normal for having all these feelings.

Nick: If I'm normal, you are!

[The two share a hug.]



Kids' Storytime

Main Message

Death is not the end of the story. There is life after death.

Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Photo of a loved one or pet who has passed away

Setting the Scene/Background

Death is a tricky subject. A lot of people avoid having the conversation with their kids because it's just too difficult.

But we know that Christ has conquered death. Help kids to learn in a gentle way about death and that there is life after death for us all with Jesus in heaven!

Telling the Story

Tell the story using the *KidStuff* bulletin.

Activity

Talk to kids about your picture. Tell them the great things you loved about the person or pet. Tell them you were sad when they passed away (say died if you think your kids are ok with hearing real words). Tell them even though you miss them and it was sad that they died, you know that they are with Jesus in heaven. Jesus died and rose again so we may have eternal life!

Reflection Questions

- Did Jesus have to die for us to go to heaven?
- What do you think heaven is like?

Stuff to Consider

Be aware of your congregation's history. Have any of your kids lost a parent or grandparent? Grief is a tough subject and might be hard for a kid to talk about. Help them to have space to cry if they need, offer extra hugs, and normalize the feeling of sadness. Just because we have hope in the resurrection doesn't mean we won't feel sad when someone dies.

Next Week's Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Use an online translation tool or invite those you know who speak other languages to translate a phrase of your choosing into many languages (Such as "God is Good")



Planning Worksheet

Preaching Themes

Kids' Storytime Ideas

Skit or Creative Ideas

Worship Setting

Props for Kids' Storytime or Skit

Hymns

Special Events (Baptism, New Members)

Choral Music/Special Music

Guest Speakers/Announcements



Scripture Readings

Text: Acts 2:1-4

2When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. **2**And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. **3**Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. **4**All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Alternate Text: 1 Corinthians 12:1-13

12Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. **2**You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. **3**Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says “Let Jesus be cursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except by the Holy Spirit.

4Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; **5**and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; **6**and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. **7**To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. **8**To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, **9**to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, **10**to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment

of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. **11**All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

12For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. **13**For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Secondary Text: Mark 1:4-8

4John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. **5**And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. **6**Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. **7**He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. **8**I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

Pronunciation Guide

Judean: joo-DEE-uhn



Scripture Readings

Dramatic Reading of the Text: Acts 2:1-4

Readers: Reader

Reader: When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Dramatic Reading of the Text: 1 Corinthians 12:1-13

Readers: Reader 1, Reader 2

Reader 1: Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak.

Reader 2: Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says “Let Jesus be cursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except by the Holy Spirit.

Reader 1: Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;

Reader 2: and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord;

Reader 1: and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.

Reader 2: To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

Reader 1: To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom,

Reader 2: and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit,

Reader 1: to another faith by the same Spirit,

Reader 2: to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,

Reader 1: to another the working of miracles,

Reader 2: to another prophecy,

Reader 1: to another the discernment of spirits,

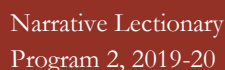
Reader 2: to another various kinds of tongues,

Reader 1: to another the interpretation of tongues.

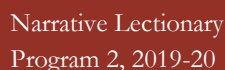
Reader 2: All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

Reader 1: For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

Reader 2: For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.



Gifts of the Spirit, Acts 2:1-4; 1 Corinthians 12:1-13



Gifts of the Spirit, Acts 2:1-4; 1 Corinthians 12:1-13



Theme and Liturgy

Preaching Theme

Main Idea: Discerning voices from God and voices from others can be challenging.

Early Christians lived in a world filled with ideas, ideologies, religions, and cultural practices. Like today, it would have been difficult to discern which voices to listen to, and which to ignore or deny. In Paul's day, people were practicing what we now call, "spiritual gifts." Some could perform miracles. Others could prophesy. Some spoke in tongues, and others interpreted their words. With the prevalence of other-worldly practices, Paul helped early Christians learn to discern between the voices and actions.

Up to this point, people were largely identified by the cultural and religious background—for Israel, these were one and the same. But now, Gentiles and Jews alike were being brought together under one Spirit. They would have to find other ways to distinguish the voices of Christ from all others.

Paul made it clear that no one speaking on behalf of God would be able to curse the name of Jesus. Likewise, only those speaking on behalf of God could proclaim Jesus as Lord. All others were imposters or pagans.

With all the voices speaking, shouting, and screaming to be heard, we also face the challenge of discerning which voices belong to God, and which do not. Some are easy to discern. Voices that silence others, voices that preach hatred instead of love—these are not voices of the Spirit. Other voices are harder to discern. In the current political landscape, the issues facing us have polarized us, and we have become stubborn in our unwillingness to listen for voices on the other side of the aisle. Can it be true that all the voices we like are right, and all the voices we dislike are wrong? Unlikely. It's most likely all the voices have grains of truth and grains of untruth. This is where our willingness to listen and learn, and to pray for wisdom in discernment can be helpful. We need to be willing to be wrong. Only then can we open ourselves to the possibility that some of the voices we don't want to hear might be speaking words of God.

For supplementary preaching resources, please [visit our website access point](#). (Link: bit.ly/proclaim-it-nl)

Scripture Summary

On Pentecost, God gave the gift of the Holy Spirit to those gathered, and in doing so they were able to discern voices speaking God's truth.

Call to Worship

L: Bless the Lord, our God!

C: Who sends us the Spirit:

L: The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,

C: The Spirit of counsel and might,

L: The Spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord.

C: Bless the Lord, our God!

Confession and Forgiveness

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Risen Lord,

C: We see the miracle of your resurrection, yet so often live as though we are still lost in our sins. We rely on our own feeble will, we stay mired in the past, and we refuse that which is too uncomfortable or unfamiliar. Forgive us, and open our hearts again to your freedom. Amen.

P: Praise God—Christ is arisen! We have a new life, and the old has fallen away. Rejoice that we are truly forgiven, and go out and proclaim the grace that is free to all, in Jesus' name, amen.



Liturgy

Prayer of the Day

O Lord,
You send your Spirit to disciples of all times and places.
May our ears be tuned to discern your voice and act on the
gifts you have given us, for the sake of Jesus Christ, amen.

Offertory Prayer

Of all the gifts which you have given us, we treasure your
Holy Spirit, O God. In gratitude for guidance and
discernment, we offer these tributes before you and ask
your blessing. May our lives be a blessing to others, in
Jesus' name. Amen.

Prayers of the Church

L: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in
need.

A brief silence.

L: Among the flurry of voices vying for our attention,
help us discern your truth, O God. Give us your
Spirit's insight that we may listen and speak with
sound judgment. God of wisdom,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We can experience the presence of your Spirit in all
living things if we tune our hearts accordingly. May we
fully embrace and inhabit your creation in ways which
inspire us to nurture and protect the natural world
which you have lovingly made. God of wisdom,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: On this day when the Church celebrates its birthday,
we rejoice for the witness of generations before us,
and for the opportunity to carry on their mission in
your name. Keep us honest, true and full of integrity
as we pilot the Church throughout this new century.
God of wisdom,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: There are many whom we know need the healing
presence of your Spirit this day. Bless them and use us
to minister to them, that all might be restored to
wholeness. We lift up this day (*especially...*). God of
wisdom,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We celebrate the fellowship we share with all your
saints of every time and place, united by one eternal
Spirit. Bind us together in permanent bonds of love,
and secure us a place with them in your heavenly
kingdom. God of wisdom,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: Accept these prayers we bring, O God. Inspire us to
go out and be the answer which the world is seeking,
by the power of the Holy Spirit, amen.

Eucharistic Invitation

We are all made to drink of one Spirit. Gather us around
this cup of salvation and empower us to live as your
witnesses to the ends of the earth. Let us join in the feast
of the saints!



Liturgy

Litany

L: Many gifts,

C: One Spirit.

L: Many ways to serve,

C: Many things to do,

L: But only one God

C: To serve.

L: The Spirit's imparted

C: To each one of us,

L: However it chooses

C: To bless us.

L: We may speak with wisdom,

C: Or demonstrate knowledge,

L: Or be blessed with unshakable faith.

C: Perhaps we are healers

L: Or miracle workers,

C: Or those who speak truth to the leaders.

L: We may be prophetic,

C: Or practice discernment,

L: Or teaching, or leading

C: Or caring.

L: Our gift might be practical,

C: Constructing, creating,

L: Or making communities strong.

C: There are thousands of ways

L: We can follow the Spirit,

C: Accepting the blessings we're given.

L: Many gifts,

C: One Spirit.

L: We're far from the same;

C: We function as parts of a whole.

L: But only one Lord

C: Gives freely to all,

L: And binds us together as one.

C: There isn't a gift

L: Of more value than others,

C: No one higher calling alone.

L: The Spirit decides

C: What each will receive,

L: And then we must make it our own.

L: Many gifts,

C: One Spirit.

L: Rejoice in this day,

C: For in it disciples were blessed

L: To go to the world,

C: Equipped by the Spirit

L: With all they could possibly need.

C: Holy gifts,

L: Holy Spirit—

All: God blesses us all!



Creative Expression

Skit

Characters: Frank, Aradia, Clark

Frank: La la la la la la!

Clark: What are you doing, Frank?

Frank: I'm trying to speak in a different language!

Aradia: What language is that?

Frank: I don't know. I'm just making sounds and hoping they come out as words!

Aradia: Ok—what are you hoping will happen?

Frank: I'm hoping that God will turn it into a language someone else can understand. I really want to spread the message of Jesus all over the world!

Clark: Are you trying to speak in tongues?

Frank: Is that what it's called?

Clark: Yeah, sometimes people feel moved by the Spirit and speak in a language that only one other person can understand. But I don't know if it quite works with them just making stuff up.

Frank: Oh.

Aradia: Yeah, it's something from God, and someone has to be able to understand it. Does that make sense?

Frank: I guess so. So, how can I spread the message of Jesus to people who don't speak my language?

Aradia: You could try learning a new language.

Clark: Yeah! Aradia and I are in Spanish class right now!

Frank: It just seems like it would be way too hard to learn a whole new language.

Aradia: Spanish isn't too hard. And we practice a lot together, which is really fun!

Clark: It is! And there are a lot of Spanish speakers all over the world. I think Mandarin is the most popular language, and then it's Spanish!

Frank: Not English?

Aradia: I don't know. But I do know that there's Spanish speaking countries all over the world. And there are people speaking Spanish who are moving to our community too, so it will be useful to know Spanish as a second language!

Clark: But you don't have to learn Spanish. You could learn French or German, or Mandarin, or maybe sign language!

Aradia: Oh yeah! That would be so awesome! Sign language is so cool and expressive!

Frank: There are so many options, it's kind of overwhelming. Couldn't I just pray for another language?

Aradia: You can certainly try, but if you pick one, there will be at least two languages you can share the good news in!

Clark: Exactly. Some of us may never speak in tongues, but the languages we do use day to day can always be useful.

Frank: Ok. Let's get out the course catalog and pick a language class for me!



Kids' Storytime

Main Message

The Holy Spirit is powerful and God loves diversity.

Props

- *KidStuff* bulletin
- Use an online translation tool or invite those you know who speak other languages to translate a phrase of your choosing into many languages (Such as “God is Good”)

Setting the Scene/Background

Pentecost is an amazing display of the power of God coming in like a rushing wind, flames, and the gift of languages. What a fun experience!

What we also see at Pentecost is God's love for diversity. Everyone was given a different language to speak to help spread the message of Jesus far and wide all over the earth.

Help kids get a taste of what it might be like to have heard so many languages at once.

Telling the Story

Tell the story using the *KidStuff* bulletin.

Activity

After telling the story, talk about how amazing it must have been to be there. Ask what it might have been like to hear and feel that rush of wind, to see the flames and to hear all those languages!

Share your phrase in English and then share it in other languages.

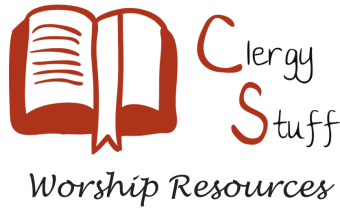
If you have people speaking other languages, you can speak the phrase at the same time. Perhaps even pray the Lord's Prayer all at once to really illustrate how amazing it must have been.

Reflection Questions

- Why are there so many languages?
- Why is God's Spirit like wind?

Stuff to Consider

Some folks believe in the power of speaking in tongues. Avoid shaming anyone for having belief in something that seems beyond the scope of your understanding. Instead, focus on the fact that God used the disciples speaking in many languages, and we can learn new languages to communicate with more people.



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