

**EPISCOPAL CHILDREN'S CURRICULUM**

**PRESCHOOL  
KINDERGARTEN**

**CROSS**



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# Preschool Kindergarten Cross

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Note: The following letter is for teachers and parents of children in the preschool/ kindergarten level of church school. These pages can be reproduced or used as a model for a personalized letter.

## Episcopal Children's Curriculum

### Unit I. SHEPHERD

Dear Parents and Guardians,

This unit will explore the life of King David. It begins with two sessions about Ruth, David's great-grandmother. She came to Bethlehem with her beloved mother-in-law Naomi, the same place where Jesus was born.

The complete Biblical account of David's life is intricate, but the children can delight in thinking about David's youth as a shepherd, musician, and psalm writer. They enjoy the story of his heroic victory over the giant, and they like thinking of him as a king. Recalling David's life in this elementary way reminds children that he was a person who stayed close to God. (The name David means "beloved.") Jesus was repeatedly addressed, especially in the *Gospel of Matthew*, as the Son of David.

We encourage you to talk about the lessons with your child. Do this by reading together the children's book, *David*, which tells the story of David as a boy and later as a king.

Scripture passages and excerpts from *The Book of Common Prayer* that the children will encounter are cited below. Look up the passages and excerpts with your child and show them where they are in the Bible and Prayer Book. The Take-Home Cards given to learners each week feature illustrations and text related to session themes. They also include useful instructions for parents. These collectible cards, which are 5 by 8 inches, can be displayed in a photo album, kept in an oversized recipe box, or used in any way you find helpful.

Following are summaries of the unit's sessions:

**Session 1: "Ruth Followed God"** tells how Ruth learned about God from Naomi. God helped them in their time of great need. (*Ruth 1:16c*)

**Session 2: "We Remember Ruth"** describes how Ruth had a baby named Obed, and that Obed was the grandfather of David. David belonged to Ruth's family. (*Ruth 4:17c*)

**Session 3: "Young David"** takes us into the country-side to be with young David, son of Jesse, who is a sensitive and caring shepherd. (*I Samuel 16:19b*)

**Session 4: “David Defeated a Giant”** shares the story of David and Goliath. This episode is to be told with sensitivity, not in order to stress the physical violence but to portray David as valiant in his deeds because of his deep trust in God. David trusted God and became an instrument for saving his people from their enemies' destructive attacks. (*I Samuel 17:50a*)

**Session 5: “David Loved Music”** helps us to use our imaginations in thinking about the music David made with his lyre. His days and nights with the sheep would have provided time for “the long thoughts of youth,” and for making melodies to the praise of God. (*I Samuel 16:23b*)

**Session 6: “David Wrote Psalms”** introduces the concept of “psalms” as songs of praise, some of which are attributed to David. The word psalm itself should be a familiar one for the children, and they can discover that we have many of these collected in the Bible. (*Psalms 23:1a*)

**Session 7: “David Became King”** portrays David as king. God had said to him, “You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince over Israel.” (*II Samuel 5:3*)

**Session 8: “Solomon Built a Temple”** looks briefly at the story of Solomon who built the great temple (house of the Lord) in Jerusalem. He was destined to follow his father, David, as king. He had the privilege of carrying out his father's dream for constructing a permanent resting place for the Ark of the Covenant. (*I Kings 5:5a*)

**Session 9: “All God's People Are Saints”** is intended for use in the week nearest the Church's celebration of the Feast of All Saints (November 1). Ruth, Naomi, David, and Solomon, are among the saints we remember and celebrate. (*Psalms 30:4a*)

Yours in Christ,  
Church School Teachers

# SHEPHERD

## SESSION 1

### RUTH FOLLOWED GOD

#### FOCUS

Ruth learned about God from Naomi. God helped them in their time of great need. The children should be able to tell the story of Ruth and Naomi.

#### GETTING READY

The story of Ruth reveals a human love that transcends differences in culture, religious background, and local custom. Her story is important because she is an ancestor of King David.

The account begins, in *Ruth 1*, with the migration of Elimelech and Naomi and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. A famine in their own country of Judah caused them to go to Moab where food was plentiful. While the family was there, the young men married Moabite women, Ruth and Orpah.

Then tragedy came to all three women. Their husbands died.

Naomi, hearing that food was once again available in her native Judah, decided to return there. She urged her daughters-in-law to remain with their own people in Moab. Orpah wept and said goodbye. But Ruth would not leave Naomi. Her words of devotion to Naomi are among the most beautiful words in the Hebrew Scriptures. (See *Ruth 1:16-17*.)

Ruth and Naomi went to Bethlehem, later known as “the city of David.”

In sharing the story with young children, concentrate on the love Ruth shows toward her mother-in-law.

Assist us mercifully, O Lord, in these our supplications and prayers, and dispose the way of your servants towards the attainment of everlasting salvation; that, among all the changes and chances of this mortal life, they may ever be defended by your gracious and ready help; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For Protection

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 832

#### TEACHING TIP

At the beginning of the year, young children are often insecure about leaving their parents and entering a new classroom with a new teacher and other children. Invite parents to join the class while the child becomes

involved in an activity. Once the child is comfortable most parents will be able to leave quietly.

## **GATHERING**

Ahead of time, arrange a display of illustrated Bibles. If possible, include some versions prepared for children. As the children arrive, invite them to look at the Bibles and to talk about them. Which ones are their favorites? What do they like about them? Tell the class members that the Bible has many stories, and they will hear these over and over when they come to the church. Preschoolers need choices. Therefore, in addition to the Gathering activity, provide a variety of puzzles, storybooks, and crayons with paper.

After all have arrived, gather the group and say:

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

(These words will be used at the beginning of every session. Invite the children to join in. If appropriate, make the sign of the cross.)

## **STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Establish a comfortable spot for storytelling where all the children can see. Describe the Bible as a special book that tells us many things about God and God's people.

Introduce the story by reading from the Bible. Gather the children in a circle, open the Bible, and let the children see where the reading is. Read *Ruth 1:16c*:

“Your people shall be my people, and your God my God.”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Children respond: Thanks be to God.

In this session, tell the story of Ruth from *Ruth 1*. Begin by putting up the picture of Ruth and Naomi from Poster No. 1 in the Teacher's Packet.

- Naomi went with her husband and two sons to a new country. They worshiped God.
- While they were there, Naomi's husband died.
- Her two sons married women named Orpah and Ruth. But then the sons also died.
- Naomi was very sad, living in a strange country with no husband and both sons gone. She decided to go back home to her own land of Judah.
- At first, Orpah and Ruth began to travel with Naomi. But then Naomi said to them, “You must go to your own country, and let me return to my country by myself.”
- Orpah kissed Naomi goodbye. But Ruth loved Naomi so much that she hugged her and held her tight. She did not want to leave her. She said,

“Your people shall be my people, and your God my God.” So they stayed together and went to Naomi’s home in Judah.

**CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

**Option 1. Ruth and Naomi**

Provide the children with paper and finger-paint, watercolors, tempera paint, or chalk. Invite them to create a background scene for the travels of Ruth and Naomi (ground, road, sky). When the paintings are complete, set them aside to dry. Give each child copies of the outline figures of Ruth and Naomi, made from the pattern provided on Poster No. 3 in the Teacher’s Packet. The children may color the figures and attach them to the dried paintings.

**Option 2. Travel Bags**

Prepare two “travel bags” (paper lunch bags) for each member of the class. Label one “Ruth’s bag,” and the other “Naomi’s bag.” Invite the children to decorate their bags with crayons. Fill the bags with items that travelers might need. Use inexpensive items such as a band aid, a cotton ball, a small comb, a box of raisins, or other similar items that are safe for children.

**GAME** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Play a getting acquainted game using an empty picture frame or one cut from construction paper. Invite the children to sit in a circle. Hold the frame in front of your face and say, “I’m looking through the window. I see a friend I know.” The person with the frame says, “I see Joe.” The frame is passed to Joe, who holds the frame and repeats the words, ending with another child’s name. Continue until all have had a chance to hold the frame.

**DOING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Role-play the story of Ruth and Naomi, focusing on their trip back to Bethlehem together. Collect items that would be used for traveling, such as suitcases, lunch boxes, totes, purses, and backpacks. Provide items to be packed (doll clothes, scarves, toys).

**WONDERING** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Wonder aloud. What would it be like to love someone so much that you would go far away with them? What would it be like to go on such a long journey? What would you talk about? What would you pray about? God would be on the journey, too. How would you know?

**MUSIC** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Sing the song, “‘Tis the gift to be simple” (*The Hymnal 1982, 554; We Sing of God, 87*), It is found on the audio tape *Children Sing!* Use the following motions:

'Tis the gift to be simple, (*cup hands like a box*)  
'tis the gift to be free, (*stretch arms wide*)  
'tis the gift to come down where we ought to be, (*bend down*)  
and when we find ourselves in the place just right, (*stand up*)  
'twill be in the valley of love and delight. (*cross arms over chest*)  
When true simplicity is gained (*put hands on hips*)  
to bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed, (*bow*)  
to turn, turn, will be our delight (*turn around*)  
till by turning, turning we come round right. (*sit*)

### **CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Ruth learned about God from Naomi. Start a conversation by asking the following:

What do you know about God? Who told you?

When do you talk about God with someone else? With whom?

Ruth left her home to go to a new place with Naomi. Ask: Have you ever left home to go to a new place? Where did you go? How did it feel?

### **TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 1 has a picture of Ruth and Naomi, a Scripture verse, a prayer, and a note to parents. Help the children to collect the cards and keep them safe. Provide a means, such as a plastic picture frame, a special box, or an envelope to get the cards home. Plan to send cards to children who miss class.

### **SAYING GOODBYE**

At the end of the session, gather the children for a prayer of thanksgiving. The first two lines change each time. Add prayers that reflect the children's concerns.

Thank you, God, for people to love,  
To hug, and to share with.  
(*Pray for the special needs of the children.*)  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle and say:

Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.

Children: Thanks be to God.

### **TEACHER'S REFLECTION**

When the session has ended, think prayerfully about the children who were present. How did they respond to the activities? What have you learned about them? How will this affect your planning for the next session?

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

The next session focuses on Ruth's family and their descendants. Spend some time thinking about your own grandparents and great-grandparents. Discover what you can about the families of the children in your class.

# SHEPHERD

## SESSION 2

### WE REMEMBER RUTH

#### FOCUS

Ruth had a baby named Obed, and Obed was the grandfather of David. The children should be able to tell that David belonged to Ruth's family.

#### GETTING READY

The story of Ruth holds an honored place in both Hebrew and Christian liturgical tradition. Because of the poignant scenes of Ruth's gleaning in the fields of Boaz, the *Book of Ruth* was read annually at the Jewish harvest feast known as Pentecost.

The ancient words used at the Eucharist to introduce The Collect of the Day, and The Great Thanksgiving are derived from *Ruth 2:4*. (Boaz went into the field and greeted the reapers. He said, "The Lord be with you!" The reapers answered, "The Lord bless you." We exchange similar greetings with the Celebrant.)

For this session with young children, the emphasis is on Ruth's marriage to Boaz and the birth of her son, Obed. God's people will always remember Ruth's baby because he was destined to be the grandfather of King David.

That the generations to come might know,  
and the children yet unborn;  
that they in turn might tell it to their children;  
So that they might put their trust in God,  
and not forget the deeds of God,  
but keep his commandments.

Psalm 78:6-7

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 695

#### TEACHING TIP

Children in church school classes come from a variety of family structures. Every family is different, and we cannot assume that all children live in traditional nuclear families. Stress the love and care children receive from the people around them, including their church family.

#### GATHERING

Before class, prepare thin strips of yellow or tan construction paper. Spread the strips like straw over a large piece of cloth or sheet of paper. As the children arrive, ask them to "glean" (harvest) the strips and tie them into

bundles with pipe cleaners or twist ties. (You may prefer to use real straw.) Remember to have other choices such as puzzles and books available.

When all are present, gather the group and say:

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.  
(If appropriate, make the sign of the cross.)

### **STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce the story by reading from the Bible. Gather the children in a circle, open the Bible, and let the children see where the reading is. Read *Ruth 4:17c* (adapted):

“They named Ruth’s baby Obed; he was the father of Jesse, and Jesse was the father of David.”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Children respond: Thanks be to God.

Display the picture of Ruth, Boaz, and Obed (found on Poster No. 1 in the Teacher’s Packet). Place it alongside the poster of Ruth and Naomi used in the previous session.

Compose a short story based on *Ruth: 2, 4:13-17*.

- Recall with the children that Ruth went with her mother-in-law, Naomi, back to the land of Judah.
- Some time after they arrived, Ruth met a man named Boaz who was kind to her and allowed her to gather food from his fields.
- Describe the gleaning of the fields. It was like the gleaning at the Gathering (above).
- Boaz and Ruth were married. In time, Ruth had a baby boy whose name was Obed. Naomi took the baby, held him close and cared for him.
- When Obed grew up, he had a son named Jesse. And when Jesse grew up, he had a son named David. They were all part of Ruth’s family.
- We can read many stories about them in the Bible.

### **CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

#### **Option 1. Family Tree**

For each child, draw a simple tree shape on construction paper using a brown marker. (Older children may wish to draw their own trees.) From Poster no. 3 in the Teacher’s Packet, photocopy for each child the pictures labeled with the names Ruth, Boaz, Obed, Jesse, and David. The children may color the pictures and attach them to limbs of the tree. Review the story of Ruth’s family as the children work.

#### **Option 2. Three Generations**

Ahead of time, clip from magazines pictures of persons representing at least three generations: grandparents, parents, and children (babies). Distribute sheets of construction paper, one for each child. Invite the children to select a picture from each of the three age levels. These are to be glued to the background sheets. As the children work, talk with them about the generations.

**GAME** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Play “Mother, may I?” substituting other family members for “Mother.” The leader stands at one end of the room and decides which family member to be (grandparent, parent, sister, or brother). The children line up at the other end of the room. The leader tells each child how many steps to take. The children must remember to ask permission before moving by saying, “Mother (or Grandmother, may I?” When all children have made their way across the room, change leaders.

**DOING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Using simple props and costumes, direct the children in role playing the story. Scenes: Ruth gathering grain in the field of Boaz and returning to show Naomi what she has done; Ruth marrying Boaz; Ruth and Naomi holding the baby, Obed.

An alternative, if weather permits, would be to go outside to harvest some flowers, fruit, or blades of grass.

**WONDERING** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Naomi was the grandmother of Obed. Ruth was the grandmother of Jesse and the great-grandmother of David. Wonder aloud with the children: What would it be like to be grandparents? Or great-grandparents? What do grandparents like to do? What makes them happy or sad?

**MUSIC** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Sing again “’Tis the gift to be simple” (*The Hymnal 1982, 554; We Sing of God, 87*). Use the motions described in the previous session. Play the tape *Children Sing!* while children participate in the Creating and Doing activities.

**CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Naomi, Ruth, Boaz, and Obed were a family. Talk with the children about their own families. Ask: Who lives with you? Where do other family members live? close by? far away? Think about aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, grandparents, and stepparents. If children have made family pictures in the Creating activity they may want to share these. Make an effort to point out the diversity of families represented. Mention the church as the family to which we all belong.

**TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 2 includes a picture of Ruth, Boaz, and Obed, with a Scripture verse,

a prayer about families, and a note to parents. Remind the children to take their cards home, show them to their families, and keep them in a safe place.

### **SAYING GOODBYE**

Say the following prayer of thanksgiving. Add any line that seems appropriate.

Thank you, God, for Ruth and her family.  
Thank you for our families, too.  
*(Pray for any concerns the children may have.)*  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle and say:  
Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.  
Children: Thanks be to God.

### **TEACHER'S REFLECTION**

Think about ways the children were able to relate their own life experiences to the story of Ruth's family. What did the children reveal about their families? What new appreciation do you have for a child's viewing of family relationships? In what ways can your class become like a family for the children?

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

The next session introduces David as a shepherd. Recall what you have heard about shepherds and about David's place in the biblical story.

# SHEPHERD

## SESSION 3

### YOUNG DAVID WAS A SHEPHERD

#### FOCUS

David was a shepherd. He worked with his father and brothers to care for the sheep. The children should be able to tell what a shepherd does.

#### GETTING READY

Shepherds and sheep are found throughout the Bible. Nomad shepherds lived in tents and moved frequently in order to find better pastures and protection for their flocks. Some wealthy sheep owners lived in towns and employed servants to drive flocks from pasture to pasture

The care of sheep was often entrusted to sons or daughters in a household. This happened in Jesse's family, which included eight sons. David, the youngest, received the shepherd's assignment. (See *1 Samuel 16-17*.)

In this session, concentrate on what it was like for David to care for the sheep. He needed a garment to wear in bad weather, a pouch in which to carry food, a "rod" to serve as a weapon in fighting off beasts, and a "staff" for guiding the sheep. He needed courage to face uncertain weather and the threat of predatory animals.

One day David was called from the fields to see a man named Samuel. Samuel was a prophet who had come to anoint David as the next king of the Hebrew people. David's family was surprised that the youngest son, who was only a shepherd, had been chosen by Samuel.

The Hebrew people of old thought of God as their Shepherd, caring for them and protecting them. Christians know Jesus as the Good Shepherd. Young learners can be comforted by the knowledge that God cares for them as a shepherd cares for sheep.

Heavenly Father, Shepherd of your people, we thank you for your servant David, who was faithful in the care and nurture of your flock; and we pray that, following his example and the teaching of his holy life, we may by your grace grow into the stature of the fullness of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Of a Pastor

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 248

#### TEACHING TIP

Children enjoy listening to someone tell a story. To enhance this

experience, the following ideas may help: Read the story to yourself several times so that you are familiar with the text. Encourage participation from the children by asking them to join in with sound effects or repeated phrases or appropriate facial expressions. Children may also act out the story. Puppets can be made to represent the characters by attaching cutout figures to straws or dowels. The figures may be used on a flannel board if fabric interfacing, felt, or sandpaper is glued to the backs.

### **GATHERING**

Display the picture from Poster No. 1 in the Teacher's Packet that shows the young David protecting the flock of sheep. Share a picture of your pet, a stuffed animal (sheep), or pictures of pets from magazines. Invite the children to talk about what they see in the pictures. Ask them if they care for animals at home. Share experiences with animals and pets.

When all are present, gather and say:

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

### **STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce the story by reading from the Bible. Gather in a circle, open the Bible, and let the children see where the reading is. Read *I Samuel 16:19b*:

“Send me your son David who is with the sheep.”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Children respond: Thanks be to God.

Prepare a short story based on *I Samuel 16:1-17:15*, focusing on David as a shepherd boy.

- David was the youngest of eight sons of Jesse. He grew to be strong and handsome. He was given the task of caring for his father's sheep.
- He liked being outdoors. He protected the sheep from danger. God helped him to save the sheep from lions and bears. (Show Poster No. 1 of David protecting his flock and describe the work of a shepherd.)
- One day David was called from the fields to his father's house. Samuel, a man who spoke for God, was there along with David's father and brothers.
- David was surprised when Samuel anointed him with oil. This was a sign that David would be a leader of God's people and would do great things.

(Remind the children to look at the story of David as a boy in the children's book *David*, pp. 2-5, when they go home.)

## **CREATING** (Time: 15 minutes)

### **Option 1. Soap Suds Sheep**

For each child, copy the sheep outline provided on Poster No. 3 in the Teacher's Packet. Attach the copies to sheets of sturdy paper or cardboard. Mix Ivory soap flakes and a small amount of water. Beat to a consistency of whipped cream. Place a spoonful of the mixture on each child's sheep. The children can spread the soapsuds to create fleece. Put aside to dry. If Ivory flakes are not available, use thick white finger-paint and stick pieces of cotton batting, cotton balls, or lint from the dryer to the wet paint.

### **Option 2. Shepherd Pictures**

Show children how to bend pipe cleaners into the shape of a shepherd's staff. Glue them onto individual sheets of construction paper. Children can draw David as the shepherd and glue cotton balls on their pictures for sheep.

## **GAME** (Time: 10 minutes)

Play a version of "Follow the Leader" called "Follow the Shepherd." Children take turns being David the shepherd, holding a small stick to represent the shepherd's staff. The other children pretend to be sheep, making "baa" sounds. The leader gathers the sheep and takes them to another place in the classroom.

## **DOING** (Time: 15 minutes)

Set up a table with real sheep wool, wool sweaters, wool yarn, and pictures of sheep. Pass the wool around for the children to touch. Talk about how we get wool from sheep, and how the wool becomes yarn for making sweaters.

## **WONDERING** (Time: 10 minutes)

David was very young when he was a shepherd. Wonder about being outdoors all day long. Sleeping outside at night. Being able to play with the sheep. What would you think about?

## **MUSIC** (Time: 10 minutes)

Sing or say "The King of love my shepherd is" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 645; *We Sing of God*, 97). Introduce the following motions:

The King of love my shepherd is, (*make a crown with hands above head*)

whose goodness faileth never; (*spread arms out in front*)

I nothing lack (*shake head*)

If I am his, (*point to self*)

And he is mine forever. (*spread out arms*)

Play the tape *Children Sing!* as the children enter the classroom and engage in the other activities. The music will be familiar to them when it is time to

sing.

### **CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Shepherds take care of their sheep. Families take care of their children. Families and children take care of their pets. Talk about people who take care of us. Ask the children: Who takes care of you at home? Who takes care of you when your parents are not there? What are some of the things they do to help you? Do you take care of anyone? Who takes care of us at church? Who takes care of your pets? How do you help?

### **TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 3 has a picture of the shepherd David protecting the sheep, a Scripture verse, a poem, and a note for parents. Remind the children to take their cards home, share them with their families, and keep them in a safe place.

### **SAYING GOODBYE**

Say the following prayer of thanksgiving. Add any line that seems appropriate.

Thank you, God, for David the shepherd.  
Thank you for people who care for others.  
(*Pray for any concerns the children may express.*)  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle and say:  
Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.  
Children: Thanks be to God.

### **TEACHER'S REFLECTION**

Young children are egocentric, but they often show great compassion for others. What evidence did you see in this session of children's care for one another? A word of support from adults can encourage empathy in children.

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

The next session focuses on the story of David and Goliath, a classic encounter of the smallest one becoming the winner. What associations do you have with this story? Think about these themes: good over evil; weakness over strength; small over large. How is God present in this story?

# SHEPHERD

## SESSION 4

### DAVID DEFEATED A GIANT

#### FOCUS

David defeated Goliath. The children should be able to tell the story of David and Goliath in their own words.

#### GETTING READY

The story of David's defeat of Goliath has an important place in both Hebrew and Christian tradition. Children often like the story of the young shepherd boy, with his slingshot and smooth stones, bravely facing the huge giant and coming out triumphant.

The account is in *I Samuel 17:1-58*. The scene is set in the hill country between Israel and Philistia. The opposing armies of the Israelites and the Philistines took their positions facing each other across a valley (perhaps a river bed that was dry in the summer).

In Old Testament times, occasionally issues were settled by a contest between strong individuals. This story is an example of such a face-off. King Saul and the Israelites are discouraged by the odds against them, and none of the soldiers in Saul's army are willing to face the giant.

David, however, is strong in his resolve to face Goliath even though he is much smaller and not skilled in warfare. We have no sympathy for Goliath, who taunts the young shepherd with derisive remarks. We rejoice with David that God has enabled him to be the victor. The Philistines are defeated as a result.

The reason for the story in the record of David's life is to underscore God's presence in his life. Without the Lord's help, he could not have accomplished such a heroic task.

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us in safety to this new day: Preserve us with your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all we do, direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Collect for Grace

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 100

#### TEACHING TIP

Even though monsters and "things that go bump in the night" are fantasy, children sometimes believe them to be real. Children's fears may not be revealed in class discussion but may show up in nightmares or other signs of

distress at home. When sharing biblical stories such as the one about David and Goliath, focus on the heroic deed and God’s presence.

## **GATHERING**

Obtain a sheet of wrapping paper (or butcher paper) that is long enough to represent the height of a giant. Goliath was approximately 9.5 feet tall. More than likely, the classroom ceiling will be lower than that, so you may have to settle for a shorter giant. Mount the sheet on the classroom wall.

As the children arrive, ask each one to stand in front of the sheet and be measured. Make marks over the heads of the children, and write their names next to these. Ask whether anyone has seen a person as tall as the sheet of paper. Provide puzzles and books for children as well.

When all are present, gather the group and say:

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## **STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce the story by reading from the Bible. To do this, gather the children in a circle, open the Bible, and let the children see where the reading is. Read *I Samuel 17:50a* (adapted):

“So David . . . (defeated Goliath) with a sling and a stone.”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Children respond: Thanks be to God.

Display the picture of David and Goliath from Poster No. 3 in the Teacher’s Packet. Tell a short story, based on *I Samuel 17*, using your own words. David, a shepherd, was strong and brave. When his sheep were threatened by fierce beasts, David protected them.

- Three of David’s brothers were in the army. One of their enemies was a fierce, huge man named Goliath. He had a helmet, metal armor, and a big sword. Goliath was very mean, and all the soldiers were afraid of him. No one would fight Goliath.

- When David heard that everyone was afraid of Goliath, he told King Saul that he would fight Goliath. Everyone laughed at David because he was small, and Goliath was a giant. The king gave David his own helmet, metal armor, and sword, but they were too big. So David fought Goliath with only a sling and some stones.

- Goliath laughed when he saw that David was just a boy. But David said, “God will help me fight you.” So David killed Goliath with the sling and the stones. When enemy saw that Goliath was dead, they ran away.

(Remind children to look at the story of David and Goliath in the children’s book *David*, pp. 6-13, when they go home.)

## **CREATING** (Time: 15 minutes)

### **Option 1. David and Goliath**

Make a photocopy for each child of the David and Goliath figures provided on Poster No. 3 in the Teacher's Packet. Glue the figures to a piece of construction paper. Invite the children to use crayons and markers to fill in the background scene and to color the figures. The background could contain hills and the armies in the story. Review the story as the children work.

### **Option 2. King Saul's Helmet**

Obtain enough paper grocery bags for each class member. Make a helmet by cutting a bag along its seam two-thirds of the way from the opening. Where the slit ends, cut horizontally four or five inches in each direction. Fold back the flaps to form the opening of the helmet. Use markers, crayons, and paint to decorate the king's helmet.

## **GAME** (Time: 10 minutes)

Play "Sometimes I'm Tall." One child is chosen to be the one who guesses. The "guesser" stands away from the group, with eyes closed.

The group chants and acts out the following:

Sometimes I'm very, very small; (*children make smaller by crouching down*)

Sometimes I'm very, very tall. (*children stretch as tall as they can*)

Sometimes small, (*children bend down again*)

Sometimes tall. (*children stretch as tall as they can*)

Guess what I am now? (*children choose to be small or tall*)

Without turning around, the guesser calls out small or tall. If the guess is correct, the guesser joins the group and chooses another child to take a turn at guessing.

## **DOING** (Time: 15 minutes)

Help the children to dress up like shepherds in David's time, using costumes of robes and cloth headpieces. Suggest that they role-play scenes from David's life as a shepherd, and as the brave youth who faced Goliath.

## **WONDERING** (Time: 10 minutes)

Wonder with the children about what it feels like to be very very tall and very very small. Wonder what it feels like to be scared. To feel safe again.

## **MUSIC** (Time: 10 minutes)

Sing again "The King of love my shepherd is" (*The Hymnal 1982, 645; We Sing of God, 97*). Repeat the motions introduced in Session 3. Listen to the tape *Children Sing!*

## **CONVERSATION** (Time: 10 minutes)

David was a very young person, and he did something very hard and

frightening when he faced Goliath. David knew that God was with him. Talk with the children about times when they may have done something that was very hard (like the action of a grown-up). Examples: Caring for the house when a parent was at home sick; going on an urgent errand; making a phone call to deliver a message.

### **TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 4 has a picture of David and Goliath, a Scripture verse, a prayer, and a note to parents. Remind the children to take their card home, show it to their families, and keep it safe to look at again.

### **SAYING GOODBYE**

Say the following prayer of thanksgiving. Add any line that seems appropriate.

Thank you, God, for being with David.  
Thank you for hearing our prayers.  
(*Pray for any concerns the children may have.*)  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle and say:  
Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.  
Children: Thanks be to God.

### **TEACHER'S REFLECTION**

Reflect on how the children reacted to the story of David and Goliath. Had they heard it before? What details seemed to capture their interest? Do the class members think of David as a heroic figure?

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

The focus of the next session is David's love for music. Take time to notice the effect that music has in your own life. How does it make you feel? Are there special feelings you associate with certain music?

# SHEPHERD

## SESSION 5

### DAVID LOVED MUSIC

#### FOCUS

David played the harp (lyre). The children should be able to tell that a lyre is a type of harp played long ago among God's people.

#### GETTING READY

In this session, the children will be helped to think about David as musician. He is sometimes called "the patron saint of Hebrew musicians."

Our knowledge of music among the people of God is limited, since we lack written evidence of how the singing and accompaniment actually sounded. We do know about three general classes of instruments: stringed (called psaltery, lute, and lyre); piped (trumpet and horn); percussion (hand drums and cymbals).

It is appropriate to imagine with the children that David carried a portable lyre (made of wood with about six strings). He tended his sheep and had time to compose his own music. His music might have expressed the thoughts of a young shepherd who loved God and all that God had made. He would have used his lyre to accompany his songs.

Offering praise to God with instruments and voice has been a vital part of both Jewish and Christian tradition. Musicians in Israel stood next to kings and priests and were honored for their talent. It would be difficult for us to conceive of worship in our congregations without music that expresses our feelings for God.

Hallelujah!

How good it is to sing praises to our God!

how pleasant it is to honor him with praise!

The Lord rebuilds Jerusalem;

he gathers the exiles of Israel.

He heals the brokenhearted

and binds up their wounds.

He counts the number of the stars

and calls them all by their names.

Great is our Lord and mighty in power;

there is no limit to his wisdom.

The Lord lifts up the lowly,

but casts the wicked to the ground.

Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving;  
make music to our God upon the harp.

Psalm 147:1-7

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 804

### **TEACHING TIP**

Young children benefit from the freedom to make choices. One way to accomplish this in a church school class is to set up learning centers. A few activities can be prepared on different tables or in different areas of the room—all available at the same time. (Consider the Creating, Doing, and Wondering in this session.) The children can choose where to go, and may move about among the choices. Some areas will need more supervision than others.

### **GATHERING**

Display the picture of a lyre found on Poster No. 1 in the Teacher's Packet. Play some instrumental music in the background and ask the children to listen for the different instruments. Provide books and crayons and paper.

When all have arrived, gather the children and say:

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### **STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce the story by reading from the Bible. Gather in a circle, open the Bible, and let the children see where the reading is. Read *I Samuel 16:23b*:

“ . . . David took the lyre and played it with his hand; . . . ”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Children respond: Thanks be to God.

Compose a short story, including details from Session 3 about David as a shepherd.

- As he watched his sheep, David had much time to think and pray. He loved music, and he carried with him his lyre—an instrument like a small hand held harp. Show the children the picture of a lyre on Poster No. 1 in the Teacher's Packet.

- David was able to make lovely sounds that must have been soothing to the sheep. Use your imagination to describe how the stars, the changing seasons, and the presence of the grazing sheep would inspire David's musical praise to God.

- David also faced storms and wild animals that threatened the sheep. His music might have also shown how he trusted God to take care of him.

- Even though David was alone with the sheep, God was with him.

(Remind the children to read about David's music in the children's book

David, page 2, when they go home.)

### **CREATING** (Time: 15 minutes)

#### **Option 1. Musical Shakers**

Attaching two paper plates together can make a simple rhythm instrument. Provide a pair of plates for each child. Invite the children to decorate the plates in their own way, with crayons, markers, or stickers. When these are finished, place a small amount of pebbles, beads, sand, or other material in one of each child's plates. Use tape or glue to attach the other plate, forming a shaker.

#### **Option 2. Lyres**

Children can make small stringed instruments by stretching rubber bands around shallow boxes (traveler-size tissue boxes, cardboard jewelry boxes, individual cereal boxes, or half-pint milk cartons). Children can decorate their "lyres" with markers or crayons before putting on the rubber bands.

### **GAME**

(Time: 10 minutes)

Invite the children to join in a musical scarf dance. Distribute colorful scarves, fabric scraps, or ribbons. Play a recording of a folk dance or other lively music or use the tape *Children Sing!* The children can dance about to the music, waving their scarves. (Talk about how David and the shepherds may have danced to music.)

### **DOING** (Time: 15 minutes)

Invite someone who plays an instrument to come to your class. Ask the guest musician to play a short selection. If possible, allow the children to come near so that they can see and possibly touch the instrument. Another idea would be to visit the organ in the church. Arrange for the organist to play some music for the class, perhaps one of the hymns they have been learning.

### **WONDERING** (Time: 10 minutes)

Wonder what it would be like to sit outside. Wonder about the different sounds that you might hear (bird singing, wolves howling, sheep bleating). Wonder about how music is created. Ask: How does music make you feel?

### **MUSIC** (Time: 10 minutes)

Introduce "The King of love my shepherd is" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 645; *We Sing of God*, 97). If children have made shakers or lyres, they may want to play them as they sing this hymn. They may wish to use their instruments while listening to the tape *Children Sing!*

### **CONVERSATION** (Time: 10 minutes)

Music was a part of David's daily life. He made music by singing or playing his harp. Talk with the children about music in their lives. Ask questions like: When do you hear music? What kinds of music do you hear? Do you know anyone who plays an instrument or sings? What kinds of musical instruments have you seen being played? What do people do with the instruments to make music (strum, beat, blow)? In what ways do you like to make music?

### **TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 5 has a picture of a lyre, a Scripture verse, a prayer, and a note for parents. Remind the children to take the card home, show it to their families, and keep it in a safe place.

### **SAYING GOODBYE**

Say the following prayer of thanksgiving. Add any line that seems appropriate.

Thank you, God, for music  
To show our love and praise for you.  
*(Pray for special concerns the children may have.)*  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle and say:  
Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.  
Children: Thanks be to God.

### **TEACHER'S REFLECTION**

How did the children respond to the music in this session? Children have individual likes and dislikes. Some children are comfortable moving and creating. Others talk, while some watch quietly. Reflect on the children's reactions to music. Did it promote their involvement?

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

The focus for the next session is on David's writing of psalms. Find time to read through some of the psalms. Be aware of your reaction to the words and the feelings that are expressed. Think about how these feelings can be shared with the children during the next session.

# SHEPHERD

## SESSION 6

### DAVID WROTE PSALMS

#### FOCUS

David wrote psalms (songs) about God, about the great deeds of God, and about every human feeling. Psalms, by David and others, may be found in the Bible, the Prayer Book, and the Hymnal. The children should be able to say that we still say and sing psalms that David wrote.

#### GETTING READY

Having linked the images of David as shepherd and David as musician, we turn in this session to David as a composer of psalms. The psalter of *The Book of Common Prayer* is a collection of songs that have belonged to the people of God for thousands of years. Jesus learned the psalms when he was a child.

The word “psalm” is from a Greek verb that means “to sing along with a stringed instrument.” The Hebrews called the 150 psalms we have in our Bible and Prayer Book a “Book of Praises.” They were divided into five shorter books that close with a song of praise that we call a doxology.

Many of the psalms are attributed to David, but scholars disagree about which ones can be safely said to be his work. For young children, it is sufficient that David composed prayers praising God and set them to music. Just as he found words for singing his love of God, so we can say and sing our own praises.

Come, let us sing to the Lord;  
let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.  
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving  
and raise a loud shout to him with psalms.  
Venite (Psalm 95:1-7)  
*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 82

#### TEACHING TIP

When teaching a new hymn or song, it is helpful to have the tune playing (on tape or record) in the background as children are engaged in other activities. Use the tapes recorded for this age-level and year. When the time comes to introduce the words, the accompaniment will already be familiar. Young children learn the words best by “echoing” them. Say a phrase and then invite the class members to repeat it. Do this several times for each phrase.

## **GATHERING**

Beforehand, post a large sheet of blank white paper at a height the children can reach easily. As they arrive, invite them to use crayons to draw pictures that represent something they would like to tell God. (Suggest thanksgiving, praise, or prayers for help.) Puzzles and books should be available as an alternative activity.

When all are present, gather the group and say:

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## **STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce the story by reading from the Bible. Gather in a circle, open the Bible, and let the children see where the reading is. Read *Psalms 23:1a*:

“The Lord is my shepherd, . . .”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Children respond: Thanks be to God.

Display the picture of David with the lyre from Poster No. 2 in the Teacher’s Packet. Tell a story about David as a writer of psalms.

- David, shepherd and musician, wrote songs to praise God. While he was watching the sheep, he would think about the things he could see—the sky, the sun and clouds, the moon and stars, the beautiful pastures of green grass with streams of clear water, and the trees. God made all these things, David thought, and so he wrote songs about what God had done.

- David also thought about times when he felt great joy or times when he felt lonely and sad. He wrote songs about all these feelings and sang them to God.

- The songs David wrote are called “psalms.” (Invite the children to say the word together.) David wrote psalms all of his life.

- Show the class members where the psalms are located in the Bible. Explain that they are in *The Book of Common Prayer*, and show them where they are found. Some of the psalms are the very ones David wrote. We say them aloud, we say them silently to ourselves, and we sing them in many different ways.

(Remind the children to look at the story of David and the psalms in the children’s book *David*, pages 2 and 14, when they go home.)

## **CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

### **Option 1. Illustrating Psalm 23**

Ask the children to draw what they hear in Psalm 23. Provide sheets of paper, glue, crayons or markers, ribbons, stickers, and other creative bits. Read the psalm aloud, from *The Book of Common Prayer*. (Three versions are given on pages 476, 477, and 612.) Invite the class members to illustrate

something they heard. Talk about David, who wrote this psalm (song).

### **Option 2. Psalm Books**

For each class member, make a photocopy of the psalm verses printed on Poster No. 3 in the Teacher's Packet (*Psalm 9:1; Psalm 23:1; Psalm 24:1; and Psalm 100:2*). Provide each child with a sheet of construction paper (to serve as a cover) and a sheet of plain white paper. These are to be folded in half and stapled in the center. Attach the photocopies to the four sides of the white paper. The children can decorate the covers and margins as they wish. As they work, read the psalm verses aloud several times.

### **GAME** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Chant or sing the following verses, to the tune of the children's song, "Here we go 'round the mulberry bush":

This is the way we watch the sheep, watch the sheep, watch the sheep;

This is the way we watch the sheep, so early in the morning.

Continue in the same pattern, with verses such as:

This is the way we play our harps . . . .

This is the way we sing to God . . . .

This is the way young David sang . . .

### **DOING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Arrange to take the children to the choir space in your church (or some other setting related to the practice of music). Invite the choir director or experienced musician to direct the group in singing the first lines of a psalm (possibly *Psalm 95*, the Venite). Talk with the children about the Church's use of psalms to praise God.

### **WONDERING** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

If possible, take the children outdoors where they can look at the sky, plants, and the whole world of nature around them. (Pictures of outdoor scenes could be used as a substitute.) Wonder about all the things they see and feel when they are outdoors. Why did these things make David want to write psalms (songs) to God? If you wrote a psalm, what would you say to God?

### **MUSIC** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Sing "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 380, stanza 3; *We Sing of God*, 61, music only). These words are known as a Doxology, and the first lines are associated with the tradition of singing psalms of praise to God. This music is also found on the tape, *Children Sing!*

### **CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Talk about the songs David wrote. Choose one or more simple lines from psalms and read them aloud, inviting the children to listen for what David said about God. (Examples: *Psalm 23:1; Psalm 24:1; Psalm 27:1*.) Ask:

What are your favorite songs about God? Where did you learn them? Do you ever make up songs? What are they about?

### **TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 6 has a picture of David with a lyre, a Scripture verse, the Doxology, and a note to parents. Remind the children to take home their cards, share them with their families, and keep them in a safe place.

### **SAYING GOODBYE**

Say the following prayer of thanksgiving. Add any line that seems appropriate.

Thank you, God, for David's psalms  
That we still have today.  
*(Pray for any concerns the children may express.)*  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle and say:  
Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.  
Children: Thanks be to God.

### **TEACHER'S REFLECTION**

Consider the children's reactions to the words "psalm" and "song," in connection with this session on David as writer of psalms. Do they have an opportunity to hear, say, or sing psalms in their worship?

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

The next session focuses on the story of David the King. His kingship lasted for many years. Think about the key role David plays in biblical history. Reflect on the many stories you have heard about King David. Consider the importance of kings, particularly in biblical history.

# SHEPHERD

## SESSION 7

### DAVID BECAME KING

#### FOCUS

David became a ruler over God’s people. God promised that David would care for the people as a shepherd cares for sheep. The children should be able to say that David became a great king.

#### GETTING READY

In this unit, we began our stories of David by establishing his lineage as a descendant of Ruth and son of Jesse. Then we considered his boyhood as a shepherd, his bravery in battle, his role as a musician, and his authorship of psalms. Now we turn to his kingship. David became king at age 30, and his reign over Judah and Israel would last forty years.

After David had succeeded King Saul, he ruled as king of Judah for a little over seven years. In that time, a series of violent events occurred among the people of Israel. Both Abner and Ishbosheth (sons of Saul) were assassinated against David’s will. Afterward, all the tribes of Israel approached David and asked him to become their king.

The tribal leaders described how David had led the people in battle under King Saul and had brought them safely to their homes again. He had been like a shepherd leading his sheep out and returning them safely to the fold. The leaders continued, “. . . the Lord said to you (David), ‘You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince over Israel.’” (*II Samuel 5:2b*)

David agreed to their request, and he ruled both Judah and Israel from his home in Jerusalem for thirty-three years.

For young children, it may be a surprise that the shepherd boy David became a king. They can picture him as a good ruler who is faithful to God and who protects God’s people.

Heavenly Father, in your Word you have given us a vision of that holy City to which the nations of the world bring their glory: Behold and visit, we pray, the cities of the earth. Renew the ties of mutual regard which form our civic life. Send us honest and able leaders. Enable us to eliminate poverty, prejudice, and oppression, that peace may prevail with righteousness, and justice with order, and that men and women from different cultures and with differing talents may find with one another the fulfillment of their humanity; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For Cities

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 825

### **TEACHING TIP**

When young children play games with rules, they ignore the rules in order to continue participating. Games that eliminate players (thus encouraging competition) are inappropriate for preschoolers. Adapt traditional games to insure that everyone can participate throughout the play.

### **GATHERING**

Beforehand, gather pictures and storybooks of queens and kings (from any time in history, or from children's stories). As the children arrive, direct their attention to the pictures. Ask: How do we know when someone is a king or queen? Invite them to share their favorite stories of kings and queens.

When all are present, gather the group and say:

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### **STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce the story by reading from the Bible. Gather in a circle, open the Bible, and let the children see where the reading is. Read *II Samuel 5:3* (adapted):

“So all the elders of Israel . . . anointed David king over Israel.”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Children respond: Thanks be to God.

Display the picture of David as king on Poster No. 2 in the Teacher's Packet. In your own words, prepare a story of how David became king from *II Samuel 5:1-5*.

- Begin by describing David as the son of Jesse and as a shepherd.
- When David was young, he had been surprised when Samuel, a man who spoke for God, anointed him with oil. The Spirit of the Lord came upon David at that time. David would be a leader of the Hebrew people and would do great things.
- Years went by. David tended his sheep, wrote psalms, and defeated the giant Goliath.
- When he grew up, David fought in the army of King Saul. The people loved him. When King Saul died, the people wanted David to be their king. God told King David to take care of the people the way he took care of the sheep. David was king for a long, long time.

(Remind the children to look at the children's book *David* when they go home.)

### **CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

### **Option 1. Jeweled Crowns**

From tagboard, cut a simple crown shape for each child. Cover each crown with foil. Use colored glue, or make your own by adding drops of food coloring to regular glue and stirring with a toothpick. (Children can do this themselves.) Using toothpicks, put drops of the colored glue on the foil-covered crowns; when it dries, it will look like translucent jewels.

### **Option 2. Paper Crowns**

From construction paper, cut a crown shape for each child. Invite the group to use markers or crayons to decorate the crowns. As they work, talk with them about David as a king.

### **GAME**

*(Time: 10 minutes)*

Play “King David Says,” following these adapted rules for the traditional game, “Simon Says”:

Choose two leaders called “kings.” Divide the group in half and direct each sub-group to gather in different areas of the room. The kings perform actions, saying “King David says, ‘Do this (demonstrate an action, such as patting one’s head, jumping up and down, etc.)’” Sometimes the leader does the action without the words, “King David says.” If the children repeat the action, instead of being eliminated they simply leave to join another group and continue playing.

### **DOING** *(Time: 15 minutes)*

Using robes, towels, old jewels and crowns, improvised scepters, and other props, encourage the children to role-play kings and queens. March around the room in a royal procession.

### **WONDERING** *(Time: 10 minutes)*

David was the King of Israel for many years. He was a good king. Wonder what it would be like to be a king or a queen. Wonder about all the people who would look to you for important things. Wonder about God as king.

### **MUSIC** *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Sing again “Praise God, from whom all blessings flow” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 380, stanza 3; *We Sing of God*, 61, music only). Invite the children to make up motions to accompany this Doxology. Use the tape *Children Sing!* to help introduce this music.

### **CONVERSATION** *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Talk about people we know who are leaders in the community (mayors, principals, school directors, clergy of the church). Leaders ask God for help so that they can do their best for others. In church, we pray that God will be with our leaders. (See Prayers of the People, *The Book of Common Prayer*,

pp. 383-393. You may want to choose a line to share with the children.)

Ask: Who are some people you know who are leaders? What do they do?  
How do they help people?

### **TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 7 has a picture of King David, a verse from Scripture, a poem, and a note to parents. Remind students to take the card home, show it to their families, and keep it in a safe place.

### **SAYING GOODBYE**

Say the following prayer. Add any line that seems appropriate.

Thank you, God, for King David.  
Be with our leaders today.  
*(Pray for the needs of the children.)*  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle and say:

Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.  
Children: Thanks be to God.

### **TEACHER'S REFLECTION**

Knowing the story of David is necessary to understand the biblical story. His name appears again and again. For example, we hear about Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, the "city of David." As you reflect on the children's experiences in the sessions of this unit, do they see the importance of David?

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

The next session focuses on Solomon, son of David and builder of the temple at Jerusalem. The full story of Solomon is found in *I Kings: 2-6*. Pay particular attention to the description of the temple Solomon built (in chapter. 6). Think about the stories of Solomon that you have heard. What is most important about his role in the life of the Hebrew people?

# SHEPHERD

## SESSION 8

### *SOLOMON BUILT A TEMPLE*

#### **FOCUS**

Solomon, son of David, built a temple for God. The children should be able to say why we remember Solomon.

#### **GETTING READY**

When David died, he was succeeded by his favorite son, Solomon. Solomon was king for about the same number of years as his father. His reign was marked by peace and remarkable programs of trade and building.

By reading the *Books of Kings* and *Chronicles*, we can piece together a description of the many achievements of Solomon. He was open to new ideas and acquired great knowledge and wisdom. Solomon took a personal hand in planning the elaborate structures that surrounded the temple area in Jerusalem. He consulted artists and builders from neighboring nations for the design of the Temple itself, which became the greatest religious shrine in the land.

Solomon's sermon and prayer at the dedication of the Temple are found in *I Kings* 8:22-66. He declared his fervent devotion for God.

For young children, only these main facts are important: Solomon was the son of David and followed his father as king. He was very wise. Solomon built a temple, a house of the Lord, that was very large and beautiful. People could go there to pray and give thanks to God.

Lord Jesus Christ, make this a temple of your presence and a house of prayer. Be always near us when we seek you in this place. Draw us to you, when we come alone and when we come with others, to find comfort and wisdom, to be supported and strengthened, to rejoice and give thanks. May it be here, Lord Christ, that we are made one with you and with one another, so that our lives are sustained and sanctified for your service.

Consecration of a Church

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 568

#### **TEACHING TIP**

Collections of pictures, gathered from a wide variety of sources (including old magazines and newspapers, calendars, and greeting cards), can be an invaluable aid in teaching. They are good conversation starters and provide a variety of concrete images. To begin a collection for the class, be on the

lookout for potentially useful pictures. Save these in large envelopes or file folders.

## **GATHERING**

Collect pictures of churches and synagogues. Display them for the class members to examine as they arrive. Talk with the children about the many kinds of buildings used for worship. Allow individuals to choose favorites and tape them to a large sheet of paper mounted on the wall. If you have an extra set of Take-Home-Cards, you can display them and ask the children to tell the stories that they represent to each other.

When everyone is present, gather the children in a circle and say:

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## **STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce the story by reading from the Bible. Gather in a circle, open the Bible, and let the children see where the reading is. Read *I Kings 5:5a*:

“So I intend to build a house for the name of the Lord my God, . . .”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Children respond: Thanks be to God.

Display the scene showing Solomon’s temple on Poster No. 2 in the Teacher’s Packet.

Prepare a story you can tell in your own words, based on selected passages from *I Kings*, especially—*Kings 2:1-4, 10-12; 5:1-7; 6:1-14*.

- Begin by sharing the fact that David had a son named Solomon.
- When David died, Solomon was made king.
- King David had wanted to build a “house for the Lord,” but he was too busy fighting his enemies. God promised David that his son would be the one to build this special house.
  - When Solomon was made king, there was peace at last. Solomon could build a house for God because he had no wars to fight. Solomon said, “Praise God for giving us peace. Let the wood be cut. I will build the Lord a house!”
  - So the work began. The building was large and beautiful. It was called a temple. At last it was finished. People could come to pray to God and give thanks for God’s goodness.

## **CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

### **Option 1. Paper Temples**

Cut sheets of construction paper into rectangles, squares, and triangles. Give each child a blank sheet of paper on which to “build” a temple (place of worship) from the shapes. Use glue sticks for attaching the buildings to the

background.

### **Option 2. Clay Temples**

Give each child chunks of clay or playdough, along with craft sticks. Invite the group to make their own temple structures. Older children could choose to prepare several clay blocks and then assemble them into a building. As the class members work, talk with them about the temple Solomon built.

### **GAME** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Pantomime the building of a temple. The children will follow your lead. Using gestures and body movements, pretend to do the following: “march” out to get the wood; “chop” down trees; “saw” the trees into pieces; “polish” the wood (rub the palm of the hands together, listen to the sound); “hammer” the wood; “measure” each piece (thumb in front, squint the eyes); “carry the stones” (bend over, arms together, pretend to lift). Older children may suggest other actions.

### **DOING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Gather toy building materials: plastic interlocking bricks, wooden blocks, cardboard boxes, tinker toys, and play logs. Encourage the children to work together and construct a single large temple (place of worship).

### **WONDERING** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Wonder aloud about the temple Solomon built for the people of God. What was it like to worship there? Think about where you like to worship God. Wonder about how many other people have worshipped there. Wonder about other places where God is present.

### **MUSIC** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Sing again “Praise God, from whom all blessings flow” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 380, stanza 3; *We Sing of God*, 61, music only). Encourage the children to think of this Doxology as a song of celebration for finishing a house of worship. Sing with joy.

### **CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Take a walk around your church, inside and out. Look at the way it is built. Measure the walls and floors, using hands and feet as “rulers.” Notice materials and colors. Ask: What is this building made of? How was it built? Talk about things found in churches that are not in any other buildings.

Share observations about any buildings the children may have seen as they were under construction (houses, barns, stores, hotels, offices).

### **TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 8 has a picture of Solomon’s temple, a Scripture verse, a prayer, and

a note to parents. Remind the children to take the cards home, share them with their families, and keep them in a safe place.

### **SAYING GOODBYE**

Say the following prayer of thanksgiving. Add any line that seems appropriate.

Thank you, God, for Solomon's temple  
And for our church (*insert name*).  
(*Pray for the concerns of the children.*)  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle and say:  
Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.  
Children: Thanks be to God.

### **TEACHER'S REFLECTION**

As the children thought about the temple Solomon built, did they express an understanding that churches are different from other kinds of buildings? Do they see the importance of a place where people gather for prayer? What details do they associate with churches?

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

Session 9 of this unit has been prepared for use at a time near All Saints' Day. Use it on the date that is most compatible with your congregation's worship and Christian education schedule. Think about your favorite saint and why that person is an inspiration to you.

# **SHEPHERD**

## **SESSION 9**

### **ALL GOD’S PEOPLE ARE SAINTS**

#### **FOCUS**

On All Saints’ Day we remember all the followers of God (including the figures in Hebrew history). The children should be able to say that all of God’s people are saints.

#### **GETTING READY**

All Saints’ Day is one of the seven principal feasts of the Church. It may be observed either on the fixed date designated for its observance, November 1, or on the Sunday following that date. The theme of the day focuses on the generations of men and women who have faithfully served God and the Church in years past as well as those who are now living as members of Christ’s Body and living witnesses in the world.

Saints are found in every walk of life today, as they have been over the years. All baptized people are in the company of those who are honored at this time. They are children of God and saints of the Church. Through baptism, we are ordained to the ministry of God’s people in the world. Our job as saints is to love God with all our hearts so that others may come to know Jesus Christ.

The “communion of saints” transcends both time and space. The celebration of All Saints’ Day is a time for the Church to honor all those who have shown their devotion to God. We offer up their names in thanksgiving and remembrance because they have shared their faith with others.

The children will be reminded of the saints they have learned about in this unit as well as those they meet in their daily lives.

O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you, bring the nations into your fold, pour out your Spirit upon all flesh, and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.  
*Amen.*

For the Mission of the Church  
*The Book of Common Prayer, p. 257*

#### **TEACHING TIP**

It is important to help young children feel that they are included in the life

of the congregation. Use parish newsletters, bulletins, or special brochures and newsletters to keep parents and other members of the church informed about what is happening in your class. Use bulletin boards, hallways, or the surfaces of doors, to display the children's work.

## **GATHERING**

As the children arrive, give each child a name tag and some star stickers. Talk with the children about God's people and how they are all called saints of God. Encourage children to decorate their name tags with stars. We sometimes say there are as many saints of God as there are stars in the sky.

Gather the group and say:

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## **STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce the story by reading from the Bible. Gather in a circle, open the Bible, and let the children see where the reading is. Read *Psalms 30: 4a*:

“Sing praises to the Lord, O you his faithful ones, . . .”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Children respond: Thanks be to God.

Display the pictures of Old Testament figures that have been used in your teaching of this unit on Posters No. 1 and 2 in the Teacher's Packet. Add to the display the poster showing modern “saints” on Poster No. 2 in the Teacher's Packet.

Introduce All Saints' Day by using the following information:

- On this day we remember all the people who have loved and praised the Lord. They are people like Naomi, Ruth, Obed, David, and Solomon. They are people like us.
- The saints are people of long ago and people who are alive now who obey and worship God. They are mothers and fathers, grandparents, shepherds, musicians, writers, heroes, fire fighters, police, kings and queens, teachers, boys and girls—all kinds of people everywhere.
- Thousands and millions of people are saints. There are so many, they are like the stars in the sky. We find saints of God in all kinds of places, too.
- On All Saints' Day we celebrate all those who are God's people. We sing, and we praise God for all the saints.

## **CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

### **Option 1. Saints of God**

Gather pictures of people of all ages from all over the world. Give each child a piece of construction paper, glue, and an assortment of pictures. (Older children may be able to select and clip their own pictures.) Invite the children to create their own composite pictures of God's people. Talk with the group about saints. They can be found everywhere.

### **Option 2. Saints' Bracelets**

Ahead of time, cut strips of construction paper, approximately 2 by 6 inches. Provide stars, markers, and glitter to decorate the strips. Make bracelets by stapling, taping, or gluing the ends together.

### **GAME**

(Time: 10 minutes)

Join hands in a circle. To the tune of "Farmer in the Dell," the children sing the following words:

We are saints of God, we are saints of God,  
Hosanna, hosanna, we are saints of God.

Choose a child to stand in the center while the others sing:

(*Child's name*) is a saint, (*child's name*) is a saint,  
Hosanna, hosanna, (*child's name*) is a saint.

The first child returns to the circle, and another goes to the center. Continue until all children have had a turn.

### **DOING** (Time: 15 minutes)

Collect props and costumes from the stories used thus far in this unit (such as a baby doll, clothing for grown-ups, shepherds' headdresses, musical instruments, crowns, carpentry tools and blocks). Encourage the children to reenact the stories as they remember them.

### **WONDERING** (Time: 10 minutes)

Wonder about God's saints of long ago and today. Use statements like these:

I wonder who were saints (God's people) long ago . . . .

I wonder where we can find saints (God's people) today . . . .

I wonder what saints do . . . .

I wonder about All Saints' Day celebrations . . . .

### **MUSIC** (Time: 10 minutes)

Introduce the hymn, "I sing a song of the saints of God" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 293; *We Sing of God*, 49). Use the music from the tape *Children Sing!*

Focus on the third stanza, and sing it several times. Encourage the children to act out the words with simple hand motions or gestures.

### **CONVERSATION** (Time: 10 minutes)

Ask the children to look again at the posters from the Teacher's Packet that were used with the Story (above). Point to each picture, asking the

children to tell what they remember about it. Be ready to help with the review. Sum up by saying that all the people of God in these stories are saints.

Ask the children to imagine they are the “modern” saints. What would they do? How would they be saints of God?

### **TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 9 has a modern scene showing Christians (today’s saints), a Scripture verse, a hymn stanza, and a note to parents. Remind the children to take home their cards, show them to their families, and keep them in a safe place. They now have their first set of nine cards to remember the stories of the Bible.

### **SAYING GOODBYE**

Say the following prayer of thanksgiving. Add the names of the children if desired.

Thank you, God, for all the saints,  
And for your people everywhere.  
*(Pray for the concerns of the children.)*  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle and say:

Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.

Children: Thanks be to God.

### **TEACHER’S REFLECTION**

When the session ends, spend some time reflecting on earlier sessions in this unit. Which activities captured the attention of the children? In what ways have the children grown? Have you observed changes in their attention spans and skills?

Note: The following letter is for teachers and parents of children in the preschool/  
kindergarten level of church school. These pages can be reproduced or  
used as a model for a personalized letter

## Episcopal Children's Curriculum

### Unit II. JESUS: TEACHER

Dear Parents and Guardians,

This unit introduces young children to the life and work of Jesus, from his birth to his death and resurrection. Sessions 1-4 have been prepared for use during Advent and at Christmas. Their focus is on *angels* who bear messages from God. Indeed, God is surrounded by a heavenly court of angels and archangels. The next two sessions celebrate two Epiphany events—the Star of Bethlehem that guided the Wise Men and the naming of the baby Jesus. The Feasts of the Nativity and of Epiphany, celebrated early in the Church Year, are a time of wonder and joy for families. The final three sessions are about the work of Jesus, the man who is our teacher.

We encourage you to talk about the lessons with your child. Do this by reading together the children's book, *Love One Another*, which begins with the story of the shepherd who visited the baby Jesus in Bethlehem and continues with a narrative about Jesus' ministry as a teacher.

Scripture passages and excerpts from *The Book of Common Prayer* that the children encounter are cited below. Look up the passages and excerpts with your child and show them where they are in the Bible and Prayer Book. The Take-Home Cards given to learners each week feature illustrations and text related to session themes. They also include useful instructions for parents. These collectible cards, which are 5 by 8 inches, can be displayed in a photo album, kept in an oversized recipe box, or used in any way you find helpful.

Following are summaries of the unit's sessions:

**Session 1: “Angels Bear Messages”** introduces the idea that angels are God's messengers to God's people. They surprise us with good news. (The Great Thanksgiving, *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 362)

**Session 2: “The Angel Gabriel Visited Mary”** tells how the angel Gabriel was sent from the presence of God to give the good news to Mary that she would have a child named Jesus. (*Luke 1:26*)

**Session 3: “Angels Came to Shepherds”** is the story at the time of Jesus' birth, when an angel appeared to shepherds in the night to tell them that they would find the Child in Bethlehem, lying in a manger. (*Luke 2:9*)

**Session 4: “The Babe Lying in a Manger”** focuses on the shepherds who witnessed a host of angels singing praise to God. They hastened to see the Holy Family and shared their amazing good news with others. (*Luke 2:20*)

**Session 5: “The Wise Men Followed a Star”** helps us all to delight once again in the Star of Bethlehem that guided the Magi to the place where the newborn King was to be found. (*Matthew 2:10-11a*)

**Session 6: “Jesus Is Given His Name”** emphasizes the name “Jesus” that was given to Mary's baby—just as the angel had said. (*Luke 2:21b*)

**Session 7: “Jesus Taught Many People”** helps the children understand that Jesus, the baby at Christmas, grew up to be a man. He traveled to many places and taught many people and shared with them the good news of God's love. (*Matthew 9:35a*)

**Session 8: “Jesus Teaches Us to Trust God”** is based on Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount (*Matthew 6:25-33*) in which he assures his hearers that God can be trusted to provide what we need. (*Matthew 6:26a*)

**Session 9: “Jesus Teaches Us to Love Others”** centers on Jesus' commandment that we love one another just as God has first loved us. The love of God flows through us to our neighbors when we reach out to them with understanding and compassion. (*John 15:12*)

Yours in Christ,  
Church School Teachers

# JESUS: TEACHER

## SESSION 1

### ANGELS BEAR MESSAGES

#### FOCUS

Angels are God’s messengers to God’s people. They surprise us with good news. The children should be able to tell what angels do.

#### GETTING READY

In the Bible, the Hebrew and Greek words that are translated “angel” mean “messenger.” The biblical references to these divine messengers have led to a large body of literature called angelology (the study of angels).

One of the first stories about angels in the Bible occurs in *Genesis 28* while Jacob was dreaming. In his dream, he saw a ladder set upon earth, reaching into heaven. On the ladder were angels of God ascending and descending. Then God appeared to Jacob. He promised that Jacob’s offspring would be as numerous as the dust of the earth. God also promised to be with Jacob and go with him wherever he went.

In Advent, we recall once again the visits of angels to Zechariah, father of John the Baptist, and to Mary and Joseph. It is appropriate remember that God sends angels to bring special news.

Just as people are not meant to live alone but in community, God is not alone but surrounded by a great company of angels. We are reminded of this at each Eucharist when we join “our voices with angels and archangels” in the singing of the “Holy, holy, holy” (Sanctus).

Young children have no difficulty in contemplating the reality of angels. Encourage them to share their ideas.

Everlasting God, you have ordained and constituted in a wonderful order the ministries of angels and mortals: Mercifully grant that, as your holy angels always serve and worship you in heaven, so by your appointment they may help and defend us here on earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Of the Holy Angels  
*The Book of Common Prayer, p. 251*

#### TEACHING TIP

In our culture, the image of Santa Claus is a magical figure. We fantasize about him, and children get heavily involved in imagining what he says and how he will visit their homes. The powerful image of the angels of God is

somehow obscured, and we forget their significance. The church school classroom is the ideal place to acknowledge the reality of angels so that young children will begin to associate them with the Church's celebration of Christmas.

## **GATHERING**

Begin each session during Advent with an activity centered around an Advent wreath. During the gathering time for this first session, children may help put together parts of the wreath. Purchase or make a circular form. Use a styrofoam ring, or place four mounds of clay for candles on a sturdy plate. Put the candles in place. Add small pieces of seasonal greens around the base. Invite the children to help with these preparations. If the class is large, you may wish to make more than one wreath, so that all of the children can participate.

When everyone is present, gather around the wreath and as the first candle is lit, introduce the following, which will be used each week during this season.

Teacher: Lord have mercy.

Children: Christ Have mercy.

Teacher: Lord have mercy.

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 356

Since the Advent candles will be lit at the beginning of each session, the greens in the wreath may need to be replenished each week. (Extinguish the candle when the activity is concluded. The candle should be relit just before the Saying Goodbye activity.)

## **STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce this storytime by reading from *The Book of Common Prayer*. Gather in a circle, open the Prayer Book, and let the children see where the reading is. Read aloud:

“. . . joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, . . .” (BCP, 362).

Use the following outline for sharing about angels:

- Open the Bible to *Genesis*, and note that stories about angels began long ago. Angels are special creatures of God.
- Tell the story of Jacob's ladder. One night, long ago, Jacob fell asleep. In a dream, he saw a ladder that went from earth high into the sky. On the ladder were angels going up and down.
- Then God spoke to Jacob. He promised that Jacob would have many ancestors. God also promised that he would be with Jacob wherever he went.
  
- Angels sometimes bring good news or warn about danger.

- Sometimes angels comfort people having a hard time.
  - Show the picture of the carved angel on Poster No. 4 in the Teacher’s Packer. Let the children react to the picture.
  - Many people today believe angels are real, even when we cannot see them.
  - We remember angels especially at Christmas.
- (If the children already have the children’s book *At the Manger*—from Shell Year, Preschool/Kindergarten, Episcopal Children’s Curriculum—encourage them to look at it at home. It includes the angel’s visit to Mary, mother of Jesus.)

**CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

**Option 1. Angel Halos**

Provide each child with a paper plate with a circle cut from the middle. Give the children glue, glitter, sequins, and markers. Encourage the children to decorate their own halos. As they work, talk with them about angels.

**Option 2. Paper Cup Angels**

Supply each child with a plain paper cup to serve as the body of an angel. Use the pattern on Poster No. 6 in the Teacher’s Packet to cut out two white paper wings for each angel. Turn the cup upside down, and attach the wings to the cup with glue. For each angel, wad a sheet of white paper into a round ball to form a head. Glue it to the bottom of the cup. The children may add details with other materials.

**GAME** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Play “News from an Angel,” modeled on the traditional drop-the-handkerchief game. The class members form a circle. One player moves on the outside of the circle as the Angel. He/she chooses someone and whispers, “Good news!” That person leaves the circle and follows the Angel. At the end of the circuit, the two change places. The new Angel circles the group and whispers to another class member. The game continues as long as interest or time will permit.

**DOING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Provide sheets and halos. (These could be made from Christmas tree garland cut into smaller pieces and tied in a circle). Let the children take turns dressing as angels and sharing good news with one another.

**WONDERING** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Wonder about angels. Say: I wonder how many angels there are. I wonder where angels live. I wonder what it’s like to be an angel. I wonder how angels fly. I wonder what it would be like to see God.

**MUSIC** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce “Angels, from the realms of glory” (*The Hymnal* 1982, 93, stanza 1) using the audio tape for Cross year, *Children Sing!* Use the following movements as the children sing:

Angels, from the realms of glory, (*raise arms and make a halo with hands*)

wing your flight o’er all the earth; (*flap arms up and down*)

ye, who sang creation’s story, (*extend arms out to each side*)

now proclaim Messiah’s birth: (*form cradle with arms and rock*)

come and worship, (*make a calling motion*)

come and worship, (*repeat motion from above*)

worship Christ, the newborn King. (*fold hands in prayer*)

### **CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Angels are represented in a variety of ways in both classic and contemporary art. If possible, show the children pictures or three-dimensional figures of angels.

Talk with the class members about other angels they have seen (on greeting cards, ornaments, public displays, and in books). Invite the children to share any stories they may have heard about angels.

### **TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 10 has an angel picture, a phrase from *The Book of Common Prayer*, a poem, and a note to parents. Remind the children to take the card home, show it to their families, and keep it in a safe place.

### **SAYING GOODBYE**

If necessary, relight the candle on the Advent wreath for the closing. Gather the children around the wreath and say this prayer:

Thank you, God, for angels  
And for the messages they bring.  
(*Pray for the needs of the children.*)  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.

Children: Thanks be to God.

### **TEACHER’S REFLECTION**

The excitement of this season will mount as time goes by. Are the children already anticipating the coming of Christmas? What was their response to the discussion of angels in this session? What questions were raised that could be addressed later?

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

The next session focuses on the angel Gabriel’s visit to Mary, with the

announcement that she would give birth to Jesus. Think about the way this important event has affected your life. You may wish to read The Magnificat, from *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 91.

# JESUS: TEACHER

## SESSION 2

### THE ANGEL GABRIEL VISITED MARY

#### FOCUS

An angel named Gabriel gave Mary the good news that she would have a baby named Jesus. The children should be able to tell about Gabriel's visit to Mary and how it made her feel.

#### GETTING READY

In the New Testament, only two angels have names: Gabriel, who announced God's message to the Virgin Mary, and Michael, an archangel mentioned in the *Book of Jude* and in *Revelation*. These angels represent the power of God. Both appeared earlier in the Old Testament in the *Book of Daniel*.

Gabriel announced God's plan to enter the human world as an infant, the baby Jesus. Gabriel's visit is called the "Annunciation" and is celebrated by the Church on March 25.

Mary's response to Gabriel's was humble and submissive. She said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." (*Luke 1:38*) Mary would await faithfully whatever lay in store for her as the child's mother.

Mary also felt great joy as she awaited Jesus' birth. During her visit to her cousin Elizabeth, who was also expecting a child, she sang a song of praise to God. Her words of praise in *Luke 2:46-55* are now called the "Magnificat."

The story of Gabriel's visit to Mary can be very appealing to young children.

Pour your grace into our hearts, O Lord, that we who have known the incarnation of your Son Jesus Christ, announced by an angel to the Virgin Mary, may by his cross and passion be brought to the glory of his resurrection; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

The Annunciation

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 240

#### TEACHING TIP

The season of Advent is the Church's opportunity to tell children the Christmas story. In the contemporary world, they are bombarded with songs, stories, and music that detract from the true meaning of Christmas. Use this

time with the children to enjoy a simple telling of the Gospel accounts of Mary, Joseph, and the birth of Jesus.

## **GATHERING**

Invite everyone to help place fresh greens around the class Advent wreath. For the second Sunday of Advent, light two candles. Provide a variety of books that relate to the biblical story of Christmas and angels such as *The Littlest Angel*. Invite the children to draw angles using crayons and paper. Display the finished drawings.

Teacher: Lord have mercy.

Children: Christ have mercy.

Teacher: Lord have mercy.

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 356

Extinguish the candles when the Gathering activity is concluded. The candles should be relit just before the Saying Goodbye activity.

## **STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce the story by reading from the Bible. Gather in a circle, open the Bible, and let the children see where the reading is. Read *Luke 1:26*:

“In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God . . . .”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Children respond: Thanks be to God.

In telling the story of the Annunciation found in *Luke 1*, create a dialogue between Gabriel, the angel, and Mary. Use the following outline:

- Gabriel was an angel who was very close to God. God sent Gabriel to bring news to a young woman named Mary.
- Mary loved and worshiped God. When the angel came to give her the news, Mary was frightened at first. But Gabriel said, “Do not be afraid, Mary. God is with you. You will have a baby boy. His name will be Jesus.”
- It was hard for Mary to believe what Gabriel said. She asked, “How can this be?”
- Then Gabriel talked with Mary. He told her about the great power of God. Nothing is impossible for God.
- Mary said to Gabriel, “Here I am. I will serve God. Let it be as you have told me.”
- Later, Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem to pay their taxes. When they arrived they could not find a place to stay. But Joseph found a place for Mary among the animals. While they were there, Jesus was born. They wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger.

## **CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

### **Option 1. Announcement Scenes**

Give each child a folded sheet of construction paper, markers, and crayons. Invite the children to create pictures that show Gabriel telling Mary about the coming birth of Jesus. When they have finished their pictures, help them to write an announcement of the good news on the inside of the folded sheet. (Teachers may suggest lines such as “Jesus will be born,” “Mary will have a baby,” or “Christmas is coming.” Encourage children to use their own words for the announcement. Younger class members can dictate the words to the teacher.)

### **Option 2. Angel Gabriel Stencil Pictures**

From the pattern on Poster No. 6 in the Teacher’s Packet, make several cardboard angel stencils. Give out sheets of white background paper. Help each class member to create a stenciled form of the angel Gabriel, surrounded by streaks of light. To make an angel, place a stencil in the center of each child’s sheet, in turn. (Removable tape loops could be used to hold the stencil in place.) Using yellow or gold paint, make a series of brush strokes around all the edges of the stencil.

## **GAME** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Do an echo pantomime using words from a traditional American spiritual, “Mary Had A Baby.” The teacher reads the words and demonstrates the accompanying motions. The children respond by repeating the words and motions together.

Mary had a baby. (*rock the baby in arms*)

Where did she lay him? (*turn head from side to side, looking for a place*)

She laid him in a manger. (*lay baby down*)

What did she name him? (*questioning action, such as shrugged shoulders*)

Mary named him Jesus. (*join hands*)

## **DOING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Invite the children to take turns role-playing the story of Gabriel’s visit to Mary. Simple costumes and props will enrich the activity. Encourage spoken dialogue.

## **WONDERING** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

The angel Gabriel, who is sometimes called an archangel, is one of two angels whose names appear in the New Testament. (The other is Michael.) Gabriel was entrusted with the greatest news of all—that Mary would have a son named Jesus. Wonder about this special messenger, using statements like:

I wonder what Gabriel looked like.

I wonder how Gabriel sounded.

I wonder how Gabriel moved.  
I wonder what other messages Gabriel gives.

**MUSIC** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Sing again the first stanza of “Angels, from the realms of glory” (*The Hymnal 1982, 93*).

If possible, give the children simple musical instruments to dance with. Bells, blocks of wood, a pot, and a stick, will add to the simple joy of dancing and clapping. Play the tape *Children Sing!* while they work on other activities.

**CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Talk with the children about Mary and her visit with Gabriel. How did Mary feel when the angel first appeared? How would you have felt if you had been there? What did the angel tell Mary? What made Mary believe the angel? What did Mary say to the angel?

The angel told Mary that she had been chosen. Have you ever been chosen to do something important? How did you feel about doing it? What did you say?

**TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 11 has a picture of Mary and the angel Gabriel, a Scripture verse, a prayer, and a note to parents. Remind the children to take the card home, show it to their parents, and keep it in a safe place.

**SAYING GOODBYE**

If necessary, relight the candle on the Advent wreath for the closing. Gather the children around the wreath and say this prayer:

Thank you, God, for the angel Gabriel  
And for God’s message to Mary.  
(*Pray for the concerns of the children.*)  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Extinguish the lighted candle. Close by saying:

Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.

Children: Thanks be to God.

**TEACHER’S REFLECTION**

How would you describe the children’s response to the encounter between Mary and the angel Gabriel? What effect did the story have? Are the class members focusing on Christ’s birth as the true reason for the celebration of Christmas?

**LOOKING AHEAD**

The next session is about on the appearance of an angel who came to the shepherds on the night Christ was born. Reflect on your own spiritual journey during Advent.

# JESUS: TEACHER

## SESSION 3

### ANGELS CAME TO SHEPHERDS

#### FOCUS

An angel appeared to shepherds, told them not to be afraid, and shared the good news that Jesus was born. A host of angels appeared, praising God. The children should be able to tell the story of the angels and the shepherds.

#### GETTING READY

Imagine a scene in the countryside. It was a cold night, and the Palestinian shepherds were watching over their flocks. Suddenly the quiet night was filled with light and sound. Then an angel from God came to them with a message.

At first the shepherds were terrified. But the angel reassured them, saying, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people.” Then the angel told the shepherds that the long-awaited Messiah had been born in Bethlehem. They would find him lying in a manger, wrapped in bands of cloth. Then a whole choir of angels appeared suddenly to sing “Glory to God in the highest!”

As adults who have celebrated the Nativity all our lives, we may forget how important it is for young children to hear the whole story of the birth of Jesus. The scenes inspire strong images that call all of us into the presence of God. The story of the shepherds gives us the opportunity to share the wonder and awe of the birth of Jesus.

Almighty God, you have given your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and to be born this day of a pure virgin: Grant that we, who have been born again and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with you and the same Spirit be honor and glory, now and forever. *Amen.*

The Nativity of Our Lord: Christmas Day

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 213

#### TEACHING TIP

The singing of Christmas hymns is generally avoided in worship during Advent so that the festal nature of the Nativity will be truly celebrated in the Church during the Twelve Days of Christmas. But young children need to learn the hymns and carols in order to join in. In their church school classes, it is appropriate to introduce, sing, and memorize Christmas hymns during the weeks of December.

## **GATHERING**

As the children arrive, put fresh greens around the candles of the Advent wreath. Light three candles. Provide each child a piece of paper and three rectangles of colored paper to represent candles. Use three purple or two purple and one pink. Let the children glue the candles to the paper and light them by adding gold stars to the top. When everyone is present, say:

Teacher: Lord have mercy.

Children: Christ have mercy.

Teacher: Lord have mercy.

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 356

Extinguish the candles when the Gathering activity is concluded and relight them just before the Saying Goodbye activity.

## **STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce the story by reading from the Bible. Gather in a circle, open the Bible, and let the children see where the reading is. Read *Luke 2:9*:

“And an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them . . . .”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Children respond: Thanks be to God.

Tell the story in your own words, emphasizing the following from *Luke 2:8-14*:

- Simple shepherds were watching over their flocks so that no harm would come to them in the night. They did not expect anything unusual to happen.
- Suddenly, God’s angel appeared to the shepherds. Light was all around them. They knew that God was there. They were frightened!
- Understanding the shepherds’ fears, the angel said, “Be not afraid.”
- Then the angel shared good news from God: “A savior has been born in Bethlehem. You will find him wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.”
- When the angel finished delivering the message, the whole sky was filled with many angels. They were praising God and singing, “Glory to God in the highest!”

## **CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

### **Option 1. Angels in the Sky**

Give the children sheets of paper suitable for finger-painting. (A recipe for making your own finger-paint has been included on Poster No. 6 in the Teacher’s Packet.) Encourage the children to think about the angels of God

that visited the shepherds. Drop a dollop of paint on each child's sheet. Expect the children to experiment, creating several pictures on the same piece of paper. When the final paintings are finished, put them aside to dry.

### **Option 2. Doily Angels**

Give each child the following: a sheet of blue construction paper; a white triangle, and a circle cut from typing paper, and two wedges cut from a lace paper doily (white, gold, or silver). Glue the triangle and the circle to the blue paper to form the body and the head of an angel. Doily wedges are then attached to form wings. Children may wish to add other angels to their background sheets if time and materials permit.

### **GAME** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Play an action game, using the following rhyme:

Angels go up, up, up, (*reach up high with arms, wiggling fingers*)

Angels go down, down, down. (*bend down and touch the floor*)

Angels go backward and forward, (*move back and forth*)

And around and around. (*turn around several times*)

Repeat as long as the children are interested. Older children may wish to add other actions.

### **DOING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Gather pieces of cloth, rope, circles of tinsel, and foil-covered cardboard angel wings. Children may choose to be shepherds and angels for role-playing the story.

### **WONDERING** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Wonder aloud about the sky filled with angels on the night Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Ask questions like the following:

How would the sky look at night? How would the angels' voices sound? How would the shepherds feel seeing and hearing the angels?

### **MUSIC** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Sing stanza 2 of "Angels, from the realms of glory" (*The Hymnal 1982, 93*). Clap out the rhythm. Sing along with the tape *Children Sing!* while clapping.

### **CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

The angels brought good news to the shepherds. Talk with the children about what it is like to receive good news. Ask: What do we mean by "good news"? When has someone told you good news?

How did you get the news? (From a member of your family? from a friend? from radio or television?) Were you surprised by the good news? Why, or why not?

The shepherds brought good news from God. What did they say?

### **TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 12 has a picture of the shepherds and the angels, a Scripture verse, a hymn stanza, and a note to parents. Remind the children to take the card home, show it to their parents, and keep it in a safe place.

### **SAYING GOODBYE**

Relight the candle on the Advent wreath for the closing. Gather around the wreath and say this prayer:

Thank you, God, for the good news the angels  
Brought to the shepherds.  
(*Pray for the needs of the children.*)  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Extinguish the lighted candle on the Advent wreath. Close by saying:

Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.

Children: Thanks be to God.

### **TEACHER'S REFLECTION**

At the heart of the Nativity story are Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus. But it would be hard to describe the great event of Jesus' birth without including the appearance of angels to the shepherds. In what ways do the children recognize the importance of angels and shepherds in their drawings, singing, and other activities?

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

The next session retells the story of Jesus' birth. Think back over all the Christmases of your life. How has the season of our Lord's Nativity affected you? What has remained the same? What has been different through the years? How have you come to understand the story in new ways?

# JESUS: TEACHER

## SESSION 4

### *THE BABE LYING IN A MANGER*

#### **FOCUS**

The shepherds who heard the angels' message went to Bethlehem to see if the story was true. They found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. The children should be able to tell the story of Jesus' birth in their own words.

#### **GETTING READY**

The sudden nighttime announcement of the Savior's birth by the angels caused the shepherds who heard it to rush at once to Bethlehem. They wanted to "see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." (See *Luke 2:15b.*) The shepherds found Mary and Joseph, and baby Jesus lying in a manger. The message from the angels was true.

After they saw the Christ Child with their own eyes, the shepherds began telling others the good news that had come to them. Everyone who heard their story was amazed at what the shepherds said. (*Luke 2:18*) The shepherds were the first evangelists who shared good news from God with others.

When Mary heard them talking, she "treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart." (*Luke 2:19*) The shepherds returned to the fields praising God for all that they had seen and heard.

It is natural for young children to eagerly tell others about their own experiences. They will find the shepherds' story credible and exciting.

O God, you have caused this holy night to shine with the brightness of true Light: Grant that we, who have known the mystery of that Light on earth, may also enjoy him perfectly in heaven; where with you and the Holy Spirit he lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. *Amen.*

The Nativity of Our Lord: Christmas Day

*The Book of Common Prayer, p. 212*

#### **TEACHING TIP**

To help young children to tell the Nativity story in their own words, a crèche and set of figures they can handle are especially helpful. As children move the figures and place them, the story becomes real. Talk with parents of the class members, and encourage them to provide an inexpensive Nativity set that children can use at home.

## **GATHERING**

As the children arrive, renew the greens around the Advent wreath and light four candles. The four weeks of Advent, of waiting and preparation, are almost over. Place a cardboard box in a special place in the room. After the children have helped with the Advent wreath, invite them to help make the box into a manger for the baby Jesus. They can decorate the box, place strips of yellow construction paper for hay, and place stuffed animals around the box. When all have gathered, say:

Teacher: Lord have mercy.

Children: Christ have mercy.

Teacher: Lord have mercy.

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 356

If your Advent wreath has a fifth, white Christ Candle, talk about how that candle is to be lit on Christmas Day. Extinguish the candles on the wreath, until the Saying Goodbye activity.

## **STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce the story by reading from the Bible. Gather in a circle, open the Bible, and let the children see where the reading is. Read *Luke 2:20*:

“And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, . . .”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Children respond: Thanks be to God.

In your own words, tell the story of the shepherds’ visit to Bethlehem, using the outline below:

- Begin by recalling the appearance of the angels to the shepherds in the field during the night. The sky had been filled with angels, light, and the sounds of praise.

- The angels told the shepherds to go to Bethlehem where they would find Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus. The shepherds hurried to see if there really was a baby in a manger.

- When they arrived in Bethlehem, it was just as the angels had said. Mary and Joseph had traveled there in order to register to pay their taxes. They could not find any rooms to stay in. The innkeeper had given them a place to stay in a stable where animals lived. There Jesus was born. His mother wrapped him in cloths. (The figures of a Nativity crèche could be used to dramatize what the shepherds saw.)

- The shepherds rejoiced at the good news. When they saw that the angels’ story was really true, they began to tell everyone what had happened.

(Remind the children to look at the children’s book *Love One Another* pp. 2-3, at home with their families.)

## **CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

### **Option 1. Napkin Angels**

Prepare angel figures from thick white paper napkins, one for each child. Unfold one napkin and roll it into a ball. Place a second unfolded napkin over the ball, and secure it with a rubber band to form the head and body of the angel. A third napkin can be folded into a thin strip and slipped under the rubber band; spread it out to form the angel's wings.

Give an angel to each class member. Invite the children to decorate their angels and add eyes, noses, and mouths using fine-tip markers. (If desired, use glue and glitter to make the wings sparkle.)

### **Option 2. Playdough Mangers**

Give each child a piece of brown or tan playdough or clay. The class members can make their own mangers for the baby Jesus. The finished mangers could be placed on paper plates, with straw added. (Small figures of the baby may be made from paper and placed in the mangers.)

## **GAME** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Play a movement game called "Angels and Shepherds." Divide the group into two teams, identifying one as the angels and the other as the shepherds. The teams form lines facing each other.

The shepherds begin by saying, "Angel, angel, say to me, 'Who is it I should see?'" (As they say the words, the shepherds make large circles with their arms, ending with hands over brows peering at the angels.)

The angels respond, "Shepherd, shepherd, we do sing, 'Go to see Christ the Lord, our newborn King!'" (As they say these words, the angels make megaphones with their hands, point to Bethlehem, and then pretend to rock the baby Jesus in their arms.)

The groups exchange places and repeat the words and movements as long as interest holds.

## **DOING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Provide a baby doll, blanket, a box (perhaps the one from the Gathering) to serve as a manger, and pieces of cloth to be used as simple costumes. Role-play the Nativity story, allowing the children to change roles several times. Some children may prefer to tell the story using the class Nativity set. Play Christmas carols in the background.

## **WONDERING** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Display Poster No. 4 the Nativity from the Teacher's Packet. Also collect several books, cards, and pictures that contain scenes of the Nativity. Encourage the children to study the poster and to look at the other pictures. Wonder about what they have seen. Use statements and questions like these:

I wonder about the different pictures. I wonder about Mary and Joseph. I wonder about the baby Jesus. I wonder about the animals, the shepherds, and the angels. I wonder what it would be like to be born in a stable.

I wonder what Christmas is like all over the world.

**MUSIC** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Use the first stanzas of “Hark! the herald angels sing” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 87), and “Away in a manger” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 101; *We Sing of God*, 20). They can be found on the tape, *Children Sing!*

If time permits, use simple bells, blocks, and rhythm sticks to stage a parade. Urge the children to let the world know that Jesus Christ is born!

**CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Talk with the children about plans for the Christmas season in your congregation, and in their individual homes. What are some of the special things that will happen? What will we see in the church that tells us Christ is born? What will the music be like? On Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, what will happen at church? at home? Who will be there for the celebration? What will people do or eat?

**TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 13 has a picture of the Nativity, a Scripture verse, a hymn stanza, and a note to parents. Remind the children that they can retell the Christmas story to their families with this card. After they finish telling the story, they should put the card in a safe place with all their other cards.

**SAYING GOODBYE**

If necessary, relight the candle on the Advent wreath for the closing. Gather the children around the wreath, and say this prayer:

Thank you, God, for Jesus’ birth  
And for joy at Christmas time.  
(*Pray for any needs the children may express.*)  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Extinguish the lighted candle on the Advent wreath. Close by saying:

Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.  
Children: Thanks be to God.

**TEACHER’S REFLECTION**

For many adults the story of Jesus’ birth may seem an old and familiar one. How can we, as teachers, view the story as fresh and new every year? Many young children of the preschool/kindergarten age level are learning the details for the first time. From your observations, are the class members able

to tell about the Nativity in their own way, including the roles of angels and shepherds?

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

The next session has been prepared for use in the week nearest the Feast of Epiphany, January 6. It focuses on the Wise Men, who followed a Star to find the baby Jesus. How has your own journey through Advent and Christmas led to a renewed encounter with the Savior born in Bethlehem?

# JESUS: TEACHER

## SESSION 5

### THE WISE MEN FOLLOWED A STAR

#### FOCUS

The Wise Men saw a star in the east and followed it to find the baby Jesus with Mary and Joseph. The children should be able to tell about the Star of Bethlehem.

#### GETTING READY

In Luke's story of Jesus' birth, the first persons to worship the baby Jesus were poor Jewish shepherds. But in Matthew's account, the first worshipers were non-Jewish visitors from afar—the Magi (*Matthew 2*).

The Magi who came asking where the king was to be born were astrologers. A popular belief at the time of Jesus' birth was that a star was added to the sky for every new baby. They had seen Jesus' star and had been guided by it on their journey.

Epiphany refers primarily to the “showing forth” of the glory of God; it is a season of brightness and light to reflect the coming of the Savior.

Earlier in history, Epiphany was the time for gift-giving rather than the days of Christmas. This practice was inspired by the story of the Wise Men's gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the baby Jesus.

Preschool/kindergarten children are fascinated by the story of the Wise Men. The bright star that led them to Jesus and the presentation of the valuable gifts offer concrete images that make the story come alive.

Because in the mystery of the Word made flesh, you have caused a new light to shine in our hearts, to give the knowledge of your glory in the face of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface for Epiphany

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 378

#### TEACHING TIP

When Epiphany arrives, the excitement of the Christmas season comes to an end. Some children may still feel the emotional highs and will be eager to continue talking about Christmas. Others may be feeling sad because it is all over. For many different reasons, this Epiphany session may be the first time some children have been in church school since early December. They may need help in returning to normal routines. Plan for activities that will help children to relax and settle in again.

## **GATHERING**

As the children arrive, gather to replenish the greens around the Advent wreath. Notice the four candles have all been lit, and each one is probably burned quite far down by now. The waiting is over, and we have celebrated the birth of Jesus. Prepare to light a Christ Candle. On some Advent wreaths, this is the center, white candle. If your wreath does not have a center candle, put a white one there. Provide an opportunity for children to make a Christ Candle, by gluing gold and silver stars to the metal casing around a tea candle. When all have arrived say:

Teacher: Lord have mercy.

Children: Christ have mercy.

Teacher: Lord have mercy.

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 356

Extinguish the candle when the Gathering activity is concluded.

## **STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce the story by reading from the Bible. Gather in a circle, open the Bible, and let the children see where the reading is. Read *Matthew 2:10-11a*:

“When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother . . .”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Children respond: Thanks be to God.

In telling the story, include the following:

- The Wise Men lived in lands far from the place where Jesus was born.
- They saw a bright star in the sky and knew they should follow it. They traveled a long way on their camels over miles of desert sand and rocks and hills.
- The star led them to Bethlehem, the place where Jesus was born. When they found Jesus they were filled with joy.
- The Wise Men entered the house where Mary and the baby Jesus were and fell on their knees to worship Jesus.
- The Wise Men had brought precious gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh from their homes far away. These were very special gifts of great value. They opened their treasure chests and gave their gifts to Jesus.

## **CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

### **Option 1. Stars of Bethlehem**

For each child, cut out a star approximately 8 inches across. (It is best to use stiff paper.) Provide the children with glue, glitter, beads, sequins, or other shiny materials to decorate their stars. Add streamers. When finished,

attach the stars to small dowels, balloon sticks, or large craft sticks. The children may hold the stars aloft and pretend that they are in the sky.

### **Option 2. Treasure Boxes**

Give each child a large sheet of construction paper and three small rectangles of brown paper. Ask the children to glue the brown pieces to the larger sheets, and to decorate the “treasure boxes” with crayons and markers. Pieces of ribbon may be used to add more decorations to the boxes.

### **GAME** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Play “Star Tag.” Cut stars from paper and attach them around the room at different heights and in different places. Make sure there will be at least one star for each class member. The children march around the room until the leader says, “See the star!” The children hurry to find a star and touch it. When all have found stars, the children return to the march until the leader calls out again. Repeat as long as interest holds.

### **DOING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Role-play the visit of the Magi. Provide crowns, necklaces, and capes for the three Magi. Allow both boys and girls to take turns being the kings and the Holy Family. Additional parts could be other travelers and the camels.

### **WONDERING** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Wonder about the stars. Darken the room. Sit quietly in a group, then lie back on the floor and look up at the ceiling. Shine a flashlight through a colander to produce stars on the ceiling. Wonder about all the stars in the sky.

Using a small focused flashlight to produce a bright star in the midst of the others, ask the children to follow the light with their eyes. Wonder what it would be like to see a bright star in the sky that appeared suddenly.

### **MUSIC** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Sing “We three kings of Orient are” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 128; *We Sing of God*, 27). The children could sing this hymn while participating in the role-play (Doing). If the group made Bethlehem Stars (Creating, Option 1), the children may hold them aloft as they sing. This hymn is also found on the tape, *Children Sing!*

### **CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

When the Wise Men found the Christ Child, they gave him very special gifts. Ask the children: What are some gifts you think are special? If you had been with the Wise Men, what would you have brought to the baby Jesus?

### **TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 14 has a picture of the Wise Men, a Scripture verse, a hymn stanza,

and a note to parents. Remind the children to take home the card, share the story of the Wise Men with their families, and keep the card in a safe place.

### **SAYING GOODBYE**

Let the Christ Candle be lighted for the closing. Gather for the closing prayer:

Thank you, God, for the Star of Bethlehem  
And for the Wise Men who followed it.  
*(Pray for the needs of the children.)*  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Extinguish the lighted candle. Hold hands in a circle and say:  
Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.  
Children: Thanks be to God.

### **TEACHER'S REFLECTION**

Review the sessions on Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany themes. Have the class members begun to sense the significance of the story of Christ's coming for them and for the whole Church? Were the children able to tell the stories surrounding the birth of Jesus in their own words?

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

The next session focuses on the giving of the name Jesus to Mary's and Joseph's child. Although the Church celebrates Holy Name Day on January 1, the story is frequently overlooked as we move on to Epiphany. It is an important transition for children as we move into Jesus' life after Bethlehem. Think about how Jesus Christ has affected your own life.

# JESUS: TEACHER

## SESSION 6

### JESUS IS GIVEN HIS NAME

#### FOCUS

Eight days after the birth of Mary's child, he was given the name Jesus as the angel had directed. The children should be able to tell how and when Jesus got his name, and say that Jesus has another name (Christ).

#### GETTING READY

In Hebrew, the name "Joshua" means "God will save," or "the salvation of the Lord." Joshua, successor to Moses, was the one who led the people of God across the Jordan River into the Promised Land. His name was common among the Hebrew people. In later centuries, it was written "Jeshua." "Jesus" is the Greek version of the same name, similar to the Hebrew Jeshua.

In *Matthew 1:21*, the choice of this name for the Son of God is explained: "for he will save his people from their sins." The early leaders of the Church drew a parallel between Joshua's leading the people across the Jordan River and Jesus' leading his followers through the waters of baptism for the forgiveness of sin.

Mary and Joseph officially named their baby after his birth. He was circumcised, in accordance to Jewish law, and called "Jesus," the name given to Mary and Joseph by the angel. (*Luke 2:21*)

The word "Christ" is Greek for "anointed one" and is the equivalent of "Messiah," which is the Hebrew word for the one whom God would send as Savior of the world. Even in New Testament times, the name Christ came to be used as another proper name for Jesus; he is called both Christ Jesus and Jesus Christ.

These details about Jesus' names will hold little interest for young children. They do delight, however, in hearing about the naming of the newborn Jesus.

Eternal Father, you gave to your incarnate Son the holy name of Jesus to be the sign of our salvation: Plant in every heart, we pray, the love of him who is the Savior of the world, our Lord Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, in glory everlasting. *Amen.*

The Holy Name

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 213

#### TEACHING TIP

Names are very important to children. This session provides an

opportunity to focus on the first event of the child Jesus' life—the giving of his name. Plan to capitalize on two dimensions: the significance of Jesus' name for all of us, and the great value we place on the name of each person. Place an emphasis on each of the children's names, and encourage them to use one another's names often.

## **GATHERING**

Display the picture of Jesus found on Poster No. 5 in the Teacher's Packet. Beneath the picture, in block letters, is the name J E S U S. Use the second set of letters (below the dotted line) to prepare a set of five cards with the individual letters on them. As the children arrive, invite them to match the letters on the cards with the letters on the poster, one by one. Use removable tape to attach the matching cards to the poster. These can be removed and replaced several times. (If the poster is laminated or covered in plastic adhesive paper, it is easier to remove and replace the letters easily.) Talk with the children about this picture of Jesus. Some children may describe other pictures of Jesus they have seen.

When all are present, say:

Teacher: Lord have mercy.

Children: Christ have mercy.

Teacher: Lord have mercy.

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 356

## **STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce the story by reading from the Bible. Gather the children in a circle, open the Bible, and let the children see where the reading is. Read *Luke 2:21b*:

“. . . he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel . . . .”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Children respond: Thanks be to God.

Compose a story that includes the following:

- Before Jesus was born, an angel appeared to Mary and told her that she would have a child. The angel said, “You shall call him Jesus.”
- Joseph had a dream in which an angel told him the same thing: “You are to name the baby Jesus.”
- Everything happened just as Mary and Joseph were told. The child was born on Christmas Day in Bethlehem.
- In those days, children did not get their names right away. Eight days after Mary had her baby, it was time for the baby to receive his name. Joseph said, “His name is Jesus.” Mary nodded, for she had kept this name in her heart ever since the angel had spoken to her.
- When he was a boy, he was called Jesus. When he grew up to be a man,

everyone called him by his name, Jesus.

- Jesus has another name. He is also called Christ, the Son of God. When we pray and sing to God, we use the name of Jesus Christ.

(Remind the children to look at the children’s book *Love One Another*, pp. 2-3, at home with their families.)

## **CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

### **Option 1. Jesus Name Cards**

Give each child a piece of construction paper with the words “His name is” written across the top. In the center, in large letters, write JESUS. Give the children colored sand, fine fish gravel, glitter, or tiny pieces of torn paper. Trace the name in wet glue for each child. Some children may be able to do this by themselves. The children pinch a little material at a time and drop it over the glue. Shake off the excess over a newspaper or a container.

Note: Colored sand can be made by adding a few drops of food coloring to white sand. Shake until the color is evenly distributed.

### **Option 2. Name Pictures**

For each child, fold a piece of manila paper folded in half. Before the class meets, write the children’s names on the bottom left, and the name Jesus on the bottom right. Some children may want to write their own names. Provide crayons or markers for the children to draw pictures of themselves and pictures of Jesus above the names. As they work, talk with them about names.

## **GAME**

(*Time: 10 minutes*)

Play a name game. Sit in a circle. The children say their names in turn, and the group claps out each one—a clap for every syllable. A variation of the game for older children includes these steps: a name is said; the group claps syllables; a child then says one thing he/she likes; the group repeats the name and the item mentioned, clapping for each syllable of both. Example: David, turtles; Sarah, pizza. (Children may enjoy the challenge of going around the circle later and calling out what each class member said.)

## **DOING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Take a tour of the church building for a “Name Hunt.” Look especially for the names Jesus and Christ. Discover all the places where names of persons can be found: in the church office, perhaps on doors and desks; bulletin boards; memorial plaques, stained glass windows, and the like. Be aware of particular examples to be pointed out to the group, but allow freedom for children’s spontaneous discoveries.

## **WONDERING** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Wonder about the name of Jesus. People all over the world use his name

in their prayers and singing. Wonder about how Jesus' name sounds in different languages. Wonder about the sound of Jesus in a joyful song. Wonder about Jesus' name used in quiet prayer.

**MUSIC** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Sing the hymn, "When morning gilds the skies" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 427; *We Sing of God*, 72). The teacher may say or sing the first part of each line, and the children may join in singing the concluding phrase, "may Jesus Christ be praised!" If you wish, add simple hand motions to accompany the words (such as an upward sweep of the arms). The tape *Children Sing!* is helpful in learning the music.

**CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Talk about names in general: last names, first names, and names that have particular meanings. Some people are named for flowers or animals. Some are named for work (such as Weaver or Carpenter). Sometimes parents choose for their children the names of people from the Bible (such as Ruth or Michael, Rebecca or James). Depending on the children's interest, you may want to explore other aspects of names.

**TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 15 has a picture of Jesus, a Scripture verse, a poem, and a note to parents. Remind the children to take the card home, share it with their families, and keep it in a safe place.

**SAYING GOODBYE**

Gather the children for a final prayer. Add other lines that may seem appropriate:

Thank you, God, for the name of Jesus.  
Thank you for all our names.  
(*Pray for the needs of the children.*)  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle for the closing:

Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.  
Children: Thanks be to God.

**TEACHER'S REFLECTION**

The period following the celebrations of Christmas and Epiphany is a good time to reflect on whether the children have learned to think of Jesus as a personal friend. How well are they able to understand the story of his life? Do they sense that he is someone who is with them as they grow and learn?

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

The next session moves ahead to the work of Jesus as a man. He was a traveling teacher. He was called “rabbi,” which means teacher. When you think of Jesus’ teaching ministry, which stories and events from the New Testament come first to mind? How have these shaped your own life?

# JESUS: TEACHER

## SESSION 7

### JESUS TAUGHT MANY PEOPLE

#### FOCUS

Jesus was a traveling teacher. He instructed his disciples and taught large crowds. The children should be able to describe Jesus as a teacher.

#### GETTING READY

The word “teacher” raises a variety of responses. Some people have mixed feelings about teachers. Others think of their teachers as caring friends who made invaluable contributions to their growth. Few people are indifferent to the significant role teachers play in our society.

In the Scriptures, the act of teaching is fundamental. God is a teacher; the word “Torah” (for the first five books of the Bible) is best translated “the teachings of God.” When Jesus came among us, he took up the work of a teacher, also called a rabbi. The apostles and others in the early Church saw themselves as continuing the work of teaching that Jesus had begun.

Christians have come to recognize that everyone who is baptized has a teaching role to perform—sharing with others their experience of the living God. We teach partly just by being who we are in the world. But we also take on the role of teacher, as in a congregation’s programs of Christian education. It is important that we look to Jesus Christ as our example of a teacher.

Hear my teaching, O my people;  
incline your ears to the words of my mouth.  
I will open my mouth in a parable;  
I will declare the mysteries of ancient times.  
That which we have heard and known,  
and which our forefathers have told us,  
we will not hide from our children.  
We will recount to generations to come  
the praiseworthy deeds and the power of the Lord,  
and the wonderful works he has done.

Psalm 78:1-4

*The Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 694-695

#### TEACHING TIP

It is important for children to know that the church cares for each of them. As their teacher, find opportunities outside the classroom to show that you care for your students. Children are thrilled to receive personal notes or cards

from their teachers. Take-Home Cards can be used for this purpose. Phone calls during illnesses or after an absence are appreciated. Recognize and greet children when you see them in situations outside the church context. Include the children in your prayers.

## **GATHERING**

Ahead of time, obtain a large sheet of newsprint or butcher paper. Tape it to a wall or other display surface. Clip from magazines pictures of persons who serve in teaching roles: parents, adult neighbors, clergy persons, doctors, nurses, police and fire personnel, and others.

As the children arrive, invite each one to choose a picture to be taped to the large sheet. As the scene grows, talk with the children about the things we *learn* from all these people.

When everyone is present, say:

Teacher: Lord have mercy.

Children: Christ have mercy.

Teacher: Lord have mercy.

*The Book of Common Prayer, p. 356*

## **STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce the story by reading from the Bible. Gather in a circle, open the Bible, and let the children see where the reading is. Read *Matthew 9:35a*:

“Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues . . . .”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Children respond: Thanks be to God.

In your own words, describe Jesus as teacher, emphasizing the following:

- Jesus grew up to be a very wise man. He went from place to place, teaching people about God.

- Sometimes he taught outdoors where men and women and boys and girls could hear him. Sometimes he taught in the places where people worshiped God, called “synagogues.” He taught large crowds, and sometimes he taught just a few people.

- One of the things that made his teaching different was all the stories he told. People remembered his stories, and they would tell them again and again to others.

- Jesus had friends who went with him as he taught. They were called disciples. They listened to all that he said. They learned what it meant to be Jesus’ followers. They knew that he wanted them to be teachers also.

- Jesus is our teacher, too. We read his stories in the Bible to learn about God and how God wants us to live.

(Remind the children to look at the children's book *Love One Another*, pp. 4-11, at home with their families.)

### **CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

#### **Option 1. Paper Bag Puppets**

Provide a small paper bag for each child, and invite the class members to make puppets. The fold of the bag becomes the mouth. Pieces of colored construction paper and strips of yarn can be used to make eyes, lips, and hair. The children may wish to use crayons to add color to the face. The puppets can be used by the children to teach each other about Jesus. Talk with them about Jesus as a good teacher.

#### **Option 2. Drawing Jesus' Listeners**

Prepare sheets of construction paper with the figure of Jesus as teacher traced (or copied and pasted) in the center. A simple pattern is included in the Teacher's Packet, Poster No. 6. Ask the children to think about Jesus teaching and to use pencils, crayons, and markers to draw people listening. They can include as many persons as they like.

### **GAME** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Play an action pantomime game called "The Teacher Says."

The teacher calls out an action that the children will recognize as something appropriate to do in classrooms. Examples: "The teacher says . . . 'Open a storybook,' 'Pour some juice,' 'Pass the crayons,' or 'Paint with your fingers.' The children respond by pretending in silence to do each of the called-out actions. Add other actions of your choosing. Older children may want to take turns being the teacher, calling out the actions.

### **DOING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Take a trip through the church building to see where teaching happens for people of different ages. As you move from place to place, talk with the children about who the teachers are in your congregation, and what they teach to children, youth, and adults. (You may want to include the pulpit as a place where those who speak do teaching. As they explain stories from the Bible, they are teaching as Jesus asked them to do.)

### **WONDERING** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Wonder aloud about being with Jesus and hearing him teach us. Wonder about what Jesus would say to us. Wonder about how Jesus' words would sound. How would they make us feel?

### **MUSIC** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Use again "When morning gilds the skies" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 427; *We Sing of God*, 72). Continue to experiment with simple hand motions to accompany the words while you listen to the tape, *Children Sing!*

### **CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Talk with the children about all the people they know who teach us. You may wish to use the scene created at the Gathering (above) to help in identifying various persons in teaching roles. What are some of the things they help us to understand? to learn? to do? Examples: Doctors help us understand how to stay well; police help us learn to be safe; teachers at school help us learn to read and write; teachers at church help us to understand about God and Jesus. Books about community helpers could be used here to illustrate the different people who teach us.

Display a picture of Jesus as teacher (or add one to the Gathering scene). Use one of your own choosing, or copy the figure from the Teacher's Packet suggested in Creating, Option 2. Ask: Why do we call Jesus a teacher? What does he help us to understand? to learn? to do?

### **TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 16 has a picture of Jesus teaching, a Scripture verse, a hymn stanza, and a note to parents. Remind children to take their card home to their families, share it, and keep it in a safe place.

### **SAYING GOODBYE**

Gather the children for a final prayer:

Thank you, God, for sending Jesus to teach us;  
Thank you for all people who help us to learn.  
(*Pray for the concerns of the children.*)  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle for the closing:

Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.  
Children: Thanks be to God.

### **TEACHER'S REFLECTION**

Reflect on your own role as a teacher in the Christian community. In what ways does your teaching help children to have a deeper knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ? How have your own experiences as a learner enhanced your approach to teaching young children?

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

The next session is about Jesus' teaching that God provides what we need. Consider what matters most in our lives in contrast to the accumulation of possessions.

# JESUS: TEACHER

## SESSION 8

### JESUS TEACHES US TO TRUST GOD

#### FOCUS

Jesus taught us that God knows our needs. He used the examples of birds and flowers to remind us that God's intention is to care for every creature. The children should be able to say in their own way that we can trust God to care for us.

#### GETTING READY

As a teacher, Jesus could sense what his followers needed to hear. He used their concerns to help them understand the message he brought about God's love for everyone. One of his messages was about anxieties that most people have.

Becoming over-anxious about our everyday needs can cause us to forget that God understands our situation. God knows what we need even before we ask. We are called to trust in God's providence and care.

This is not to say that we should be careless and imprudent in the management of our resources. In an age where poverty, homelessness, malnutrition, and starvation persist alongside plenty and affluence, Christians cannot rest contented. We pray, "Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten; Nor the hope of the poor be taken away" (*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 98). This implies that we are called to share food, clothing, and shelter.

Young children cannot be expected to understand the world's problems. But they can grasp the truth of Jesus' words about trusting in God to care for us.

Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom, you know our necessities before we ask and our ignorance in asking: Have compassion on our weakness, and mercifully give us those things which for our unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot ask; through the worthiness of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Proper 11

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 231

#### TEACHING TIP

It is sometimes a challenge to help young children to release pent-up energies. Games are especially helpful for this purpose. Give simple directions, and make it clear where the boundaries are. Example: "Stay on

the carpet but not the tile.” Encourage the children to respect one another’s space.

## **GATHERING**

Display Poster No. 7, “Morning in the Tropics,” from the Teacher’s Packet. The scene shows many kinds of plants and living things. As the children arrive, invite them to choose their favorite parts of the picture and to tell others about their choices.

When everyone is present, say:

Teacher: Lord have mercy.

Children: Christ have mercy.

Teacher: Lord have mercy.

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 356

## **STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce the story by reading from the Bible. Gather the children in a circle, open the Bible, and let the children see where the reading is. Read *Matthew 6:26a*:

“Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Children respond: Thanks be to God.

Compose a story about Jesus as a teacher.

- One day, on the side of a mountain, a large crowd was gathered to hear Jesus. Some were sitting, and others were standing at the edge of the crowd. They all looked eagerly at Jesus.

- It was a beautiful day. Flowers were blooming and the birds were flying about.

- Jesus looked at the crowd. Some of them seemed so anxious and worried. He knew they worried about how they would get enough food to eat. They worried about their families. Would they be healthy and safe? Would they have enough money for clothes and the many other things they needed?

- The people heard Jesus say, “Don’t be so anxious! Look at those birds flying around. They aren’t worried. They don’t have to plant things. They don’t have to build barns for storing food. God feeds them. You’re more valuable than the birds. You won’t be helped by worrying.”

- Jesus pointed to the flowers. “You worry about clothes. But just look at the wild flowers. They do not work or make clothes. Yet they are all dressed in beautiful colors.”

- He said, “Do not worry about food and clothing and other things. God in heaven knows what you need.”

(Remind the children to look at the children's book *Love One Another*, pp. 12-15, at home with their families.)

## **CREATING**

*(Time: 15 minutes)*

### **Option 1. Picture of Birds and Flowers**

Give each child a piece of heavy construction paper. Provide tempera paint. Ask the children to create a scene of birds and flowers. As the paintings dry, supply bright feathers, twigs, leaves, and small pebbles, which can be glued to the paper to add a realistic touch.

### **Option 2. Triptych: Jesus, Bird, Lily**

For each class member, prepare a copy of the triptych outline (three panels) from Poster No. 6 in the Teacher's Packet. The figure of Jesus stands in the center panel. A bird is on one side panel, and a lily on the other. Invite the children to use crayons and markers to color the three panels. When they are finished, fold along the lines so that the triptychs will stand. As the group is at work, talk with them again about Jesus' teaching.

## **GAME** *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Play "Flying Birds." Divide the class members into groups to be different birds, such as sparrows, robins, doves, crows, and ducks. The teacher then calls out the name of a group and gives a simple command. Begin by asking each group to fly softly from where they are over to their nest (a designated spot in the room). Add other commands for the groups, such as: "Sparrows, feed your babies," or "Robins, pull up a worm with your beak," or "Doves, go to sleep with your heads under your wings." Continue as long as interest holds.

## **DOING** *(Time: 15 minutes)*

Make bird feeders with pine cones, peanut butter or suet, and birdseed. Tie a piece of yarn around the top of each cone. Roll the cone in peanut butter or suet first, then in birdseed. (Use a pan to catch excess seed.) Wrap the cones in wax paper or sandwich bags to make it easier to carry them home. If you have children allergic to peanut butter, use this as an alternative: Give each child a 18-inch piece of yarn with a piece of masking tape around the end to form a "needle." Thread cheerios or fruit loops on the yarn and ties the ends together when finished.

## **WONDERING** *(Time: 10 minutes)*

When Jesus taught about God's care for people, he spoke first about God's care for everything that lives. Wonder together about birds and flowers (the examples Jesus used). Use questions like these:

How many birds are in the whole world? How many colors are there? Where do they live? What do they eat?

How many flowers are in the whole world? Where do we find them? What colors are they? How many different smell do they have?

**MUSIC** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Use the tape *Children Sing!* to introduce and sing “Seek ye first the kingdom of God” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 711; *We Sing of God*, 106). The children will enjoy forming a circle and singing the hymn. At the refrain, the group can join hands and sway as they sing the “Alleluias.”

**CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Talk with the children about the word “worry.” Ask: What does it mean to worry? What do you worry about? What does your family worry about? What do other people worry about?

How does it feel to be worried? What do you do when you are worried?

Jesus taught that God knows the things we worry about and cares for all of us. When we pray, we can talk to God about the things that worry us.

**TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 17 has a picture of Jesus with a bird, a Scripture verse, a hymn stanza, and a note to parents. Remind children to take the card home, share it with their families, and keep it in a safe place.

**SAYING GOODBYE**

Gather the children for a final prayer:

Thank you, God, for your love  
And all that you provide for us.  
(*Pray for the concerns expressed by the children.*)  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle for the closing:

Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.

Children: Thanks be to God.

**TEACHER’S REFLECTION**

Children learn about trusting God as they come to trust the people who care for them and teach them. Reflect on what you have done to encourage a trusting relationship with each child.

**LOOKING AHEAD**

The next session focuses on Jesus’ commandment, “Love one another as I have loved you.” Recall when you first became aware of these words and how they have affected your life.

# JESUS: TEACHER

## SESSION 9

### JESUS TEACHES US TO LOVE OTHERS

#### FOCUS

Jesus taught us to love one another. The children should be able to say in their own way how we show love and care for others.

#### GETTING READY

At the beginning of Holy Eucharist in the Penitential Order are the words: “Jesus said, ‘The first commandment is this: Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is the only Lord. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.’” The words are taken from *Mark 12:29-31*.

The first commandment is found in *Deuteronomy 6:4*. The Hebrews call it the Shema. Jesus adds the second commandment, linking love of God to the love of neighbor. To love other people depends upon our love for God (who first loved us), and we show our love of God by loving other people. In a sense, the love we show to others is the love of God flowing through us.

The New Testament uses the word “agape” (pronounced a-**gah**-pay) for love. It is not a sentimental or sensual love, but a compassionate love that cares deeply about the total welfare of others.

Young children need to hear over and over that God loves them. It is never too early to remind them that they can also show love and care for other people.

Almighty God, we entrust all who are dear to us to your never-failing care and love, for this life and the life to come, knowing that you are doing for them better things than we can desire or pray for; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For those we Love

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 831

#### TEACHING TIP

In their daily life, children respond readily to positive feelings—loving, being loved, trusting, taking care of others, being taken care of. All are powerful factors for young children’s development. Speak directly, confidently, and clearly about Jesus’ love. This message is the essential contribution the Church offers to children, and their parents and teachers can best share it with them.

## **GATHERING**

Display a picture of Jesus with his twelve disciples. One is included on Poster No. 8 in the Teacher's Packet, together with the names of the twelve. As the children arrive, call their attention to the scene. Ask them to choose particular figures in the picture to match with the names. (They can match any name with any of the figures.) Enjoy wondering about these friends of Jesus gathered around him.

When everyone is present, say:

Teacher: Lord have mercy.

Children: Christ have mercy.

Teacher: Lord have mercy.

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 356

## **STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce the story by reading from the Bible. Gather the children in a circle, open the Bible, and let the children see where the reading is. Read *John 15:12*:

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Children respond: Thanks be to God.

Following are suggestions for preparing a story:

- Jesus was a wonderful teacher. People listened when he talked with them. They remembered what he said.
- Many times, Jesus taught his twelve close friends, who were called disciples. They liked these times when he talked just with them. They would sit together to eat. They would pray. And they would share stories. Sometimes they went fishing together.
- Jesus loved the disciples very much. He wanted them to be teachers, too. He wanted to help them learn.
- One time when they were all gathered, Jesus looked at each one of these twelve friends. Then he said, “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”
- The disciples would never forget how Jesus loved them. They knew how much Jesus wanted them to love other people.
- We remember these words of Jesus. Jesus also loves us very much. We ask God to help us love others as Jesus wants us to.

(Remind the children to look at the children's book *Love One Another*, pages 16-23, at home with their families.)

## **CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

### **Option 1. Picture Montages**

Ahead of time, prepare for each class member a large sheet of construction paper with the following sentence across the top: “Jesus said, ‘Love one another.’” Use heart stickers, inexpensive Valentines, and magazine pictures of a variety of people, including all age groups and races. Ask the children to choose pictures to glue to their sheets under the words. As they work, talk with them about Jesus’ commandment. (Note: Older children may be able to cut out pictures for themselves.)

### **Option 2. Decorated Commandment**

From Poster No. 6 in the Teacher’s Packet, prepare photocopies of the words of Jesus’ commandment, “Love one another, as I have loved you.” Give one to each child. Ask the class members to use crayons and markers to add colorful borders to their sheets. If you wish, mount the finished pages on slightly larger sheets of construction paper in the shape of a heart to create a frame effect.

## **GAME** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Use the black-and-white picture of Jesus and the disciples from Poster No. 6 in the Teacher’s Packet, to create a matching game (14 pieces). The poster is a version of the same four-color scene used at the Gathering (above).

Cut the pieces apart. You may wish to mount them on heavier paper or light cardboard. Put the pieces in a basket.

Talk with the children about Jesus and the disciples he gathered around him. Invite the group members to choose pieces from the basket and put them together to form a picture of Jesus teaching his twelve friends. (The pieces can be taped to a surface as they are fitted together. Or the children could hold pieces and stand to form a tableau of the scene.)

If there are fewer children than pieces in the basket, class members can select more than one. To play the game with more than fourteen, use a second basket with another set of pieces, and divide the class into two groups.

## **DOING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Invite a visitor from the congregation to share with the children stories of the church’s people showing love toward others. Examples: A teenage volunteer who works on service projects; a Stephen’s Ministry representative who helps those in crisis situations; a hospital volunteer.

## **WONDERING** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Ask the children to wonder about Jesus and his friends. I wonder what it would be like to be a friend of Jesus. To walk beside him on the road. To sit in a boat with him. To eat meals together.

**MUSIC** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Sing again “Seek ye first the kingdom of God” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 711; *We Sing of God*, 106). At the refrain, encourage the children to hold hands and sway gently during the “Alleluias.” You may want to add the second stanza or listen to the tape, *Children Sing!*

**CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Describe what Jesus did to show that he loved other people.

Talk about ways we show love for others. How do we show our parents that we love them? Our brothers and sisters? Our friends? Our teachers? Our neighbors? How do they show us that they love us?

How does it make us feel when we love other people? When they love us?

**TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 18 contains an illuminated print of Jesus’ commandment, a poem, and a note to parents. Remind children to take the card home, share it with their families, and add it to the other cards they have received, keeping them all in a safe place.

**SAYING GOODBYE**

Gather the children for a final prayer:

Thank you, God, for loving us  
And giving us others to love.  
(*Pray for the needs of the children.*)  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle for the closing:

Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.  
Children: Thanks be to God.

**TEACHER’S REFLECTION**

The conclusion of this unit marks approximately the half way point in the church school year. The children have been together as a class for a number of months. Think back over the time you have spent with them. Have you observed changes in the class members? Is there evidence that they feel comfortable in the group, and are welcomed lovingly as members of the preschool/kindergarten community?

Note: The following letter is for teachers and parents of children in the preschool/  
kindergarten level of church school. These pages can be reproduced or  
used as a model for a personalized letter.

## Episcopal Children's Curriculum

### Unit III. WORSHIP: ENVIRONMENT

Dear Parents and Guardians,

The place where we gather for worship, however simple or ornate, takes on a kind of sacred character. It has been set apart by the church so that people can come there to be quiet and reverent in the presence of God, and to lift up their hearts and voices in prayer and song.

Just as our homes and work places are furnished in ways that express who we are, what we value, and what we do with our lives, so our churches declare our identity as Christian people.

We encourage you to talk about the lessons with your child. Do this by reading together the children's book, *My Church*, is about the places where people are baptized, receive Communion, pray, and learn.

Scripture passages and excerpts from *The Book of Common Prayer* that the children encounter are cited below. Look up the passages and excerpts with your child and show them where they are in the Bible and Prayer Book. The Take-Home Cards given to learners each week feature illustrations and text related to session themes. They also include useful instructions for parents. These collectible cards, which are 5 by 8 inches, can be displayed in a photo album, kept in an oversized recipe box, or used in any way you find helpful.

Following are summaries of the unit's sessions:

**Session 1: “The Cross in Our Church”** focuses on the cross, with a view to helping class members to recognize its shape and to name it when they see it. (Anthem 1, *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 281)

**Session 2: “The Altar Is a Holy Table”** calls attention to the altar, or Holy Table, where Christians come together to receive the bread and wine of Holy Communion. (Consecration of a Church, *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 574)

**Session 3: “Pulpit and Font”** provides a chance for the children to learn about the pulpit as a place where preaching is done. This may be their chance to see firsthand how the pulpit is built and approached. (*Luke 3:18b, Acts 10:48*)

**Session 4: “Candles Remind Us of Jesus”** describes how the church uses special candles at each service and in the various Church seasons. The session's purpose is to help children associate the church's use of candlelight with the presence of Jesus Christ at our worship. (Easter Vigil, *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 285)

**Session 5: “Things of Beauty”** treats all the other furnishings, appointments, and decorations in the worship space. We will look at the particular features of our own church. (*Isaiah 64:11a*)

Sessions 6 through 9 of this Unit are about the events of Holy Week and Easter. We will use them in the latter weeks of Lent and around Easter Day.

**Session 6: “Hosanna!”** focuses on the Liturgy of the Palms. The children learn to wave palms fronds and branches and join in saying, “Hosanna!” to express the joy of the event. (*Matthew 21:9b*)

**Session 7: “Holy Week”** reviews Holy Week events and includes these images: towel and water (for footwashing), bread and wine at the Last Supper, the cross of Good Friday. (*Matthew 27:54c*)

**Session 8: “The Lord Is Risen Indeed”** concentrates on the Resurrection greeting, “Christ is risen,” and the response, “The Lord is risen indeed.” (*Luke 24:34*)

**Session 9: “Alleluia! Alleluia!”** explores the use of the “Alleluia!” that is said and sung in celebration of the good news of Jesus Christ's resurrection. (Holy Eucharist, *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 355)

Yours in Christ,  
Church School Teachers

# WORSHIP: ENVIRONMENT

## SESSION 1

### THE CROSS IN OUR CHURCH

#### FOCUS

All Episcopal churches include crosses. The children should be able to say where crosses are located in their church.

#### GETTING READY

The cross, an instrument of both suffering and shame, is the most profound Christian symbol and sign. Persons who are serious about their faith in Jesus Christ as Son of God see the cross as a constant reminder of Jesus' obedience to God. Jesus suffered crucifixion—a method of execution that was an offense to Jew and Greek alike. On the cross, a victory was won over human sin.

Christians have expressed their appreciation for the meaning of Christ's sacrifice by incorporating the cross into many forms of art and architecture. Churches and art galleries are filled with representations of the cross.

The subtle meanings of the cross cannot be conveyed to young children, but it is important for them to recognize its shape and central place in the Christian community.

Almighty God, whose beloved Son willingly endured the agony and shame of the cross for our redemption: Give us courage to take up our cross and follow him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. *Amen.*

Of the Holy Cross

*The Book of Common Prayer, p. 252*

#### TEACHING TIP

Children learn best when using all their senses. As part of this unit, give the children opportunities to touch, see, hear, and smell the special qualities and beauty of the church. Field trips, objects brought into the classroom, role-playing, and pictures are essential.

#### GATHERING

Display the large picture of the Episcopal Church shield, found on Poster No. 10 in the Teacher's Packet. (A smaller version also appears on the front cover of this Teacher's Guide.) As the children arrive, ask them to find the different crosses in the shield. Provide puzzles, books, and crayons and paper for additional activities.

When all are present, gather in a circle and teach the children to say

together:

I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the Lord.”  
*Psalm 122:1*

**STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce the story by reading from *The Book of Common Prayer*. To do this, gather the children in a circle, open the Prayer Book, and let the children see where the reading is. Read the first lines of Anthem 1 from the Good Friday liturgy, p. 281:

We glory in your cross, O Lord,  
and praise and glorify your holy resurrection;  
for by virtue of your cross  
joy has come to the whole world.

Introduce the children to the symbol of the cross, using the following outline:

- Show the children the cover of *The Book of Common Prayer*, and point out the cross on the cover. All Episcopal churches have prayerbooks, and they all have crosses on them.
- In your own words, tell a story about a cross that is in your church or about crosses of different types and shapes. An example follows:
  - Nancy’s older brother was an acolyte at their church. His job was to carry the cross at the front of the processional at the beginning of worship.
  - One day, Nancy hoped she could be an acolyte and carry the cross in front of the choir and clergy.
  - When her brother was scheduled to acolyte, the family came to church early so he could get ready. He put on a special robe, and wore a small cross around his neck. Then he went to the front of the church to get the cross and bring it to the back of the church. One time he let Nancy hold it. It was very heavy. She knew that the cross was very special to the people in the church.
  - Discuss the fact that all Episcopal churches have crosses to remind us of Jesus. If you have a cross in your classroom, point it out to the children.
  - Many people remember the cross when they pray. Show how the sign of the cross is made. Depending on the custom in your church, you may want to teach the children to make the sign.

(Remind the children to look at the children’s book *My Church*, pages 4-7, at home with their families. It contains a poem, a story, and pictures of crosses.)

**CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

**Option 1. Clay Crosses**

Provide a lump of salt clay for each child. (A recipe is in the Teacher’s

Packet, Poster No.13.) Demonstrate making a cross by rolling two thin strips of clay and pressing them together in the shape of a cross. Encourage the children to experiment with ways to make cross shapes. Sturdy plates or pieces of cardboard will help in getting the crosses home safely. When dry, these crosses can be painted.

### **Option 2. Decorated Crosses**

From sturdy paper, cut out a large cross for each child. Provide markers and crayons for decorating the crosses. Punch a hole in the top and add yarn to hang the cross on a wall. Finished crosses may be taken home or displayed in the classroom. A photocopy of the Episcopal shield could be given to each child to color.

#### **GAME** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Use Posters No. 10 and 13 from the Teacher's Packet for this game. Display the black and white cross outlines from Poster No. 13 on a table or other flat surface. Cut out the matching colored crosses from Poster No. 10. Invite children to select a cross and match it to the outline. The game can be repeated as often as needed for all children to have an opportunity to match one or more crosses.

#### **DOING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Take children on a search for crosses in and around your church. Count how many you can find. Remember to look for crosses in the architecture of the building. Ask: How are the crosses different? How are they all the same? Look for an Episcopal flag and note the shield of the Episcopal church.

#### **WONDERING** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

On a table near your story area, set out crosses or pictures of crosses of different sizes and types. (Your display could include lace, embroidery, and needlepoint.)

Wonder aloud about all the crosses in the world, and all the churches that have crosses. Ask: Why are some crosses up high on buildings? Why are others stuck in the ground? What different materials can be used to make crosses?

#### **MUSIC** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Sing the refrain of "Lift high the cross" (*The Hymnal 1982, 473; We Sing of God, 76*). Form a procession with the children while singing this hymn and listening to the tape, *Children Sing!* Choose a leader and provide a cross to be carried. Class members can take turns being the leader.

#### **CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Look again at the shield of the Episcopal Church (from Poster No. 10 used in the Gathering above). Encourage the children to say the word, "Episcopal." Ask: Have you seen this shield before? Where? (Some of the

older children will have seen it on signs, flags, banners, or books.) Ask: What is on the shield? How many crosses can you find? What are the colors in the shield? What else do we know about that has same three colors? What other crosses have you seen? Where were they?

#### **TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 19 contains a picture of a cross, a hymn stanza, and a note to parents. Remind the children to take home the card, share it with their families, and add it to their collection.

#### **SAYING GOODBYE**

Gather the children for a final prayer. Add any line that seems appropriate:

Thank you, God, for our church,  
And for crosses that tell us of Jesus.  
*(Pray for the concerns of the children.)*  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle and say:

Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.  
Children: Thanks be to God.

#### **TEACHER'S REFLECTION**

Reflect on the children's experience with crosses. How familiar are they with this central Christian symbol? How observant are the class members? How many details do they notice when inspecting their surroundings? What more can you do to encourage the children to be keen observers?

#### **LOOKING AHEAD**

The next session focuses on the altar. Think about the altars (Holy Tables) you have seen in churches. Consider how the position of an altar in a church, and the altar hangings, contribute to our sense of God's presence.

# WORSHIP: ENVIRONMENT

## SESSION 2

### THE ALTAR IS A HOLY TABLE

#### FOCUS

The Altar is a Holy Table where we gather for Eucharist. The children should be able to say that all Episcopal churches have altars.

#### GETTING READY

The ancient stone altars of the Hebrews were places of sacrifice. In the *Book of Leviticus*, regulations specified how altars were to be used as places for the offering up of animals in Old Testament times.

In Christian tradition, we continue to use the word altar when referring to the Holy Table where the Eucharist is celebrated. Jesus was with his disciples at a table when he instituted the sacred meal we call Holy Communion. As the priest breaks the bread and announces that “Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us,” the meal is reenacted, and we acknowledge anew the mystery of the Eucharist.

The altar stands at the very center of our place of worship where we offer up the Great Thanksgiving for what God in Christ has accomplished for our sake.

Young children can be helped to sense the honored place the altar has in their church even though they are not able to understand its significance in Christian faith and liturgy.

We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table. But thou art the same Lord whose property is always to have mercy. Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. *Amen.*

Prayer of Humble Access

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 337

#### TEACHING TIP

Young children communicate their ideas and feelings through body language as much or more than through the use of words. A sense of reverence and awe at the Holy Table in the church is likely to be expressed mainly through gesture, movement, and facial expression. Teachers play an important role in helping children to find constructive ways to express themselves. Be aware of your own body language as you talk about the altar.

## **GATHERING**

Ahead of time, obtain all that you need for setting up a small altar in the classroom. Use a piece of white cotton fabric and allow the children to decorate the cloth as they arrive. Then invite them to assist in arranging the table, the white cloth covering, and the candlesticks. (If the altar is to be placed against a wall, a cross can be added.) Talk about the altar as a holy table in the church.

When all are present, gather in a circle and say together:

I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the Lord.”

*Psalm 122:1*

## **STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce the story by reading from *The Book of Common Prayer*. To do this, gather the children in a circle, open the Prayer Book, and let the children see where the reading is. Read the first lines of the prayer for dedication of an altar, p. 574:

Lord God, hear us. Sanctify this Table dedicated to you. Let it be to us a sign of the heavenly Altar where your saints and angels praise you for ever.

Introduce the children to the role of altars in worship by using the following outline:

- In your own words, share a story of an altar that has special meaning for you. You could also describe the building of a new church and the consecration of the altar, or tell about people who care for the altar. An example follows:

- Sometimes Mark went with his mother to the church on Saturday. His mom was in the altar guild.

- People in the altar guild prepare the altar for Sunday worship services. They put clean covers on the altar, arrange flowers, and make sure everything is ready.

- One Saturday, a package came from a church in Jamaica. The people there had made beautiful altar coverings for Mark’s church. Mark’s mom let him look at the brightly colored birds and flowers around the edges of the cloth. He had never seen some of the flowers and birds that were on the cloth.

- The next day, Mark saw the cloth on the altar. From a distance, the colors around the edges of the cloth made the altar look so pretty.

Point out that all Episcopal churches have altars in a central place where people worship. They are used for the celebration of the Eucharist.

(Remind the children to look at the children’s book *My Church*, pages 8-11, at home with their families. It contains a poem, a story, and pictures of altars.)

**CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

**Option 1. Altar Collages**

Provide sheets of paper and glue. Ask the children to create altars on their sheets, using craft sticks, pipe cleaners, straws, or strips of paper. Pieces of cloth, foil, tissue, and glitter can be used to make hangings and other additions.

**Option 2. Altar Drawings**

Provide the children with drawing paper and markers. Ask the class members to draw the altar (Holy Table) in their church, adding any decorations they wish, such as hangings and candles. Some of the older children may choose to add chalices and patens, or other details. This could be done following a trip to look at the altar in your church.

**GAME** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Play “What’s Missing?” Display objects found on or near church altars: candlesticks, cross, book, chalice and paten, linens, hangings. (Or you may photograph each of these items in your own church.) Show the objects or pictures to the children, naming each one as you do so. Ask the class members to close their eyes while you remove one object. Children open their eyes and look for what is missing. Younger children may do better with only three or four objects in view at one time. Continue as long as interest holds.

**DOING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Provide wooden blocks, small plastic building blocks, or other construction toys for the children to make altars. Provide cloths or paper napkins to cover the “altars.” Or, let the children use the materials from the Gathering.

**WONDERING** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

If possible take the children to the church’s sanctuary, and ask them to sit quietly in front of the altar. Let this quiet time be an opportunity to experience the wonder that makes this a very special table. (An alternative would be to sit in front of the altar arranged in the classroom, at the Gathering.) Say, “We can call an altar a Holy Table.” Wonder about these questions:

What does it mean for something to be holy? What makes the table (altar) holy?

**MUSIC** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Sing the refrain of “Lift high the cross” (*The Hymnal 1982, 473; We Sing of God, 76*). Repeat the procession used last week, and march around the room. Begin in one direction; at the end of the refrain, turn and march in the

opposite direction as you continue to sing or listen to the tape *Children Sing!*

**CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Talk about many different kinds of tables the children know about. Think of all the possible uses for tables, and all the places where they are found. Examples: dining tables, work tables, and ornamental tables at home—and tables in restaurants and stores.

In church we have a Holy Table, called an altar. Ask: How is it different from other tables we know about? How is it the same?

What is the altar in our church made from? What might other altars be made from? What do we see on our altar? What might we see on altars in other churches?

**TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 20 has a picture of an altar, a prayer, and a note to parents. Remind children to take the card home, show it to their parents, and keep it with the others in their collection.

**SAYING GOODBYE**

Say the following prayer of thanksgiving. Add any line that seems appropriate.

Thank you, God, for our church,  
And for altars that tell us of Jesus.  
(*Pray for the concerns named by the children.*)  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle and say:  
Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.  
Children: Thanks be to God.

**TEACHER'S REFLECTION**

Do the children respond differently when they are in the presence of the Altar? Is there evidence of a reverent attitude on their part? In future sessions, how can you contribute to their appreciation for the church's worship space?

**LOOKING AHEAD**

The next session focuses on the pulpit and the baptismal font. Consider how these church furnishings have contributed to your own Christian formation.

# WORSHIP: ENVIRONMENT

## SESSION 3

### PULPIT AND FONT

#### FOCUS

All Episcopal churches have pulpits for preaching and fonts for baptizing. The children should be able to find the pulpit and the font in their church and tell what happens at each one.

#### GETTING READY

The symbols of *font* and *table* stand for the two great Sacraments: Holy Baptism, by which we are incorporated into the body of Christ; and Holy Eucharist, in which we give thanks over and over again for the sacrificial love of our Lord who is Savior and Redeemer.

The *pulpit* is another vital symbol. It stands for the proclaiming of God's Word, the opening up of the Scriptures in sermons that confront us repeatedly with the good news of God in Christ.

The liturgy of Holy Eucharist is in two parts: The Word of God read aloud from Scripture and preached from the pulpit, and The Holy Communion administered from the Holy Table, or Altar.

Young children in the church should be able to recognize the font (fountain of water) as the place where people are baptized, and the pulpit (a raised structure) as the place where preaching is done.

Father, we thank you that through the waters of Baptism we die to sin and are made new in Christ. Grant through your Spirit that those baptized here may enjoy the liberty and splendor of the children of God. *Amen.*  
(Consecration of the Font)

Father, in every age you have spoken through the voices of prophets, pastors, and teachers. Purify the lives and the lips of those who speak here, that your word only may be proclaimed and your word only may be heard. *Amen.* (Consecration of the Pulpit)

Consecration of the Church

*The Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 569, 571

#### TEACHING TIP

Look carefully at the environment of your classroom. Young children's behavior and learning are greatly affected by the classroom setting. Try to imagine this room from the children's perspective. Does the room belong to them? Are posters and decorations at the children's eye level? Adding

decorations to the room helps children gain a sense of ownership and belonging. You may find there are small changes you can make that will affect the behavior and feelings of the children.

### **GATHERING**

Before class, display the outline of a church interior from Poster No. 9, in the Teacher's Packet. As the children arrive, add the cutouts of an altar and a cross from Poster No. 10. Talk with the class members about the placement of these central furnishings, and review what they look like in your church. Provide puzzles and books for alternative activities.

When all are present, gather in a circle and say together:

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord."

*Psalm 122:1*

### **STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce the story by reading from the Bible. To do this, gather the children in a circle, open the Bible, and let the children see where the reading is. Read *Luke 3:18b*:

"He proclaimed the good news to the people."

Then read *Acts 10:48*:

"So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ."

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Children respond: Thanks be to God.

Prepare a story in two parts. Let the first part be about pulpits, and the second about fonts.

- Direct the children's attention to the outline of a church interior on Poster No. 9 from the Teacher's Packet. At the Gathering (above), the altar and cross cutouts were added. Be prepared to add pulpit and font cutouts during the story.

- Compose a short narrative about pulpits, such as a time when you (or someone you know) stood behind the pulpit and spoke in your church. At some point, add the cutout of a pulpit to the outline poster. An example of a story follows:

- Albert's grandfather, Mr. Walker, has always been a member of the same church. Mr. Walker likes to tell stories about the church, especially about how they got a pulpit.

- Years ago, when the church was first built, the congregation could not afford to buy a stand to put at the front of the church. When the clergy stood up to preach, they held their notes and Bibles in their hands.

- A member of the church had a beautiful table that his family had brought to the area years ago. Without telling anyone, he used the wood from the table to make a pulpit. It is still there today.
- Continue by telling a story about seeing a different kind of font or watching a baptism in your church. Add the font cutout to the outline poster. An example of a story follows:

- Janet’s baby sister was baptized on Pentecost Day last year. There were red balloons in the church, and a lot of people in the congregation were wearing red.

- The baby had cried almost all morning. But when the priest held Janet’s sister, she stopped crying. She seemed to like having the water on her head.

- Point out that all Episcopal churches have pulpits and fonts. The pulpits are where we hear good news about Jesus in sermons. The font is where we are baptized and become Christians.

(Remind the children to look at pictures of fonts and pulpits in the children’s book *My Church*, pages 12-15, at home with their families.)

**CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

**Option 1. Filling the Font**

For each child, trace onto white paper an empty baptismal font, viewed from the top. Add a few wavy lines to represent water. (See the suggested pattern in the Teacher’s Packet, Poster No. 13.) Set out shallow containers of blue paint and cups of water that the children can reach easily. Encourage the class members to fill their fonts by mixing water and blue paint and applying it with a brush. Blue and white chalk, crayons, or markers could be used instead of the paint.

**Option 2. Puppets and Pulpits**

Ahead of time, prepare the following for each child: Cutout figure of a vested person (see pattern in the Teacher’s Packet, Poster No.13); a small box, such as the bottom part of a quart-size milk carton or a small brown paper bag; and a craft stick or narrow strip of heavy cardboard. The children can use crayons or markers to color their figures. These are attached to the sticks or strips and taped to the “pulpits.” Older children may use their finished puppets to “preach” and tell stories about Jesus.

**GAME** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Play a version of musical chairs. Arrange chairs in a circle so that every child has one. Designate one chair as a pulpit, by draping it with cloth or providing some other marking. Play music from the tape *Children Sing!* while the children march around the circle of chairs. When the music stops, everyone takes a seat. The one who ends up in the “pulpit” chair gets a chance to preach with a greeting or short sentence.

After a few turns, change the designated chair to a font. Place a pitcher

under this chair. As the music ends, the child who is at the font will pick up the pitcher and pretend to fill it with water.

**DOING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Take the children to the nave to see your church's pulpit and font. Many children may not have had an opportunity to see these up close. Give each class member a turn to stand in the pulpit and say "Good morning," or some other short greeting. Also, allow each child to touch the font.

**WONDERING** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Direct the children's attention to the church on Poster No. 9 and cutouts from the Teacher's Packet (used at the Story) or to pictures of your own church. Wonder aloud about preaching the good news to all people. Wonder about how many people have been baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**MUSIC** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Sing once more the refrain of "Lift high the cross" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 473; *We Sing of God*, 76). Decide whether to form a procession as before. Use the tape *Children Sing!*

**CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Ask the children what they remember about a recent baptism or perhaps their own. Where was the font? What happened at the font? What did the priest do? When was the water poured into the font? Where did the people stand? What are some of the words that were said? When have you heard a sermon? What do you remember?

**TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 21 includes pictures of a pulpit and a font, Scripture verses, and a note to parents. Remind the children to take the card home, show it to their families, and keep it in a safe place.

**SAYING GOODBYE**

Say the following prayer of thanksgiving. Add any line that seems appropriate.

Thank you, God, for our church's preachers,  
And for all people who are baptized.  
(*Pray for the concerns of the children.*)  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle and say:

Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.  
Children: Thanks be to God.

**TEACHER'S REFLECTION**

Reflect on what the children have learned so far about the church environment. What seem to be their impressions? What have the children's play and conversation revealed? How can parents be helped to follow through on the children's introduction to the church's environment?

**LOOKING AHEAD**

The next session will focus on candles as a symbol of Jesus. Spend a few minutes this week appreciating the role that light plays in our lives. Think about how the wonder of light can be shared with the children.

# WORSHIP: ENVIRONMENT

## SESSION 4

### CANDLES REMIND US OF JESUS

#### FOCUS

All Episcopal churches have candles to remind people of Jesus. The children should be able to say where the candles are in their church, and to tell when they are lighted.

#### GETTING READY

The light of candles reminds us that Jesus said that he was “the light of the world” (*John 8:12*).

Candles in our churches are not just decorations. They have a purpose: to provide light for reading, to indicate that a special action will take place, or to invite us to devotion and prayer.

Candles in processions were originally used to help people see their way. In a Gospel procession, the candles honor the reading of the Word of God.

At Eucharist, only two candles are necessary—one at either side of the altar. In many churches, six office lights (candles) are also present. Other candles may also be used. The Paschal Candle, prepared at the Easter Vigil, is used from Easter through Pentecost Sunday and at baptisms to remind us of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Young children delight in the flicker of candle flames; it is important that they associate their church’s candles with Jesus.

O God, through your Son you have bestowed upon your people the brightness of your light: Sanctify this new fire, and grant that in this Paschal feast we may so burn with heavenly desires, that with pure minds we may attain to the festival of everlasting light; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Lighting of the Paschal Candle, Easter Vigil  
*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 285.

#### TEACHING TIP

Children at the preschool and kindergarten age are literal thinkers. They are just beginning to use and understand symbols such as a candle representing Jesus. One of the ways children grow in their ability to use symbols is through dramatic play. As young children pretend, they are preparing themselves for using other forms of representation. In this curriculum, we introduce symbols with the expectation that children will experience them at their own level of understanding.

## **GATHERING**

Ahead of time, make a large candle from construction paper and display it at the front of the room. Make a flame from foil. As the children arrive give them a smaller paper candle and let them decorate it and add a foil flame. Display the smaller candles around the larger one. Provide storybooks and puzzles for alternative activities.

Gather in a circle, and say together:

I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the Lord.”

*Psalm 122:1*

## **STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce the story by reading from *The Book of Common Prayer*. Gather in a circle, open the Prayer Book, and let the children see where the reading is. Read these lines from the Easter Vigil, p. 285:

“The light of Christ. Thanks be to God.”

Prepare a story about candles using information in the outline below:

- Display the outline of a church interior from Poster No. 9 in the Teacher’s Packet. Add the altar and cross cutouts from Poster No. 10. Then attach the cutouts of the candles so that they correspond as nearly as possible to the placement of candles in your own church’s sanctuary.

- Tell a story about lighting candles. An example of a story follows:

- This year, Christina was allowed to go to the Easter Vigil service. It begins Saturday night, after her usual bedtime.

- When she walked in the church, it was very dark. Christina held her dad’s hand tightly. The ushers gave each person a small candle with a holder.

- Then the service began. A person holding a candle came down the aisle singing a strange song. When he got to the front of the church, he lit the candles of two people sitting across from each other. Then they lit the candles next to them.

- Slowly the light grew. Finally the candles in front of us were lit, and then someone turned to light Christina’s dad’s. He lit her candle and told her to hold it very carefully. Soon the church was full of light and she wasn’t afraid any more.

- In your story, tell the children that candles remind us of Jesus. At Christmas, the candles say to us that Jesus has been born. At Easter, the candles say to us that Jesus has risen. At all times, the candles are our way of saying that we know Jesus is “the light of the world.”

(Remind the children to look at pictures of candles in the children’s book *My Church*, pages 16-19, at home with their families.)

## **CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

### **Option 1. Paper Tube Candles**

Give each child a rectangle of white paper. Let the children use glitter, glue, sequins, and other materials to decorate the “candles.” Roll up the sheets of paper to form tubes or wrap them around paper towel rolls. Tape the ends to keep them from unrolling. Glue on a flame cut from orange or red construction paper, or bits of tissue.

### **Option 2. Candle Drawings**

Provide paper and crayons or markers. Suggest that the children draw candles they have seen in their church. Talk with the group as they work, allowing the class members to describe their drawings in their own way.

#### **GAME** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Play “Jack Be Nimble.” Place a can or cylindrical block in the center of an open area. Everyone chants the rhyme: “Jack be nimble, Jack be quick, Jack jump over the candlestick!” Substitute the children’s names for Jack as they take turns jumping over the candlestick.

#### **DOING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Invite a member of the altar guild or an experienced acolyte to bring to the class one of the large candles used in your church (with its candlestick if possible). Allow each child to touch the candle lightly. Demonstrate how the candle is placed in the holder, how it is lighted (with a candlelighter), and how it is extinguished.

#### **WONDERING** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Light a large candle.

Ask: How do you feel when you see a lighted candle? Sometimes, when people tell stories about Jesus, they say, “Jesus is light.” Wonder: How is Jesus the light of the world? How many candles are lit each day?

#### **MUSIC** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce the first stanza of the hymn, “I want to walk as a child of the light” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 490). Say aloud one line at a time, and ask the children to repeat each one with you. Then sing each line, repeating until it is familiar. You may wish to do this while listening to the tape *Children Sing!*

#### **CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Talk about the use of candles at different times. Ask the following questions:

Where do you see candles? at home? at church? other places? How big are the candles? how small? What colors are they? What are their shapes? How does it feel to hold a candle? to smell it? What holds candles as they burn? How do we light candles? When? Who does it?

**TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 22 includes a picture of candles in church, a prayer, and a note to parents. Remind the children to take the card home, show it to their families, and keep it in a safe place.

**SAYING GOODBYE**

Say the following prayer of thanksgiving. Add any line that seems appropriate.

Thank you, God, for our church,  
And for candles that remind us of Jesus.  
*(Pray for any concerns the children may have.)*  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle and say:  
Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.  
Children: Thanks be to God.

**TEACHER'S REFLECTION**

Recall the actions and events of this session. What seemed to be the understanding of candlelight in relation to Jesus Christ? Think of the words that the children used to describe their thoughts. What indications did you notice that they understood more than they could say aloud? How can you help them in their struggle to master language that expresses their feelings and insights?

**LOOKING AHEAD**

The focus of the next session is on things of beauty in the church. Think about how any object of beauty causes you to feel. What is the relationship between such feelings and our religious faith? What role does art play in a church environment?

# WORSHIP: ENVIRONMENT

## SESSION 5

### THINGS OF BEAUTY

#### FOCUS

Many Episcopal churches have banners, flags, flowers, stained glass windows, carvings, and various needlepoint decorations. The children should be able to name one or more of their favorite things of beauty in their church.

#### GETTING READY

One way to honor God is by making objects of beauty in God's honor. We do not regard beautiful things as ends in themselves but as means of expressing our religious devotion. The stained glass, tapestries, and other forms of decorative art that are often present in Episcopal churches are offered up to God and increase a sense of holiness.

Building beautiful places to honor God dates back to the Old Testament. King Solomon built a house of the Lord in Jerusalem that is described in *II Chronicles 3-4*. The inside was overlaid with pure gold, and the nave was lined with cypress and covered with fine gold. Precious stones were set throughout the temple, and cherubim were carved on the walls. Curtains were made of blue, purple, and crimson fabrics and fine linen. The altar was made of bronze and basins were made with the rim "like the flower of a lily."

Young children are not able to put their appreciation of beauty into words, but they can be helped to realize what it means to enter a sacred space filled with beauty.

Let us thank God whom we worship here in the beauty of holiness.

Eternal God, the heaven of heavens cannot contain you, much less the walls of temples made with hands. Graciously receive our thanks for this place, and accept the work of our hands, offered to your honor and glory.  
*Amen.*

Consecration of a Church  
*The Book of Common Prayer, p. 578*

#### TEACHING TIP

It is important to encourage young children in saying aloud that they find something beautiful or pleasing. Teachers set the example for this kind of expression as they share their own genuine love for things of beauty. Call the children's attention to objects in your church that you appreciate and find

inspiring.

### **GATHERING**

Display again the outline of a church interior from Poster No. 9 in the Teacher's Packet. Remove all of the things that have been added to the poster since the beginning. As the children arrive, let them place the items on the altar in the classroom. If the poster has been laminated, this will be an easy process. Invite them to name the furnishings from previous sessions (cross, altar, pulpit, font, candles, and lectern). The class members can help in adding the remainder of the cutouts that are provided (banner, flag, stained glass window, flowers, and a carving).

Talk about each addition as it is placed on the altar.

When all are present, gather in a circle and say together:

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord."

*Psalm 122:1*

### **STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce the story by reading from the Bible. To do this, gather the children in a circle, open the Bible, and let the children see where the reading is. Read *Isaiah 64:11a*:

"Our holy and beautiful house, where our ancestors praised you, . . ."

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Children respond: Thanks be to God.

Prepare a story about things of beauty in churches using information in the outline below:

- Tell an original story about an object of beauty in your church, such as a window, a carving, a needlepoint project, a flag or banner, or flower arrangement. Include details about how it was made, the Bible story it represents, the saint it honors, or the event that inspired it. Include special celebrations or efforts related to its placement or use.

- Share your own feelings about the object, and why you care about it. Tell the children that objects of beauty are placed in the church to help people think about God.

- An example of a story follows:

- At the front of George's church are designs painted in a deep red. Several years ago, the church was made bigger. The people wanted to make it look like it had a long time ago. People who had been members of the church a long time brought in pictures of the way it used to look.

- • The people working on the church looked at the pictures and found ways to use some of the old designs. An artist from another city came to paint the designs on the walls.

- Even though the church was closed while the work was going on,

George came with his dad to watch the workmen and artists. The artists stood way up high as they painted their designs. The church is the most beautiful place George has ever been.

(Remind the children to look at pictures of churches in the children's book *My Church*, pages 20-23, at home with their families.)

**CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

### **Option 1. Stained Glass Pictures**

Make stained glass pictures. Give the children pieces of rough sandpaper and wax crayons in a variety of colors. Each child will color designs directly onto the sandpaper. The teacher places a sheet of white typing paper over each child's design and irons it gently until the crayon colors show through the paper. Hold the papers up to the light, or tape them onto windows for a stained glass effect.

### **Option 2. Beautiful Churches**

Decorate paper churches. For each child, provide a sheet of white construction paper with an outline of a church drawn on it. Use glue, glitter, sequins, fabric, and other materials to make the inside of a "beautiful church."

**GAME** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Share the following fingerplay with the children:

This is the roof of God's house so good. (*make roof with hands*)

These are the walls that are made of wood. (*hands straight, palms parallel*)

These are the windows that let in the light. (*thumbs and forefingers form window*)

This is the door that shuts so tight. (*hands straight, side by side*)

This is the steeple so straight and tall. (*arms up straight*)

Oh, what a good church for one and all! (*arms at angle for roof*)

**DOING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Distribute generous lumps of play dough to the children. (You may make your own from flour, water, and cream of tartar; see the recipe provided on Poster No. 13 from the Teacher's Packet.) Ask the class members to shape their clay into beautiful things that they might see in church. Share items that can be used to work with the dough, such as cookie cutters, wooden spoons, rolling pins, and plastic flatware.

**WONDERING** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Display Poster No. 14 from the Teacher's Packet, of a reredos (carved panel behind the altar) from an Episcopal church's sanctuary. Invite the children to name what they see in the figures and scenes in this panel.

Wonder, who might have made this? How long did it take? How many

people have seen this?

**MUSIC** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Continue to sing “I want to walk as a child of the light” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 490). Hold hands and walk in a circle, first to the right, then to the left. Bring your hands together into the middle of the circle, then back out again. Repeat these movements as you sing and listen to the tape *Children Sing!*

**CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Focus your discussion on the things of beauty in your own church, created to give glory to God. Ask questions like:

What do you look at when you are in your church? What do you like about the things you see around you? Why?

Which things in your church do you think are beautiful? Why?

Note that beautiful things are found everywhere (not just in church). Many of these make us think of God. Ask the children to name some of the beautiful things they know about at home, at school, and in other places.

**TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 23 contains a picture of a carved screen, a prayer, and a note to parents. Remind the children to take home the card, show it to their families, and keep it in a safe place.

**SAYING GOODBYE**

Say the following prayer of thanksgiving. Add any line that seems appropriate.

Thank you, God, for our church,  
And for all beautiful things that tell us of you.  
(*Pray for the special needs of the children.*)  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle and say:

Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.

Children: Thanks be to God.

**TEACHER'S REFLECTION**

How have the children reacted to this session's focus on things of beauty in the church's environment? Did the children show, in their own way, a sense of appreciation? Reflect on what the children have learned about their own church's furnishings.

**LOOKING AHEAD**

The next four sessions in this unit are designed to be used around Easter—before and following Easter Day. The next session focuses on the story of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. It is important that young children hear this story before Holy Week; they can benefit from thinking about Palm Sunday before the actual day. Consider what this story has meant to you in your own faith journey.

# WORSHIP: ENVIRONMENT

## SESSION 6

### HOSANNA!

#### FOCUS

The story of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem with his disciples is recalled at the beginning of Holy Week. The people praised Jesus by laying down their coats and spreading palm branches. The children should be able to say that we wave palms and sing "Hosanna!" to praise God on Palm Sunday.

#### GETTING READY

In a variety of ways, children can be a part of Palm Sunday observances. This session, which is likely to be used during Lent, is designed to help young children anticipate the Liturgy of the Palms, which comes at the beginning of the Church's worship on the first day of Holy Week.

Palm Sunday itself has been called a day with a split personality. It begins with triumphant procession and hosannas. In the story in *Matthew 21*, Jesus sends his disciples to find a donkey on the outskirts of Jerusalem. They brought the donkey to Jesus, spreading their cloaks for him to ride on.

Jesus entered Jerusalem in triumph, with crowds shouting "Hosanna to the Son of David!" The people were waving palm branches and spreading their cloaks on the road.

The Palm Sunday liturgy concludes in silence following the reading of the Passion that ends with the death of Jesus. The liturgy dramatically summarizes the events of Holy Week.

Preschool/kindergarten children are especially able to enter joyously into preparations for waving palm fronds to welcome Jesus as he enters Jerusalem. They can join their voices in singing "Hosanna!"

O God, the source of eternal light: Shed forth your unending day upon us who watch for you, that our lips may praise you, our lives may bless you, and our worship on the morrow give you glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Collect for Saturdays

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 123

#### TEACHING TIP

Role-playing provides an excellent opportunity for all of us, young and old alike, to enter more fully into the actions, feelings, and emotions of biblical events. In many churches, Palm Sunday offers an occasion for the whole congregation to act out the story of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.

Arrange for the children in your class to participate with their families. Doing simple role-plays in class can be a good way to help the children get ready to take part.

### **GATHERING**

Make a large cross from sticks, branches, or pieces of wood. As the children arrive, let them join in helping to lay green branches around the cross.

When all are present, gather in a circle and say together:

I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the Lord.”

*Psalm 122:1*

### **STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce the story by reading from the Bible. Gather in a circle, open the Bible, and let the children see where the reading is. Read *Matthew 21:9b*:

“Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Children respond: Thanks be to God.

In your own words, tell the story of Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem, drawing on *Matthew 21:1-11* as a guide. Display Poster No. 11 of the Palm Sunday procession that is provided in the Teacher’s Packet. Highlight the following:

- Jesus and his disciples went on a journey to Jerusalem. As they came near to the city, Jesus sent two of his disciples to get a donkey for him to ride.
- The disciples found a donkey and put their coats over its back. Jesus then sat on the donkey.
- When he rode into the city, people were very happy to see him. They spread their coats on the ground and cut palm branches off the trees to place on the road in front of Jesus.
- The people—men and women, young and old, and children of all ages—began to shout “Hosanna,” which means “Praise be to God,” to show their happiness.
- Everyone crowded around to see Jesus. It was a very happy day.

### **CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

#### **Option 1. Palm Paintings**

Place a pot of palms, another green plant, or a picture of a palm in the front of the room. Provide green tempera paint, paper, and large brushes. Let the children create paintings of palms and other green branches. As they work, continue to talk about the palms that were strewn in Jesus’ way as he

entered Jerusalem.

### **Option 2. Newspaper Palms**

Make newspaper palm trees. For each child, roll a single sheet of newspaper into a tube. Tape the tube so it will not unroll. Cut slits in one end of the tube. Pull out the inside layer of the tube and palm “fronds” will come out. Some four- and five-year-olds will be able to do this themselves.

#### **GAME** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Sing stanzas like the following, to the tune of “Here We Go ‘Round the Mulberry Bush”:

This is the way we watched for Jesus, watched for Jesus, watched for Jesus,

This is the way we watched for Jesus,  
On the day we waved our palms.

This is the way he rode along, etc.,  
On the day we waved our palms.

This is the way we sang our praise, etc.,  
On the day we waved our palms.

Children can add appropriate motions while singing each stanza.

#### **DOING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Provide materials for the children to act out the story of Jesus entering Jerusalem. Towels can be used for head coverings and for coats. Green branches can be used to wave and to place on the ground. A “road” can be marked out on the floor with masking tape, and a stick (with a stuffed paper bag head) can be used as a donkey.

#### **WONDERING** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Look again at Poster No. 11 of the Palm Sunday procession from the Teacher’s Packet (see Storytelling, above). Wonder about:

—riding on a donkey. How would it feel to ride this animal?

—the city of Jerusalem. What would it be like to live there? What was the road like? What was the weather like? What kinds of plants were growing?

—the people who came to see Jesus entering the city of Jerusalem. How did they feel when they saw Jesus coming? How did Jesus feel?

#### **MUSIC** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Listen on the music tape *Children Sing!* to “I want to walk as a child of the light” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 490). Ask the children to use the green

branches that were placed around the cross at the Gathering (above). Organize a procession, and invite the children to move in different ways with their branches while you sing or play the tape. Suggest that they show how they feel by the way they wave the branches.

**CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Let the conversation begin by focusing on a time in the children's experience when they waited eagerly for an event to begin—a recent parade, the arrival of an important person, a wedding, or other occasion. Ask questions like: What did you do while you were waiting? What did you do when (the event, the person) finally arrived? What did you say? feel? What was the most exciting thing about it?

If the children are present for processions in your congregation, talk about these. Ask: Who is in the procession? How are the people dressed? What do they carry? Where do they come from? Where do they go?

If your congregation has a procession on Palm Sunday, explain to the children what happens.

**TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 24 shows Jesus riding on a donkey and includes a Scripture verse, a prayer, and a note to parents. Remind the children to take the card home, show it to their families, and keep it in a safe place.

**SAYING GOODBYE**

Say the following prayer of thanksgiving. Add any line that seems appropriate.

Thank you, God, for our church,  
And for palms we wave in praise to Jesus.  
(*Pray for the needs of the children.*)  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle and say:  
Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.  
Children: Thanks be to God.

**TEACHER'S REFLECTION**

Think about the story of Jesus' triumphant entry. In what ways did the children express their understanding of this event? Did the activities in this session help the children to enter into the anticipation, joy, and excitement of this story?

**LOOKING AHEAD**

The focus of the next session is on the events of Holy Week that led to Jesus' death and resurrection. Read one of the Gospel accounts (*Mark, chs. 11-15; Matthew 21-27; Luke 19:29-23; John, 12-19*). Reflect on the story of

Jesus' last days.

# WORSHIP: ENVIRONMENT

## SESSION 7

### HOLY WEEK

#### FOCUS

In Holy Week we remember what happened between Palm Sunday and Easter. The children should be able to name one or more of the events of Jesus' life during that week.

#### GETTING READY

Many Christians attend the church's liturgies on Palm Sunday and Easter but are not involved in the services during Holy Week. For that reason, it is important to focus on what happened during the intervening week, especially the Last Supper and the Crucifixion.

The week begins with the joy of Palm Sunday, with the people shouting "Hosanna!" and waving palm leaves as Jesus enters Jerusalem. Later that week, Jesus met with his disciples to celebrate the Passover meal, which is part of a Jewish festival to remember the freeing of the Hebrew people from their Egyptian captors.

At that meal, Jesus began by washing his disciples' feet (*John 13:1-20*). He took the role of a servant to illustrate the way they were to act in the world. Then Jesus shared bread and wine with his disciples as part of the Last Supper. He said the words we hear at the Eucharist each week in church.

Soon after, Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. He was arrested, tried, and found guilty. On Good Friday, he was crucified. He gave his life so that we may live. His friends put Jesus in a tomb, which was sealed with a stone. Guards were left to ensure that no one tampered with the grave.

Children should be introduced to these poignant scenes with great care. We know that the good news of Jesus' resurrection soon followed.

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Monday in Holy Week

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 220

### TEACHING TIP

Because young children cannot be shielded from the full story of Holy Week, teachers and parents need to think through carefully how to approach it. To dwell on the crucifixion story in detail can be very disturbing to children who have developed a deep love for Jesus. Teaching about Good Friday and the cross, therefore, should always be linked with the joyous good news of the resurrection.

### GATHERING

As the children arrive, direct their attention to the four pictures of Holy Week provided on Poster No. 12 in the Teacher's Packet (Jesus washing Peter's feet; Jesus with bread and wine; Jesus carrying his cross; the closed tomb with guards standing nearby). Encourage them to look carefully at each of the scenes and to talk about what they see. Some five-year-olds may be able to read the words (Holy Week) that appear at the top of the poster. Provide books, paper, and crayons for the children as an alternative activity.

When all are present, gather in a circle and say together:

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord."

*Psalm 122:1*

### STORY (Time: 10 minutes)

Introduce the story by reading from the Bible. Gather in a circle, open the Bible, and let the children see where the reading is. Read *Matthew 27:54c*:

"... Truly this man was God's Son!"

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Children respond: Thanks be to God.

Prepare to tell in your own words a story about Holy Week. Use the words "Holy Week," explaining that we remember each year in our church the story of Jesus' last days and his resurrection. Refer to the pictures on Poster No. 12 in the Teacher's Packet that were used at the Gathering.

- Review what happened on Palm Sunday, then tell the story of the Last Supper (Maundy Thursday). This was the last meal Jesus had with his friends, the twelve disciples. They gathered in an upstairs room.

- Jesus surprised them by taking a bowl of water and a towel and washing the disciples' feet. He wanted to show that he had come to be their servant.

- After the group had eaten, Jesus took bread, thanked God for it, broke it, and shared it with the twelve disciples. Then he took a cup of wine, thanked God for it, and shared it. He said the words we hear at the Eucharist in our church. He was telling the disciples he would die and rise again. He asked them to share bread and wine in this way always.

- Finally, describe Good Friday. Jesus had to carry the cross on which he

died (was crucified) that day. After his death, Jesus was placed in a tomb with a stone against the door. Soldiers stood by to make sure no one went in or out.

- But we know the good news that followed: Jesus returned to life on Easter Day.

**CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

### **Option 1. Cross Prints**

Make sponge-painted cross pictures. Cut sponges into the shape of a cross or in simple rectangles of all sizes. Put tempera paint in shallow trays. Provide a sheet of paper for each class member. Allow the children to dip the cross shapes or rectangles into the paint to make cross prints on the paper.

### **Option 2. Holy Week Pictures**

Give each child a sheet of paper that contains a simple outline of a chalice, paten, and cross. (A pattern suitable for photocopying is provided in the Teacher's Packet, Poster No. 13) Invite the class members to use markers or crayons to create their own pictures of Jesus at the Supper or on Good Friday. As they work, talk with the children about Holy Week.

**GAME** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Play "Finish the Story." The teacher says a series of sentences about the events of Holy Week, pausing before the final word(s). The children are to fill in what is missing. Examples:

On Palm Sunday, Jesus rode on a (donkey).

Along the road to Jerusalem, the people waved (palm branches).

At Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples, he took water and a towel and washed (the disciples' feet).

They ate (bread). They drank (wine).

On Good Friday, Jesus died on (a cross).

We call this week in the church (Holy Week).

Decide whether to ask the children to take turns in responding or to allow the whole group to call out the missing words. Repeat the game, and let the children pantomime the sentences.

**DOING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Ahead of time, bake a supply of hot cross buns—enough for each child to receive one. (Bake the buns from a traditional recipe, form them from packaged dough, or purchase bakery rolls.) Invite the children to finish the buns by putting a frosting cross on the tops. Use slightly runny confectioners' icing and spoons to dribble the cross design. Alternatives would be pre-packaged frosting tubes or pastry tubes filled with icing.

**WONDERING** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

The events we examine in Holy Week run the gamut of human feelings

from high expectation and excitement on Palm Sunday to deep sorrow on Good Friday, followed by the great joy of Easter. Young children are aware of the emotions of Jesus' last days, the facts of which are only now coming fully into their consciousness. Wonder about the things that happened to Jesus during this week. How many people saw Jesus on Palm Sunday? What would it be like to be so happy? After Good Friday, what would it be like to be so very sad?

**MUSIC** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Teachers may choose not to have music this week, in order to stress the reflective nature of Holy Week.

If you wish, introduce the refrain of "Alleluia, Alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord" (*The Hymnal 1982*, 178), and explain that this will be a part of the coming Easter celebration. Remind the children that "Alleluia" is not said in church until Easter Day.

**CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Holy Week customs vary among congregations. The children will have only limited knowledge of what to expect if they are present at services during those days. Share some information, and talk about:

What will happen in our church during Holy Week? What are the names of the services? On what days will they be held? What happens on Maundy Thursday? on Good Friday? at the Easter Vigil?

How will the church look inside during Holy Week? What will change from day to day? What can we be watching and listening for?

**TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 25 has a picture of Jesus carrying a cross, a Scripture verse, a prayer, and a note to parents. Remind the children to take the card home, share it with their families, and keep it in a safe place.

**SAYING GOODBYE**

Say the following prayer of thanksgiving. Add any line that seems appropriate.

Thank you, God, for the life of Jesus,  
And for Holy Week in our church.  
(*Pray for any concerns the children express.*)  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle, and say:

Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.  
Children: Thanks be to God.

**TEACHER'S REFLECTION**

How did the children respond to the joy of Palm Sunday? In contrast, how did they respond to the sadness of Good Friday? Was this just a lesson for them or did they show some emotions?

**LOOKING AHEAD**

The remaining two sessions in this unit focus on the joy of Easter. Take time to think about the changes that happen in the church environment during the Easter season. How do these changes affect us in our spirituality?

# WORSHIP: ENVIRONMENT

## SESSION 8

### THE LORD IS RISEN INDEED

#### FOCUS

The Church has preserved the ancient Easter greeting, “Alleluia. Christ is risen. The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.” The children should be able to say this greeting and tell when we use it.

#### GETTING READY

Easter is the oldest season of the Christian year. It has been called a fifty-day Sunday. From ancient times, kneeling and fasting were considered inappropriate in these weeks of celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The salutation and response for Easter, declaring that the Lord is risen, are said with joy by everyone in the church.

We can understand how the friends and disciples of Jesus must have felt when they realized that the tomb was empty. In the story in *Luke*, the women arrive at the tomb with spices to anoint the body. When they arrived, they found the stone rolled away and the tomb empty.

Two men “in dazzling clothes” stood beside and told them that Jesus had risen. The women told their story to the disciples who did not believe them. But Peter ran to the tomb and found it empty, with only the linen cloths that had been wrapped around the body. Later Jesus appeared to his disciples and others.

Ritual words and actions are very important in the lives of young children—a fact evident in their daily routines and play. It is appropriate, therefore, to introduce preschool/kindergarten children to the words and actions that are traditionally a part of the Church’s celebrations. Just as we learn to say “Merry Christmas” to one another in the season of our Lord’s birth, we learn also to say “Christ is risen” in the season of the resurrection.

O God, who for our redemption gave your only-begotten Son to the death of the cross, and by his glorious resurrection delivered us from the power of our enemy: Grant us so to die daily to sin, that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his resurrection; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Easter Day

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 222

#### TEACHING TIP

Young children learn by comparing and contrasting. Easter customs in the

Church offer concrete examples of sharp contrast between the more somber Lenten season with its plain atmosphere and the bright Easter vestments, flowers, and music. The season of Christ's resurrection is a splendid time to encourage the children to describe the changes they observe in their church.

### **GATHERING**

As the children arrive, ask them to help in decorating the classroom for Easter. Use colorful streamers and flowers. As they work, talk about the joy of Easter Day.

When all are present, gather in a circle and say together:

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord."

*Psalm 122:1*

### **STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce the story by reading from the Bible. To do this, gather the children in a circle, open the Bible, and let the children see where the reading is. Read *Luke 24:34*:

"... 'The Lord has risen indeed,' ..."

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Children respond: Thanks be to God.

In your own words, tell the story of Jesus' resurrection. Use the picture on Poster No. 11 provided in the Teacher's Packet that shows the empty tomb, Mary Magdalene, and the risen Christ. Highlight the following:

- After Jesus died, women who were his friends went to his tomb but did not find his body. They wondered how they were going to move the stone and if the guards were still there.
- An angel told them that Jesus had been raised from the dead. They were very happy and went to tell Jesus' friends.
- Jesus' friends were not sure whether to believe what the women told them, but later that day they saw Jesus themselves.
- The friends were full of joy, and they shouted, "The Lord is risen indeed!" Now they knew that Jesus was the Son of God and was alive forever.
- On Easter Day, we still greet one another with the joyous words of the disciples, "Christ is risen. The Lord is risen indeed." Lead the children in practicing the response.

### **CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

#### **Option 1. Tissue Painting**

Make tissue paintings to express the joy of Easter. Provide scraps of bright colored tissue and a sheet of construction paper for each child. Dilute water-soluble glue and set out several dishes of the mixture. Invite the children to brush pieces of tissue with the glue and smooth these down on the paper background. As layers of tissue are added, the colors run together to form pictures.

### **Option 2. Lily Pictures**

Ahead of time, prepare a sheet of paper for each child, with a line drawn horizontally on the lower third to represent the ground level. Just below the line, add a lily bulb, with hairy roots (sketched and colored, or cut from brown construction paper and glued on). Ask the children to draw and color an Easter lily plant above the “ground.” Talk about how lilies appear at Easter to remind us of new life. Have pots of lilies or pictures available.

### **GAME** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Play the game, “Telephone.” Children sit in a circle and pass a secret message by whispering from one person to the next. The message continues around the circle until the last person repeats the message out loud to the class. Use the words, “The Lord is risen indeed,” for the first message. Continue with other messages, such as these hymn lines: “Hail thee, festival day,” or “Good Christians all, rejoice,” and “Jesus Christ is risen today.”

### **DOING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Use simple props and costumes to enable the children to reenact the story of the resurrection. They can dramatize the women’s visit to the empty tomb—their sadness as they approach it, and their great surprise and joy as they discover that Jesus is alive. Include the sharing of the news with the disciples and others, using the traditional Easter greeting.

### **WONDERING** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Wonder about how you would feel if you were at the empty tomb. What does surprise feel like? What does joy feel like?

### **MUSIC** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Continue singing “Alleluia, Alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 178). Children can march and wave their arms as they sing this glad Easter hymn.

Another possibility would be for the class members to sit in a circle and play a rhythm game by tapping their knees to the rhythm of Easter hymns. Begin by tapping out “Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia!” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 207.) Both hymns are recorded on the tape *Children Sing!*

### **CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Talk about how the church building looks at Eastertide. What changes do we see on Easter Day? What colors do we notice? Ask the children to describe the altar, the candles, the vestments, banners, flowers, and other

changes. Was it a surprise to see how different everything seemed? Why?

#### **TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 26 has a picture of Jesus, a Scripture verse, an Easter prayer, and a note to parents. Remind the children to use the card to tell their families the Good News of Easter, then to keep the card in a safe place.

#### **SAYING GOODBYE**

Say the following prayer of thanksgiving. Add any line that seems appropriate.

Thank you, God,  
For the good news of Eastertime.  
*(Pray for the needs of the children)*  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle and say:  
Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.  
Children: Thanks be to God.

#### **TEACHER'S REFLECTION**

Children enjoy celebrations and surprises. In what ways did the children show an understanding that the resurrection was a glad surprise? Were the children able to sense that Easter is a festival of celebration? In what ways did they express their own joy?

#### **LOOKING AHEAD**

The next session focuses on the Easter celebration. Jesus is risen! Spend some time reflecting on your own feelings about the Good News of Easter.

# WORSHIP: ENVIRONMENT

## SESSION 9

### ALLELUIA! ALLELUIA!

#### FOCUS

At Easter we sing about our risen Lord. The good news of Jesus' resurrection makes us joyful. The children should be able to say we sing to show our joy, using words like "Alleluia!"

#### GETTING READY

The word Alleluia, also spelled Hallelujah, is Hebrew for "Praise ye Yahweh (the Lord God)." We include it in Christian hymns and liturgy, especially at Easter, the season of Christ's resurrection. The Great Alleluia is sung or shouted at the First Eucharist of Easter.

Something about the very sound of Alleluia conveys its meaning; it rolls off our tongues to express our incomparable joy at the good news that our Lord has been raised from the grave.

In this session, we seek to communicate to young children the delight we experience in singing about Jesus' rising from the dead to live forever and ever.

Almighty God, who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ overcame death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of the Lord' resurrection, may be raised from the death of sin by your life-giving Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. *Amen.*

Easter Day

*The Book of Common Prayer, p. 222*

#### TEACHING TIP

Young children express emotions such as joy and sadness through bodily movement. This session encourages the use of bodies and voices to show the joy of Jesus' resurrection. Allow the children to be creative in their expressive movements.

#### GATHERING

Prepare a large sheet of paper in the shape of a banner. Print "Alleluia!" in large letters on the paper. As the children arrive, provide crayons and markers or glue and bits of colored tissue to be used in decorating the banner. Hang it in a prominent place in your room to celebrate Easter.

When all are present, gather in a circle and say together:

I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the Lord.”

*Psalm 122:1*

**STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce the story by reading from *The Book of Common Prayer*. Gather in a circle, open the Prayer Book, and let the children see where the reading is. Read:

“Alleluia. Christ is risen.” (BCP, pp. 323, 355)

Describe the joy with which Christians greet Easter:

- Explain to the children that words of joy from *The Book of Common Prayer* are spoken at the beginning of our worship during the season of Easter. They are said first at the services on Easter Day, beginning with the Easter Vigil.

- The words were used by Jesus’ disciples when they learned that Jesus had risen from the dead. They have been used by Christians ever since.

- Review the Easter story, using your own words and referring again to Poster No. 11 of the risen Jesus from the Teacher’s Packet. Include the following points:

- Jesus’ friends and disciples were very sad when Jesus died. On the third morning after his death, several women went to visit the place where he was buried. Jesus had been placed in a cave, and a big rock was rolled to block the entrance.

- When they arrived, the stone had been rolled away. They looked inside, and nothing but a few pieces of cloth were there.

- Two men in bright clothes told the women that Jesus had risen. The women went to tell the others the good news.

- Share with the children the fact that we tell this joyous Easter story over and over. We hear it every year through our whole lives.

**CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

### **Option 1. Alleluia Prints**

Provide each child with a sheet of paper folded in half. Ask the class members to decorate one half of their sheets with bright colored crayons. On the other half write the word “Alleluia” in large bold letters. Fold the paper in half with the crayon side and the Alleluia on the inside. Press firmly (you may even wish to use a warm iron) on the crayon side to transfer the crayon design to the other side. Open the paper for a special Alleluia surprise.

### **Option 2. Singing at Easter**

Use a crayon resist process to make pictures of choirs and others singing at Eastertime. Give each child a piece of paper and crayons. Invite the class members to draw with the crayons. When this step is completed, provide watercolors or thin tempera to paint over the pictures in a bright Easter color (such as yellow, pink, light blue, or pale green). As they work, talk with the children about all the people who sing “Alleluia.” You may want to play a tape of Easter music in the background.

**GAME** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Play “Match Your Cross.” Ahead of time, cut out large crosses from colored paper or different patterns of wallpaper. Make sure there are matching pairs of each color or pattern, enough for each child in the class to have one. Pass out the crosses, and ask the group to skip around the room as music is played. When the music stops, each child will find a partner with a matching cross. Mix up and exchange crosses, and repeat the game as long as children are interested.

(Note: If the class is composed of an odd number of children, the teacher can join the game to make it possible for everyone to find a matching cross.)

**DOING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Take the children into the nave of your church, and invite them to point out all the evidence that it is Eastertime (the altar hangings, banners, and flowers). Enjoy naming all the church furnishings and discussing what happens when people come together to worship.

Look closely at the altar cover and pulpit hanging. Look for the Paschal Candle, and point it out.

You may want to pretend that the class members are a choir and arrange a brief Easter procession.

**WONDERING** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Invite the children to wonder about Easter celebrations all around the world. Say, I wonder what the first Easter was like. I wonder what Easter would be like in other parts of the world. I wonder how many Christians there are? How many celebrate Easter by going to church?

**MUSIC** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Sing again “Alleluia, Alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 178). Use bells, and wave ribbons, streamers, or scarves while singing. If possible, attach the banner made during the Gathering (above) to a pole, and march in a parade. Take turns being the leader. Use the tape *Children Sing!*

**CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Talk with the children about what they did to celebrate Easter. Ask questions like:

How did you get ready?  
Where did you go? What did you have to eat?  
What did you sing in church? What did you talk about?  
What will you remember best about Easter? What would you like to do again?

Note: If the children talk about new clothes, bunnies, egg hunts, and the like, welcome these contributions because they represent the idea of new life, which is the central theme of Easter.

#### **TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 27 shows an Easter choir scene, a Scripture verse, a hymn stanza, and a note to parents. Remind the children to take the card home, share it with their families, and keep it in a safe place.

#### **SAYING GOODBYE**

Say the following prayer of thanksgiving. Add any line that seems appropriate.

Thank you, God, for Easter  
And for music to share.  
*(Pray for the concerns of the children.)*  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle and say:  
Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.  
Children: Thanks be to God.

#### **TEACHER'S REFLECTION**

Have the children gained a sense of appreciation and understanding of the church's environment? Do they sense belonging to a church family? Do they see the difference between Lent and Easter?

Note: The following letter is for teachers and parents of children in the preschool/  
kindergarten level of church school. These pages can be reproduced or  
used as a model for a personalized letter.

## Episcopal Children's Curriculum

### Unit IV. THE CHURCH SINGS

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Music affects us in many ways. It can make us laugh, weep, or dance. It can energize and stir us. It can arouse every kind of feeling and emotion. Music is one of the chief forms of religious expression. Some of the most powerful music ever composed declares the glory of God, and proclaims the good news of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ.

Words of hymns and service music from the hymnal are connected to our personal experience. Moments of joy—such as baptisms, confirmations, and weddings—bring to mind the hymns that were sung on those occasions. Similarly, times of sorrow are frequently associated with music.

We encourage you to talk about the lessons with your child. Do this by reading together the children's book, *Let Us Sing*, which illustrates a hymn for children.

Scripture passages and excerpts from *The Book of Common Prayer* that the children encounter are cited below. Look up the passages and excerpts with your child and show them where they are in the Bible and Prayer Book. The Take-Home Cards given to learners each week feature illustrations and text related to session themes. They also include useful instructions for parents. These collectible cards, which are 5 by 8 inches, can be displayed in a photo album, kept in an oversized recipe box, or used in any way you find helpful.

Following are summaries of the unit's sessions:

**Session 1: “God Gives Us Music”** is designed to help the children appreciate the Church's singing. The people of the Church have always used music and singing to express their feelings about God. (*Psalm 150:1a, 3, 6b*)

**Session 2: “We Sing of God in the Morning”** encourages the children to give God thanks and praise each new day. Singing is a way of expressing our morning praise. (*Psalm 100:1-2*)

**Session 3: “We Sing of God All Day”** reminds the children that all day long, as we work or play, we remember that God is with us. (*Colossians 3:16c*)

**Session 4: “We Sing of God in the Evening”** describes the way God watches over us during the night. God is with us while we are sleeping. (O Gracious Light, *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 118)

**Session 5: “We Sing Our Praise to God”** tells how the whole creation inspires music and our hymns of praise. We praise God in song for all that God has made. (*Psalms 96:1a*)

**Session 6: “We Sing Our Praise to Jesus Christ”** tells how the people of the Church sing hymns of praise for Jesus Christ. (Holy Eucharist, *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 358)

**Session 7: “We Sing About Loving God”** is about “first and great commandment” to “love the Lord (our) God” with all our hearts, souls, and minds. We sing of our love for God. (*Psalms 66:1-2*)

**Session 8: “We Sing About Loving Others”** is about the second commandment that we should “love (our) neighbor” as ourselves. Love of neighbor is a familiar theme in our Church’s hymns. (*Matthew 22:37-39*)

**Session 9: “The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost”** is for use at Pentecost and celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles. At Pentecost we sing our praise for the Holy Spirit. (*Acts 2:1*)

Yours in Christ,  
Church School Teachers

# THE CHURCH SINGS

## SESSION 1

### GOD GIVES US MUSIC

#### FOCUS

Music and singing are gifts from God. The people of the Church have always used music and singing to express their feelings about God. The children should be able to identify *The Hymnal 1982* as the Church's book of songs, and to name musical sounds they hear in church.

#### GETTING READY

God's people have always used music to worship God. The Bible includes many stories about the use of music in worship.

For example, after the Hebrew people escaped the Egyptian armies by crossing the Red Sea, Moses led the people in singing a song to the Lord (*Exodus 15:1-18*). Then Aaron's sister Miriam "took a tambourine in her hand; and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing." (*Exodus 15:20*)

David is often remembered as a writer of psalms who played the lyre. When King Saul was troubled, "David took the lyre and played it with his hand, and Saul would be relieved and feel better. . . ." (*1 Samuel 16:23*)

In the *Gospel of Mark*, Jesus and the disciples sang a hymn at the end of the Last Supper before going to the Mount of Olives. (*Mark 14:26*)

In the early church Latin hymns were sung by choirs at daily services. During the Reformation, people sang psalms in church, on the streets, and from the windows of their houses.

Today we sing hymns, psalms, songs, and anthems that represent the rich musical traditions of Christian bodies in many lands and cultures. *The Hymnal 1982* contains a wide selection from these treasures.

In a very simple way, this unit invites young children to enjoy the musical heritage of Christians.

O God, whom saints and angels delight to worship in heaven: Be ever present with your servants who seek through art and music to perfect the praises offered by your people on earth; and grant to them even now glimpses of your beauty, and make them worthy at length to behold it unveiled for evermore; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For Church Musicians and Artists

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 819

#### TEACHING TIP

Music is the focus for this unit. The level of your own musical ability

should be secondary to the children's enjoyment of music. Do not be overly concerned about learning either the words or tunes of each session's hymn. Our purpose is to increase the children's exposure to the Church's music, and to help them appreciate the vital role it plays in our worship. Strive simply to enjoy making music together. The tape *Children Sing!* will provide musical help for this unit.

### **GATHERING**

On a table, arrange an attractive display of a Bible, a copy of *The Book of Common Prayer*, and a copy of *The Hymnal 1982*. Also include any other hymnals such as *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, *We Sing of God*, or *Wonder Love and Praise*. As the children arrive, encourage them to examine the books. Talk with them about the similarities and differences that they observe among them.

When all have arrived, say:

Teacher: Thanks be to God.

Children: Alleluia, alleluia!

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 366.

### **STORY** (Time: 10 minutes)

Introduce the story by reading from the Bible. To do this, gather the children in a circle, open the Bible, and let the children see where the reading is. Read *Psalms 150: 1a, 3, 6b* (adapted):

Praise the Lord!

Praise (God) with trumpet sound; praise (God) with lute and harp!

Praise the Lord!

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Children respond: Thanks be to God.

As you tell the story, use the Bible, the Prayer Book, and the hymnal that were displayed at the Gathering. Also, show Poster No. 14 from the Teacher's Packet that illustrates *Psalms 150*.

- Begin by saying that God's people have always used music to worship God. The Bible (hold it up) has many stories about people who worshiped God with music. Describe these examples, in your own words:

- Moses and Miriam and the people of God danced and sang their praise after they had escaped from Egypt. (*Exodus 15*)

- David, the shepherd boy who grew up to be king, played a lyre (like the one shown on Poster No. 1 and 14), and he wrote psalms, or songs. Point to the instruments on Poster No. 14 that are all mentioned in *Psalms 150*. The Bible has a whole book of psalms (songs), and these psalms are also in our Prayer Book (hold it up). Some can be found in the hymnal (hold it up).

- Jesus and his disciples sang a psalm together at the end of the Last

Supper.

- We play music and sing our praises to God in our church.

**CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

### **Option 1. Making Hymnals**

Ahead of time, make photocopies of the first line of the Venite, “Come, let us sing to the Lord,” on 8 1/2 by 11-inch white paper. (A sample version is provided on Poster No. 13 in the Teacher’s Packet.) Fold these in half and insert them inside construction paper covers. If possible, match the color of the hymnals in your church (usually blue or red).

Allow the children to add notes and any other musical decorations they wish, with crayons or markers. As the children work, talk about the use of the hymnal by God’s people as they worship.

### **Option 2. Painting to Music**

Provide the children with paper, paint, smocks, and brushes. As music is played, invite the class members to paint expressively in response to what they hear. They may want to vary the colors they use, and the size of the brushes. You may wish to write the first line from the Venite at the top of the page.

**GAME** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Play a non-competitive version of “Musical Chairs.” Arrange a group of chairs so that there is one for each child. Start the music, and invite the children to move around the chairs until the music stops. Everyone then sits down. Repeat.

Each time the children move to the music, demonstrate a particular action they are to do (such as marching, clapping, skipping, dancing, and waving arms). Older children may wish to suggest the actions.

**DOING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Arrange a visit to the church’s organ. Ask the organist or choir director to demonstrate the organ or other musical instruments your church uses. Invite the children to sing or hum with the organ, or to keep time quietly (with an arm motion like that of a conductor). Be sure to notice the hymnals.

**WONDERING** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Play the recording of church music from the tape *Children Sing!* It includes a variety of instruments and musical styles. Ask the children to sit quietly with their eyes closed in order to listen intently.

Wonder aloud about the sounds and moods, asking questions like:

What does the music make you think about? How does it make you feel?  
What does the music make you want to do?

How can the music help you think of God? What does it make you want to say to God?

**MUSIC** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Choose one of your favorite hymns from *The Hymnal 1982*. Decide how to share it with the class members. You may want to tell briefly why you like it, when you first heard it, and how it makes you feel to sing it.

Invite the children to share their favorite hymns from the past three units.  
Re-sing these hymns.

**CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Talk about the many kinds of music that are used to praise God. Ask: What are some of these that we use in our own church? Who makes the music? How? (Examples: organ, piano, bells, guitars.)

Who sings? Speak about choirs in churches, some small and others large, some adults and some children. Who do you know who sings in a choir? Where have you heard choirs? How does the singing sound?

We worship God when we sing with our own voices. What are some of the things you like to sing to God?

**TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 28 includes a musical picture, a Scripture verse, a poem, and a note to parents. Remind the children to take the card home and add it to their collection, keeping it in a safe place.

**SAYING GOODBYE**

Say the following prayer of thanksgiving. Add any line that seems appropriate.

Thank you, God, for the hymns we sing,  
And for music to praise you.  
(*Pray for the needs of the children.*)  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle and say:

Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.

Children: Thanks be to God.

**TEACHER'S REFLECTION**

Sometimes young children show early on that they are picking up the inhibitions many adults feel with respect to singing. Reflect on each child in your class. Did they all seem comfortable with their musical expressions? If not, what can you do to increase the comfort level of those children?

**LOOKING AHEAD**

The next session focuses on musical praise offered in the morning. Listen to some music that is reflective of your faith each day. Consider how it affects you.

# THE CHURCH SINGS

## SESSION 2

### WE SING OF GOD IN THE MORNING

#### FOCUS

Each morning we give God thanks and praise for a new day. Singing is a way of expressing our morning praise. The children should be able to say that we can sing praise to God in the morning.

#### GETTING READY

God's people of long ago worshiped in the temple at Jerusalem and in synagogues. In the Hebrew language, they sang their praises to God each day.

In *I Chronicles 25* is a description of duties of the temple musicians. Some were to prophesy with lyres, harps, and cymbals. Another was to use the lyre in thanksgiving and praise to the Lord.

When Isaiah tells about the blessings that are in store for God's people, he says, "So the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing." (*Isaiah 51:11a*)

Jesus also sang these same songs of praise with his people.

In our churches, one of our oldest morning songs is *Psalm 100*, which is also called the Jubilate (from the Latin word for "joy").

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us in safety to this new day: Preserve us with your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all we do, direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 137

#### TEACHING TIP

Mornings in classes and in homes can be chaotic and fast-paced. Music can help us to change that pace and focus on being God's people. As you work with the children in the classroom, look for ways to use music that praises God to accompany activities and transitions. Recorded music can be a substitute for instruments and singing.

#### GATHERING

Beforehand, gather a variety of bells (jingle bells, sleigh bells, wind chimes, dinner bells, or bicycle bells). Display these on a table. As the children arrive, demonstrate the sounds made by the different bells. You may want to permit each class member to choose one bell to ring. Have music playing in the background as children experiment with the bells.

When all are present, say:

Teacher: Thanks be to God.

Children: Alleluia, alleluia!

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 366.

**STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce the story by reading from the Bible. To do this, gather the children in a circle, open the Bible, and let the children see where the reading is. Read *Psalms 100:1-2*:

“Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.  
Worship the Lord with gladness;  
come into his presence with singing.”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Children respond: Thanks be to God.

Compose a story that begins with waking up in the morning.

- When we open our eyes, we can tell whether the sun is shining or the day is cloudy. It may be bright and warm; it may be rainy or frosty or snowy. Every day is different.

- When we listen with our ears, we can hear the sounds of the morning. Sometimes we know the birds are singing. Sometimes we hear the drops of rain falling. Sometimes we hear the familiar sounds of people preparing breakfast, or going to work, or racing by in their cars and trucks. Sometimes we hear bells ringing in the morning.

- If we breathe deeply, we can smell food cooking or the scent of flowers outside our windows.

- Every day is a gift from God. With gladness, we give God thanks and praise for each new morning with all its sights and sounds and smells.

- One of the songs we sing at church is called the Jubilate. We can ring bells joyfully as we sing. The words of this morning song are from *Psalms 100* in the Bible. It is in our Prayer Book and in our Hymnal.

- This song was sung when our mothers and fathers were boys and girls. This song was sung when our grandmothers and grandfathers were boys and girls.

(Remind the children to look at the children’s book *Let Us Sing*, pages 2-3, at home for a picture and the words to the *Psalms 100*.)

**CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

**Option 1. Bells**

Provide a small paper cup and a jingle bell for each child. Invite the children to use crayons, markers, and bits of construction paper with glue or stickers, to decorate the outside of the cups. When they finish, attach a jingle

bell to each cup with a string. If you use plastic or cups with wax coating, cover the cups with construction paper before decorating.

Note to teachers: Plan to make extra bells, and save these for use in a Pentecost parade (Session 9, Music).

### **Option 2. Morning Picture**

Give each child a piece of white paper and some yellow, orange, red, and white tempera paint. Ask the class members to paint the sun rising in the morning. While the paint is still wet, allow the artists to sprinkle the sun with shiny glitter.

#### **GAME** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Ask the children to sit in a circle on the floor. Using a small ball, roll it to a child saying the words, “Be joyful in the Lord.” That child then rolls the ball to someone else, repeating the words. Take turns rolling the ball, making sure that everyone has an opportunity to do so.

#### **DOING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Encourage the children to role-play things people do in the morning. Provide props to enhance this activity: Clothing, dolls, pots, pans, toothbrushes, and other items. Use background music to encourage singing. The hymn, “Morning has broken” (*The Hymnal 1982, 8; We Sing of God, 6*), is one possibility.

#### **WONDERING** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Use the bells from the Gathering. Wonder about the sounds they make:

I wonder what bells would say if they could talk?

Some bells are loud, others are soft. Some are tinkling and some are clanging.

What does the sound of a bell make you want to do? Why?

What do the sounds make you think about?

How do the sounds of the bells make you feel?

#### **MUSIC** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce “The Jubilate” (*The Hymnal 1982, Service Music; We Sing of God, S 2*).

As you sing or chant slowly, encourage the children to ring bells (from the Gathering and/or from Creating, Option 2, above). The words of The Jubilate and an illustration are included in the children’s book, *Let Us Sing*, pages 2-3.

As an alternative, begin singing “Lord of All Hopefulness.”

#### **CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Talk with the children about morning time. Ask questions such as:

What happens outside in the morning? How does the world wake up?

What happens at your house in the morning? What do you do to get ready for the day? Who sings in the morning at your house? Do you? What could

you sing?

Many people sing praises to God in the morning. Why do you think they do this? What would you like to sing to God in the morning?

#### **TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 29 has a picture of a sunrise, a Scripture verse, a poem, and a note to parents. Remind the children to take the card home, show it to their families, and keep it in a safe place.

#### **SAYING GOODBYE**

Say the following prayer of thanksgiving. Add any line that seems appropriate.

Thank you, God, for the morning sun;  
Thank you for the songs we sing.  
*(Pray for any concerns the children may express.)*  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle and say:  
Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.  
Children: Thanks be to God.

#### **TEACHER'S REFLECTION**

Had the children thought of the idea of starting their day by singing praise to God? How do you think this session helped to convey this concept? How might you encourage the children to sing praise to God in their own ways?

#### **LOOKING AHEAD**

The next session emphasizes our singing praise to God throughout the day. As you go about your daily routines, be conscious of the times when you think of the words of a familiar hymn or song praising God. Does the music you listen to normally remind you of God or giving thanks to God?

# THE CHURCH SINGS

## SESSION 3

### WE SING OF GOD ALL DAY

#### FOCUS

All day long as we work or play we remember that God is with us. The children should be able to say that we can sing to God during the day.

#### GETTING READY

“Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy” is a hymn to help us think of God through the day. Jan Struther, wrote many children’s hymns in a collection titled *Songs of Praise*. She was born in England, but lived in America.

This hymn, written around 1930, was one of the first to address God as “you.” Earlier writers usually referred to God with the pronouns “thee” and “thou.” Jan Struther believed the more personal term “you” to be more natural for children. Now this pronoun is common not only in hymns but also in Bible translations and in *The Book of Common Prayer*.

The words of the hymn, set to an Irish ballad, describe God as gentle, kind, eager, hopeful, joyful, and calm. The song asks God to be with us when we wake, while we work, when we return home, and when we go to sleep. It ends by asking for God’s peace at the end of the day.

“Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy” can be enjoyed by people of all ages.

From the rising of the sun to its setting my Name shall be great among the nations, and in every place incense shall be offered to my Name, and a pure offering; for my Name shall be great among the nations, says the Lord of Hosts. (*Malachi 1:11*)

An Order of Service for Noonday  
*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 106

#### TEACHING TIP

When singing with young children, remember that their voices are naturally pitched higher. They are good imitators and learn music by echoing and repetition. Encourage class members to listen to hymns and songs for words and phrases that are repeated often. This helps them to sharpen their listening skills and enables them to join in even before they can sing the entire hymn.

#### GATHERING

Ahead of time, collect the following items: hairbrush or toothbrush

(morning); lunch box or lunch bag (noonday); storybook or other book (evening); stuffed animal or pillow (bedtime). As they arrive, talk with the children about when the items on display might be used. Provide books related to daily activities and puzzles to offer choices for the children. When all are ready, say:

Teacher: Thanks be to God.

Children: Alleluia, alleluia!

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 366

**STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce the story by reading from the Bible. To do this, gather in a circle, open the Bible, and let the children see where the reading is. Read *Colossians 3:16c*:

“. . . and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Children respond: Thanks be to God.

Prepare a story based on the hymn, “Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 482; *We Sing of God*, 78). Following is an outline you can follow:

- A woman named Jan Struther loved to sing her prayers to God. She liked to write down words that other people could sing, too. She wrote a hymn that makes us think about God all day long.

- Jan Struther knew that God is with us in the morning when we wake up and face a new day. She knew that God is with us when we work and at noontime when we stop for lunch.

- God is with us when we come home in the afternoon or evening.

- God is with us when we finish the day and lie down to sleep through the night.

- Jan Struther wanted her hymn to say what God is like. All day long we remember that God is full of joy, God is strong and eager, God is kind and loving, and God is gentle and calm and peaceful.

- So Jan Struther wrote her beautiful song, and we can sing it in the morning, during the day, or in the evening. (Show the children *The Hymnal 1982*, 482, and say that this is the hymn Jan Struther wrote.)

(Invite the children to look at the hymn when they go home in the children’s book *Let Us Sing*, pages 6-7.)

**CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

**Option 1. Sandblock Instruments**

For each child in the class, prepare the following: Two matching pieces of wood (scraps from a lumber yard or workshop, or pieces cut from a length of board), and two pieces of sandpaper cut to fit on the wood.

Help the children to attach their sandpaper pieces to their blocks of wood, with hot glue. When the glue is dry, enjoy making musical sounds by rubbing the blocks together on the sandpaper side.

Note to teachers: Plan to make extra sandblocks, and save these for use in a Pentecost parade (Session 9, Music).

### **Option 2. Singing Children (Pictures)**

Provide paper, crayons, and markers. Invite the children to draw pictures of children singing. As they work, talk with the class members about their drawings. What time of day is it in each picture (morning, midday, evening, or nighttime)?

#### **GAME** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Play a singing game, “Praise the Lord all day long.” Sing the following to the tune of “London Bridge is falling down”:

Praise the Lord all day long, all day long, all day long,  
Praise the Lord all day long. All God’s children.

*In the same pattern, use the following opening phrases:*

Praise the Lord in the morning, . . .  
Praise the Lord at the noonday, . . .  
Praise the Lord in the evening, . . .

As the children sing, they can march around the room in a circle. At the words, “All God’s children,” they can make an upward sweep of their arms or clap. If they have made sandblock instruments (Creating, Option 1, above), they might use them to accompany their singing.

#### **DOING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Invite the children to join in making a “Singing Mural.” Tape a long sheet of butcher paper to a wall or other surface, at a level easily reached by the class members. Sketch ovals for the people’s heads, each with a smaller oval to be a singing mouth. Provide crayons and markers for everyone, and encourage each one to select a head and add features, hair, and clothing to represent herself/himself.

Across the top of the mural, add the words, “All God’s Children Sing,” and display the finished work in the church.

#### **WONDERING** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Show pictures of a variety of animals. Wonder about different sounds animals make. We speak of birds singing. Do other animals sing? Ask:

I wonder why birds sing? Why do frogs sing? Why do crickets sing?  
What does it feel like to sing?

What would it be like if there was no music or singing?

**MUSIC** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Sing “Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 482; *We Sing of God*, 78). Begin by reading or singing each stanza, asking the children to listen carefully for what time of day it is. Note the time of day for each stanza. The children can add accompaniment with their sandpaper block instruments (see *Creating*, Option 1).

**CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Display Poster No. 15 from the Teacher’s Packet showing a scene viewed at different times of the day: At sunrise, at noontime, in the evening, and at night. Clip from Poster No. 10 in the Teacher’s Packet the picture of children singing.

Ask, as you point to each of these four scenes: What time of day does this picture show? What are some of the things we do at that time?

Hold up the picture of the children singing, and ask: What are the children doing? Where shall we put it? Encourage the children to think hard about which scene to choose. Then place the picture, in turn, on each of the four scenes. Talk about singing praises to God at any time of the day or night.

**TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 30 shows a picture of children singing, a Scripture verse, a hymn stanza, and a note to parents. Remind the children to take the card home, show it to their families, and keep it in a safe place.

**SAYING GOODBYE**

Say the following prayer of thanksgiving. Add any line that seems appropriate.

Thank you, God, for days and nights;  
Thank you for the songs we sing.  
(*Pray for any needs of the children.*)  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle and say:

Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.  
Children: Thanks be to God.

**TEACHER’S REFLECTION**

Think back over the chosen activities for this session. What evidence do you have that the children enjoyed singing and making musical sounds? How can they be encouraged to take a lively interest in singing praise to God?

**LOOKING AHEAD**

The next session focuses on nighttime prayers and singing. Recall evening songs or lullabies that were part of your childhood. Which hymns or songs do you now like to associate with the close of the day?

# THE CHURCH SINGS

## SESSION 4

### WE SING OF GOD IN THE EVENING

#### FOCUS

God watches over us during the night. The children should be able to sing a nighttime prayer and say that God is with us while we are sleeping.

#### GETTING READY

Two children's hymns were written by a young priest in England. The most famous of the two hymns, "Onward, Christian soldiers," was written for a Sunday School procession. The other hymn, "Now the day is over" is a hymn for evening and one we still sing today. It is based on *Proverbs 3:24*: "If you sit down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet."

The words are a series of requests that God keep us safe through the night. In the second verse, Jesus is asked to give the weary rest. In other parts of the hymn, requests are made for comfort to the sick, safety for sailors, and "visions bright of thee" for children. Near the end, the writer asks that angels "spread their white wings above me, watching round my bed."

The original hymn had eight stanzas. "Now the day is over" is in *The Hymnal, 1982, 42*.

We give you thanks, O God, for revealing your Son Jesus Christ to us by the light of his resurrection: Grant that as we sing your glory at the close of this day, our joy may abound in the morning as we celebrate the Paschal mystery; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*.

A Collect for Saturdays

*The Book of Common Prayer, p. 134*

#### TEACHING TIP

Nighttime fears are common in early childhood. Children, in discussing bedtime and their nightly rituals, may share some of their fears. Listen carefully to their contributions and be positive in accepting what they say.

#### GATHERING

Ahead of time, collect items related to children's bedtime, such as a nightgown or pajamas, pillow, blanket, stuffed animals, and storybooks. You may want to ask children to bring some of their favorite items from home. As the children arrive, invite them to talk about what they do at bedtime.

When everyone is ready, say:

Teacher: Thanks be to God.

Children: Alleluia, alleluia!

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 366.

**STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce the story by reading from *The Book of Common Prayer*. Gather in a circle, open the Prayer Book, and let the children see where the reading is. Read:

“Now as we come to the setting of the sun, and our eyes behold the vesper light, we sing your praises, O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” (*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 118)

You may want to invite the children to say in unison the final words:

“We sing your praises, O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”

Tell a story about God’s care for us at night using the following outline:

- When we have finished our work and play and are ready for bedtime, we remember that God has been with us all through the day. We give thanks for God’s love and care. We pray that God will keep us through the night.

- As we lie in bed quietly, we can think our own thoughts about God. God’s angels watch over us, and we feel safe. Sometimes we sing softly to ourselves.

- A beautiful hymn that we can sing in the evening or at bedtime is called “Now the day is over.” It was written long ago, and we can find it in our Hymnal.

- You may want to read the words of the hymn to the children, or possibly paraphrase the stanzas (*The Hymnal*, 1982, 42).

- One verse asks Jesus to give little children dreams about God. Another asks Jesus to be with people who are sick. The last verse asks the angels that are sent by God to keep watch “round my bed.”

(Invite the children to look at two verses of the hymn when they go home in the children’s book, *Let Us Sing*, pages 14-15.)

**CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

**Option 1. Musical Sand Shakers**

Provide for each child a small paper bag, a thick rubber band, and a small amount of fine sand. Decorate the bags with colorful markers or crayons. Help the children to pour sand into their bags and close them with the rubber bands. Shake the bags to make a gentle, lullaby-like musical sound.

Note to teachers: Plan to make extra shakers, and save these for use in a Pentecost parade (Session 9, Music).

## **Option 2. Night Sky Pictures**

Give each child a black or dark blue piece of construction paper, along with glue, glitter, sequins, stickers, or other bright bits of material. Ask the class members to create “night sky” pictures.

### **GAME** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Pantomime this action rhyme:

Sleepy one, sleepy one, turn around (*everyone turns in place*)

Sleepy one, sleepy one, touch the ground (*touch the floor*)

Sleepy one, sleepy one, go upstairs (*march in place*)

Sleepy one, sleepy one, say your prayers (*hands together in prayer*)

Sleepy one, sleepy one, turn out the light (*reach high, flip light switch*)

Sleepy one, sleepy one, say goodnight (*head on hands, like pillow*)

Repeat for as many times as the children’s interest holds.

### **DOING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Set up a bedtime corner, with books, blankets, pillows, dolls, and stuffed animals. Encourage the children to role-play bedtime activities, such as singing lullabies and saying prayers.

### **WONDERING** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

If possible, set the stage for wondering, with a night-light like the kind familiar to the children. Plug it into a wall outlet or extension cord, turn it on, and gather around it. Ask: Why do we turn on night-lights when we go to bed? How does a night-light help us?

Point out that night-lights can remind us to pray to God as we settle down for the night.

Wonder about why people pray at bedtime. Why is this a good time to talk with God? What are some of the things we can pray for?

### **MUSIC** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Sing “Now the day is over” (*The Hymnal 1982, 42*), slowly several times, using the following motions:

Now the day is over, night is drawing nigh,  
(*raise hands together above head like the sun, and slowly lower them to the front as the sun sets*)

Shadows of the evening steal across the sky.  
(*put arms to the side and make a slow sweeping motion overhead to the other side*)

When the children are familiar with the words, sing the hymn stanza again, adding accompaniment with the sand shakers from *Creating*, Option 1 (above).

### **CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Talk with the children about lullabies. A lullaby is a soft and gentle song that puts us to sleep. Some children say prayers at bedtime, others sing songs

and prayers, and some do both. Many of the lullabies we sing are hymns and prayers, such as “All through the night,” and “Now the day is over.”

Ask: What are some of the quiet, peaceful songs you like to hear at bedtime? You may want to encourage the children to sing some of their favorites.

#### **TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 31 includes a nighttime picture, lines from *The Book of Common Prayer*, a bedtime prayer, and a note to parents. Remind the children to take the card home, show it to their families, and keep it in a safe place.

#### **SAYING GOODBYE**

Say the following prayer of thanksgiving. Add any line that seems appropriate.

Thank you, God, for the starry nights;  
Thank you for the songs we sing.  
(*Pray for the needs of the children.*)  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle and say:  
Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.  
Children: Thanks be to God.

#### **TEACHER'S REFLECTION**

How did the children react to this session on singing and praying at bedtime? What evidence did you note that their bedtime rituals include lullabies (hymns) and prayers? Consider ways to encourage parents to sing and pray with their children at bedtime.

#### **LOOKING AHEAD**

The focus for the next session is on singing praise to God. Read the stanzas of the hymn, “All things bright and beautiful” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 405; *We Sing of God*, 68). As you go about your routines this week, pay particular attention to things for which you praise God.

# THE CHURCH SINGS

## SESSION 5

### WE SING OUR PRAISE TO GOD

#### FOCUS

The whole creation inspires music and our hymns of praise. The children should be able to say that we praise God in song for all that God has made.

#### GETTING READY

Cecil Frances Alexander, wrote three children’s hymns. They were all intended to help young learners understand phrases in the Apostles’ Creed.

- “All things bright and beautiful” was related to the words, “I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 405.) This hymn helps us remember the beauty and wonder of God’s creation. It describes differences in the seasons and the beauty of tiny flowers and majestic mountain ranges.

- “There is a green hill far away” was an effort to explain how Jesus “suffered under Pontius Pilate” on Good Friday. (Hymn 167)

- “Once in royal David’s city” interpreted the words, “(I believe) in Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary” (Hymn 102)

The writer of these hymns has been called one of the greatest of hymn writers in nineteenth-century England.

Sing to the Lord a new song;  
sing to the Lord, all the whole earth.  
Sing to the Lord and bless his Name;  
proclaim the good news of his salvation from day to day.  
Declare his glory among the nations  
and his wonders among all peoples.

Psalm 96:1-3

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 725

#### TEACHING TIP

Young children are blessed with abundant energy that can sometimes be overwhelming. Providing form and structure for movement and dance (like waving scarves and streamers to musical accompaniment) will help children to release energy in positive ways as they learn to express their feelings with their whole bodies.

## GATHERING

Display Poster No. 16 from the Teacher's Packet, illustrating the themes of the hymn, "All things bright and beautiful." As the children arrive, encourage them to look at the picture and describe what they see. Provide playdough for them to create their own beautiful things.

When all are present, say:

Teacher: Thanks be to God.

Children: Alleluia, alleluia!

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 366.

## STORY (Time: 10 minutes)

Introduce the story by reading from the Bible. Gather in a circle, open the Bible, and let the children see where the reading is. Read *Psalm 96:1a*:

"O sing to the Lord a new song; . . ."

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Children respond: Thanks be to God.

Begin by reviewing briefly the seven days of the Creation (*Genesis 1:1-2:3*).

- Before creation, there was only darkness. On the first day of creation, God created light.

- On the second day, God made the sky.

- On the third day, God separated the water and made dry land. The land was called Earth, and the waters were called seas.

- On the fourth day, God created the sun and the moon and the stars.

- On the fifth day, God created living creatures in the waters and sky—great sea monsters and birds and other creatures.

- On the sixth day, God created living creatures on earth—cattle and every thing that creeps on earth. God also made humans in his image—male and female.

- On the seventh day, God rested.

- Describe the splendor and wonder of God's work of creating all things.

- When we look at everything God made—all the bright and beautiful things, all the big and little things, all the wise and wonderful things, we want to sing our praises to God.

- One hymn in our hymnal that helps us to praise God is called "All things bright and beautiful." We can sing it in the summer and in the winter, in the spring and in the fall. We can sing it every time we see the sun and moon and stars, the flowers and birds, the mountains and rivers, the animals on the hillside and bugs in the grass.

(Encourage the children to look at the first two stanzas of this hymn at home in the children's book, *Let Us Sing*, pages 12-13.)

## **CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

### **Option 1. Making Cymbals**

For each child, cut out two large circles of sturdy cardboard. Staple a taut loop of string to one side of each circle. (This will serve as a handle.) Supply sheets of heavy duty foil wrap, and ask the children to cover their cardboard pieces (on the plain side). The finished circles can be crashed together as if they were cymbals, as the children provide the clanging sound effects with their voices.

Note: Plan to make extra cymbals, and save these for use in a Pentecost parade (Session 9, Music).

### **Option 2. Nature Treasures**

Ahead of time, collect a variety of “nature treasures” that are readily available (such as feathers, leaves, twigs, nutshells, tiny pebbles, and flowers). You may want to take the children on a nature walk to collect these items. Give each one a paper bag to gather beautiful things. When you return, give each child a large sheet of paper on which you have lettered the words, “Praise God.” Encourage the class members to arrange their selected treasures on the paper and glue them in place.

## **GAME** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Play a guessing game called “I see . . .” The teacher says something like, “I am thinking of something bright and beautiful that God made,” and then begins to describe it with specific clues for guessing. For example, “It is red and round . . . It has a dark stem . . . It grows on a tree . . . You can cut it into pieces and eat it.” (Apple.) As clues grow more numerous, class members should be able to guess what the teacher is describing.

Some older children may be able to think of appropriate examples and give the clues themselves.

## **DOING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Using bright-colored scarves or streamers of crepe paper, encourage the children to make up a dance that expresses praise to God (using tape-recorded music for background). You may be able to take the children outside to let the wind blow their streamers as they dance and sing songs of joy.

## **WONDERING** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Take a walk outside and look at the wonderful things God has made. Wonder about all the things God has made. What things are beautiful to us? To birds? To fish? To other animals? Invite the children to name something they think is beautiful and respond with the phrase, “It is beautiful!”

## **MUSIC** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Sing the first stanza of “All things bright and beautiful” (*The Hymnal*)

1982, 405; *We Sing of God*, 68). Ask the children to echo the words several times. You may wish to add simple motions as the group sings. Sing along with the music tape *Children Sing!*

When the children are familiar with the hymn, they may add cymbals to accompany their singing. (See Creating, Option 1, above.)

### **CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Talk with the children about songs and hymns of praise to God. Ask: How would you like to praise God? What words would you use? What would you like to give God thanks for? Invite the group to make a list of specific things they would mention. (Jot down the list, and repeat it aloud.)

With older children, you may be able to collect their ideas, and sing them to a familiar tune.

### **TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 32 includes a nature scene, a Scripture verse, a poem, and a note to parents. Remind children to take the card home, share it with their families, and keep it in a safe place.

### **SAYING GOODBYE**

Say the following prayer of thanksgiving. Add any line that seems appropriate.

Thank you, God, for everything you made;  
We praise you with songs.  
(*Pray for any concerns the children may express.*)  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle and say:

Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.

Children: Thanks be to God.

### **TEACHER'S REFLECTION**

Children have a natural sense of awe and wonder for God's creation. In this session how was this sense enhanced, both for the children and for you? How can you keep in touch with a sense of wonder for yourself and the children as you go about your everyday routines?

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

The next session focuses on singing praise to Jesus Christ. Recall some of your favorite hymns that offer such praise. Look through *The Hymnal 1982*, noting words of praise to Jesus.

# THE CHURCH SINGS

## SESSION 6

### WE SING OUR PRAISE TO JESUS CHRIST

#### FOCUS

The people of the Church sing hymns of praise for Jesus Christ. The children should be able to say that we sing about Jesus.

#### GETTING READY

The German hymn, “When morning gilds the skies” (*The Hymnal, 1982*, 427) is believed to have been written in a beautiful area in Germany with hills and valleys, forests and mountains, along the river Main and its tributaries.

This is the same part of Germany where Jacob Grimm wrote his *Fairy Tales*, which is dotted with small towns and local castles. Ancient churches are numerous. Martin Luther stayed in a castle in this region, and it was here that he translated the part of the Bible into German.

The hymn reflects the beauty of the region in which it was probably written. But it is the repetition of the refrain, “May Jesus Christ be praised,” that makes the hymn a enjoyable for young children.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord; who on the first day of the week overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. *Amen.*

Of God the Son

*The Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 345, 377

#### TEACHING TIP

At this point in the church school year, the children have been exposed to a number of hymns from *The Hymnal 1982*. Even though they may not be able to read the words from the hymnal’s pages, they will recognize familiar tunes and refrains. They can find Jesus’ name in hymns, and some may be able to locate hymns by number. Solicit the help of parents in supporting the children’s use of the hymnal in these ways.

#### GATHERING

As the children arrive, play a recording of one or more hymns that include frequent mention of Jesus using the music from the audio tape *Children Sing!* Ask the children to listen with care and to stand up when they hear Jesus’ name being sung. Provide other activities such as books, crayons and paper, puzzles and playdough to be used while listening to the music.

When everyone is ready, say:

Teacher: Thanks be to God.

Children: Alleluia, alleluia!

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 366.

**STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Begin the story by reading from *The Book of Common Prayer*. Gather in a circle, open the Prayer Book, and let the children see where the reading is. Read:

“Praise to you, Lord Christ.” (p. 358)

(You may want to explain that these are the words that we say or sing at the Eucharist, following the reading of the Gospel. Invite the children to say the words together in unison.)

Prepare a story that follows the events in Jesus’ life using the following outline.

- At Christmas, we remember how Jesus was born. We sing songs and hymns about the baby and his mother, Mary, the shepherds, and the Wise Men.

- Jesus grew up to be a great teacher. We sing songs and hymns about the stories he told to his disciples.

- Jesus died on the cross and was raised from the dead at Easter time. We sing many beautiful hymns about the good news that Jesus lives with us still. At Easter, the songs are joyous and often include the word “Hosanna!”

- One of the hymns we sing to praise Jesus is called “When morning gilds the skies” (*The Hymnal*, 1982, 427) In this hymn we sing, over and over, “May Jesus Christ be praised!”

(Encourage the children to look at the first two stanzas of this hymn at home in the children’s book *Let Us Sing*, pages 4-5.)

**CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

**Option 1. Praise Horns**

Give each child a sheet of paper approximately 12 by 18 inches in size. Decorate the sheets with glitter, paint, and colorful designs. Roll the sheets to form horns (more tightly at one end than the other to create a horn-like shape). Tape each horn securely. Ribbons or streamers could be added to the open end. The children can hum or shout through their horns, “May Jesus Christ be praised!”

Note to teachers: Plan to make extra horns, and save these for use in a Pentecost parade (Session 9, Music).

**Option 2. Praise Mobiles**

From Poster No. 13 in the Teacher's Packet, make copies of the four medallion-like paper circles that can be used to create a mobile (floating musical notes; a figure of Jesus; the words, "Praise to Jesus Christ," and children singing). Cut out the circles so that each child has a set of the four. (Older children may be able to do the cutting themselves.) Invite the class members to color the mobile pieces with crayons or markers, then attach them with string to plastic container tops to form Praise Mobiles.

**GAME** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Invite the children to stand in a circle, and lead them in a series of rhythmic "body sounds," while chanting "May Jesus Christ be praised!" Use the following: Clapping hands; slapping palms on thighs; tapping heads; pounding fists against each other; brushing clap (chopping motions, touching palms together); finger sounds (rubbing or snapping); clapping the floor; marching in place; swinging a foot. The children may be able to demonstrate and suggest additional body sounds.

**DOING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Collect metal spoons, forks, and pot lids of various sizes. Invite the children to experiment with making varied sounds. Spoons can be clicked together to sound like bells. A fork can be suspended from a string and struck with another fork to produce a triangle-like sounds. Pot lids can be hit with a stick to sound like gongs.

As the children get used to the improvised instruments, talk with them about using all kinds of sounds to offer praise to Jesus Christ. You may want to beat out the rhythm of the line, "May Jesus Christ be praised!" from the hymn, "When morning gilds the skies."

**WONDERING** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Ask the class members to repeat several times, in unison, "May Jesus Christ be praised!" Then wonder about:

How does it make you feel to praise Jesus? How do you think Jesus feels when he hears us praising him in our prayers and singing?

How could we show praise to Jesus without using words?

**MUSIC** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Sing "When morning gilds the skies" (*The Hymnal 1982, 427; We Sing of God, 72*). Following are movements that may be used along with the singing or listening to the tape *Children Sing!*:

When morning gilds the skies, (*move one arm in a full circular motion*)

My heart, awaking, cries, (*fold hands on heart*)

may Jesus Christ be praised! (*lift hands above head*)

When evening shadows fall, (*bring arms wide to the side and down*)

this rings my curfew call, (*fold hands by head as if in sleep*)

may Jesus Christ be praised! (*lift hands above head*)

**CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Talk with the children about all the times they hear people using Jesus' name. Ask: When you are in church, when do you hear his name? at home?

When we pray to Jesus, what words do we use? When we go to Eucharist, what are the special words we hear about Jesus?

When we sing about Jesus, what words do we use? What is your favorite hymn or song that has Jesus' name in it?

**TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 33 has a picture of Jesus, a line from *The Book of Common Prayer*, a hymn text, and a note to parents. Remind the children to take the cards home, show them to their families, and keep them in a safe place.

**SAYING GOODBYE**

Say the following prayer of thanksgiving. Add any line that seems appropriate.

Thank you, God, for Jesus Christ;  
Thank you for our songs of praise.  
(*Pray for any concerns the children may express.*)  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle and say:

Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.  
Children: Thanks be to God.

**TEACHER'S REFLECTION**

As you think over the session, were the children were taking part with a sense of joy? What clues did you pick up from their "body language" as well as from their words and singing? How does your own appreciation for praise to Christ affect your work with the children?

**LOOKING AHEAD**

The next session focuses on the first great commandment to love God with all our hearts, souls, and minds. Reflect on the role of music and song in the lives of Christian people. Apart from participation in corporate worship in the Church, where do you hear music that causes you to think about God?

# THE CHURCH SINGS

## SESSION 7

### WE SING ABOUT LOVING GOD

#### FOCUS

The “first and great commandment” is to “love the Lord (our) God” with all our hearts, souls, and minds. The children should be able to say that we sing about our love for God.

#### GETTING READY

A hymn by an American, Henry van Dyke, is “Joyful, joyful, we adore thee” (*The Hymnal, 1982, 376*). It was written to go with the music from the “Hymn to Joy” in Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony.

The hymn has much to say about God, who is made known in nature, who forgives us, who is Father, and who reaches out to us with warmth in the same way the sun beams down upon the earth. Christ is called “our brother” in the hymn, and it calls us to share his love with other people.

Children like the lightness of Beethoven’s lovely melody.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels  
and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to  
proclaim the glory of your Name:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Holy Eucharist, The Great Thanksgiving

*The Book of Common Prayer, p. 367*

#### TEACHING TIP

An effective storytelling technique to encourage children’s imaginations is called a “guided meditation.” Ask the class members to sit comfortably, with legs and arms tucked in against their bodies. They close their eyes and imagine they can see what they are hearing the teacher describe in words. Use short, graphic sentences and phrases that evoke mental images. Speak slowly and in a soft voice.

#### GATHERING

Ahead of time, prepare a display called “God’s World.” On a board or wall, attach several pieces of green paper (to represent the earth), and several pieces of blue above these (to be the sky). This should be large enough to

accommodate items added by all the class members.

Make cutouts or find pictures of white clouds, birds, flowers, hills or mountains, streams of water, trees and plants, and the like. Be sure to make enough of these so that every child can have a choice.

As the children arrive, ask each one to choose an item to add to the display. Attach the additions with tape.

When everyone is ready, say:

Teacher: Thanks be to God.

Children: Alleluia, alleluia!

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 366.

**STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce the story by reading from the Bible. Gather in a circle, open the Bible, and let the children see where the reading is. Read *Psalm 66:1-2*:

“Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth;  
sing the glory of his name;  
give to him glorious praise!”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Children respond: Thanks be to God.

Ask the children to close their eyes and be very still. Invite them to imagine they are seeing what you will describe in words. Speak in a soft voice, pausing between phrases, for a short period of guided meditation:

- You are climbing a tall hill . . . moving slowly up the path. The sun is shining, and it is a beautiful day . . . Everything seems to shine brightly . . . Soon you are at the top of the hill, and you look down below . . . You can see fields, filled with green plants . . . You can see trees in a forest.

- In the meadows are flowers blooming in many colors . . . Birds are singing . . . Water is running in a stream . . . You look far into the distance, and you can see an ocean . . . It looks as if the ocean meets the sky . . . The blue colors of sky and sea are beautiful, and white clouds are floating by . . .

- You are very still . . . You think about God who made everything . . . and about the beauty of all God’s creation . . .

- Keep all these pictures in your mind as we listen to these words from a hymn we sing:

- Read aloud Stanzas 1 and 2 of “Joyful, joyful, we adore thee” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 376; *We Sing of God*, 60).

- Refer to the display, “God’s World,” prepared at the Gathering (above).

(Encourage the children to look at lines from this hymn at home in the children’s book, *Let Us Sing*, pages 10-11.)

**CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

### **Option 1. Rhythm Sticks**

Assist the class members in making rhythm sticks. You may want to purchase wooden dowel lengths, preferably one-half inch or more in diameter. Cut enough 12-inch pieces to provide a pair for every class member. The children can use bright markers to decorate the sticks. Or you may prefer to gather smooth sticks from outdoors, trimming them to even lengths. These can be decorated by tying or taping ribbons or paper streamers to one end of each stick. Wrap the opposite end of the stick with colorful tape to form a handle.

Note to teachers: Plan to make extra sticks, and save these for use in a Pentecost parade (Session 9, Music).

### **Option 2. Painting Joy**

Give each child a large sheet of finger-paint paper and a generous dollop of white finger-paint. (A recipe for the paint is included on Poster No. 6 in the Teacher's Packet.) Invite the class members to begin painting. As they work, offer the children the possibility of adding drops of various bright-colored tempera paint to their sheets. The colors can be worked into the paintings, to produce a joyful, swirled effect.

#### **GAME** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Ask the class members to sit in a circle. Choose one child to walk around and gently pat another on the head. Both children walk in opposite directions around the circle until they meet. They shake hands joyfully and say, "Love God!"

The first child joins the circle, and the second one proceeds to tap another child. The pair repeat the action.

#### **DOING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Role-play a performing orchestra. Assign imaginary instruments to each of the children: drums, cymbals, violins, horns, or use the instruments you have been making in the Creating activities. Help individuals with the movements for the "pretend playing."

Ask the different sections of the orchestra to stand together. Then play a recording of the "Ode to Joy" from Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* and ask the class members to "play along."

#### **WONDERING** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Wonder aloud about loving God with all our hearts, souls, and minds. Ask questions like:

What does it mean to love someone with all our hearts? with all our souls? with all our minds?

Why do we love God so much?

How can we show our love for God?

#### **MUSIC** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Sing "Joyful, joyful, we adore thee" (*The Hymnal 1982, 376; We Sing of*

*God, 60*). Concentrate on the first stanza. As the children become familiar with the words, add accompaniment with rhythm sticks. (See *Creating, Option 1*, above.) Use the tape *Children Sing!*

**CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Invite a young musician, junior-high or high-school age, to visit the class and to play guitar, piano, violin, horn, or any other instrument. Include the visitor as you wonder aloud about these questions:

Why doesn't all music sound the same? What kinds of music do you like most? How does the music at church make you feel? What makes it different from other music you hear?

**TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 34 has an illustration, the Great Commandment, a hymn stanza, and a note to parents. Remind the children to take the card home, show it to their families, and keep it in a safe place.

**SAYING GOODBYE**

Say the following prayer of thanksgiving. Add any line that seems appropriate.

Dear God, we love you.  
Thank you for music to love you with.  
(*Pray for the needs of the children.*)  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle and say:

Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.  
Children: Thanks be to God.

**TEACHER'S REFLECTION**

For young children, the love between themselves and God can be as real as the love they give and receive with parents. They tend not to be self-conscious about expressing this spiritual reality, as they sing, play, and work in the church classroom. In what ways did the class members' comments or actions suggest that they consider God a real presence in their lives?

**LOOKING AHEAD**

The next session turns to the second commandment (that we love our neighbors as ourselves). Be aware of your own interactions with other people as you go about your daily activities. In what ways are you "neighbor" to others? How are they neighbors to you?

# THE CHURCH SINGS

## SESSION 8

### WE SING ABOUT LOVING OTHERS

#### FOCUS

The second commandment is that we should “love (our) neighbor” as ourselves. Love of neighbor is a familiar theme in our Church’s hymns. The children should be able to sing about our love and care for others.

#### GETTING READY

Like many modern American hymnals, *The Hymnal 1982* is enriched by selections from Afro-American, Hispanic, Native American, Russian, Israeli, and African sources. “Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love” (*The Hymnal, 1982*, 602), a twentieth-century hymn from Ghana, is appealing to young children.

The hymn’s refrain is a prayer to Jesus, asking that we be filled with his love and shown how to serve our neighbors. Stanza 1 describes Jesus washing the feet of his disciples and taking on the role of servant. Stanzas 2 and 3 describe our neighbors (rich and poor, black and white, from nearby and far away) and reaffirm that they are to be served and loved—“these are the ones we should love. All are neighbors to us and you.” Stanza 4 describes Christian love as humble and devoted to serving others.

Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart [and especially the hearts of the people of this land], that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For Social Justice

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 823

#### TEACHING TIP

Young children in our media-oriented culture have a wide exposure to peoples around the world. Still, their understanding of the word “neighbor” applies most directly to the persons who are close to their homes. As their teachers, we cannot expect them to get the concept of our being world neighbors. Even so, we need to introduce the facts that God has made many people, and that Jesus asks us to love them all.

#### GATHERING

Ahead of time, clip from magazines and newspapers a broad collection of people’s faces (young and old, and representing varied races and cultures). Place these where the children can examine them freely. String a clothesline

in the classroom, low enough for the children to reach it, and place on the line enough clip-type pins for each class member to have at least one.

As the children arrive, invite them to examine the faces and choose one to be clipped to the clothesline. As they do so, speak about people all over the world who are our neighbors.

When everyone is ready, say:

Teacher: Thanks be to God.

Children: Alleluia, alleluia!

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 366.

**STORY** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce the story by reading from the Bible. Gather in a circle, open the Bible, and let the children see where the reading is. Read *Matthew 22:37-39*:

“He said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Children respond: Thanks be to God.

Introduce the hymn “Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 602; *We Sing of God*, 93), using the following outline (hold a simple homemade drum that you can beat with a hand):

- In our church we sing a hymn that was written in the country of Ghana in Africa. It is called “Jesu, Jesu” (pronounced “Yay-soo, yay-soo,” meaning Jesus, Jesus), and it tells us how to love and serve our neighbors. (You may want to gesture toward the neighbors on the clothesline used at the Gathering.)

- Chant the words of the refrain, beating out the rhythm on the drum.

- Then invite the children to echo the words, one phrase at a time, as you continue to chant and beat. The class members can beat on the floor with their hands.

- Repeat again, this time with everyone joining for the whole refrain.

- Ask the children to let their “drums” (hands) be still. Invite them to listen as you chant and beat the first stanza. (The class joins in the refrain as before, with both voices and drumbeat.) Continue with the other stanzas in the same pattern.

- The strong rhythmic cadence of this hymn lends itself to this kind of chanting; teachers who feel comfortable doing so may sing instead.

(Encourage the children to look at the words to the hymn at home in the children’s book, *Let Us Sing*, pages 8-9.)

**CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

**Option 1. Drums**

Make drums from cans with plastic lids, or oatmeal boxes. Decorate the drums by gluing bits of colored tissue to them, wrapping them with strips of colored paper, wrapping paper, or wallpaper scraps. The children will beat on them like a tom-tom.

Note to teachers: Plan to make extra drums, and save these for use in a Pentecost parade (Session 9, Music).

**Option 2. Neighbor Pictures**

On a large piece of paper for each child, write the words, “My Neighbors.” Ask the children to draw and color pictures of their neighbors and friends. As they work, talk with them about neighbors who care for one another.

**GAME** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Play “Neighbor Switch.” Help each child to find a partner (neighbor). Play music, and ask the children to perform an action—such as hopping, skipping, or dancing. Call out the actions: “Neighbors march!” or “Neighbors jump!” Or let the class members decide on their own actions. Each time you stop the music, the neighbors switch. When all have found new partners, the game continues. Repeat as long as the children are interested or time permits.

**DOING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Arrange to take the class on a singing trip to another classroom in the church or to the area where adults may be gathered. Lead the children in singing the refrain of “Jesu, Jesu.” The drums made in Creating, Option 1, could be incorporated in this activity.

Note: The group that is visited could join with the children in the singing. You may want to take along a simple snack that could be shared by everyone.

**WONDERING** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Engage the children in wondering about neighbors. How many people have neighbors? What do neighbors like to do with one another? What songs might neighbors sing together? How can we love our neighbors?

**MUSIC** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Sing the refrain of the folk song from Ghana, “Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 602; *We Sing of God*, 93). Listen to the tape of the music on *Children Sing!* You can use these simple motions:

Jesu, (*arms upward*)

Jesu, (*arms extended horizontally*)

fill us with your love, (*fold arms over chest*)

show us how to serve (*hands in front, palms up*)

the neighbors we have from you. (*open arms wide*)

**CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Begin the conversation by repeating the commandment of Jesus: You shall love your neighbor.

Ask: Who are some of your neighbors? When do you see them? What do you do together? How do you help and care for them?

What would it be like not to have any neighbors? What would you miss?

If you moved far away, who would your neighbors be then?

**TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 35 includes a picture of a circle of children, a Scripture verse, a hymn refrain, and a note to parents. Remind the children to take the card home, show it to their families, and keep it in a safe place.

**SAYING GOODBYE**

Say the following prayer of thanksgiving. Add any line that seems appropriate.

Thank you, God, for neighbors to love;  
Thank you for the songs we sing.  
(*Pray for the needs of the children.*)  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle and say:

Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.

Children: Thanks be to God.

**TEACHER'S REFLECTION**

Singing brings Christians together. When we lift our voices in praise, our worshiping community is strengthened. In what ways has this session (and this unit) helped to foster a stronger sense of togetherness among the children? What more can be done to underscore the importance of music in their lives?

**LOOKING AHEAD**

The session that follows is for use on Pentecost Sunday. Use it on the date most appropriate for your congregation's calendar. It can be inserted at any point during the period the unit is being taught.

# THE CHURCH SINGS

## SESSION 9

### THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES AT PENTECOST

#### FOCUS

At Pentecost, Jesus' apostles were visited and empowered by the Holy Spirit. The children should be able to say that at Pentecost we sing praises for the Holy Spirit.

#### GETTING READY

Pentecost, one of the Principal Feasts of the Church, has several meanings.

- The outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles marked the beginning of their missionary activity.
- The apostles' experience reminds us that the gift of the Holy Spirit accompanies our own baptisms. In the prayer of thanksgiving over the water at the service of Holy Baptism, we recall the presence of the Spirit from Creation until now.
- Powerful symbols are associated with the descent of the Spirit: flames of fire and a descending dove.

One of the hymns we sing at Pentecost, "Hail thee, festival day!" (*The Hymnal, 1982, 225*), reminds us of the different meanings of Pentecost. Other hymns were composed with the title: "Hail thee, festival day!" for Easter and Ascension Day.

The words in the hymn refer to the "likeness of fire," preaching to the "ends of the earth," and the "Spirit of Life" that abides in all of God's people.

Young children may enjoy singing and marching to the refrain.

Almighty and most merciful God, grant that by the indwelling of your Holy Spirit we may be enlightened and strengthened for your service; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Of the Holy Spirit

*The Book of Common Prayer, p. 251*

## TEACHING TIP

Young children look forward to celebrations with anticipation. At this age, it is appropriate to link the Feast of Pentecost to the idea of celebrating birthdays. Use the children's knowledge of what happens at a birthday party (hats, games, foods, cards) to help them sense the joy and surprise connected with Pentecost, the birthday of the Church.

## GATHERING

Before the children arrive, blow up small red balloons—enough for each class member to have one (and a few to spare in case some of them burst). Attach a string to each balloon. Cut strips of red, orange, or yellow crepe paper, and place these on a table near the balloons.

As the children arrive, invite them to help attach crepe paper streamers to the balloon strings. Use short pieces of tape.

When everyone is ready, say:

Teacher: Thanks be to God.

Children: Alleluia, alleluia!

*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 366.

## STORY (Time: 10 minutes)

Introduce the story by reading from the Bible. Gather in a circle, open the Bible, and let the children see where the reading is. Read *Acts 2:1*:

“When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.

Children respond: Thanks be to God.

Tell the story of the first Pentecost using the following outline.

- Begin the story by describing what happened to the disciples of Jesus as they came to Jerusalem for the annual Jewish harvest festival called “Pentecost.” They expected to pray together, giving thanks to God for the fruits of the earth.

- But something unexpected happened. There was a sound like a strong wind blowing. Their faces were bright as if lighted by fire.

- This surprise was the coming of the Holy Spirit. They were able to speak in many other languages.

- In the city of Jerusalem were people who had come from other lands for the great festival. They came rushing to see what had happened to cause the strange sound. They were amazed when they could hear what the disciples were saying in their own languages. It was a day of great surprises.

- In our church, we sing about the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. One of the hymns we use is called “Hail thee, festival day!” It is a hymn full of joy.

(Encourage the children to look at the hymn at home in the children's

book *Let Us Sing*, pages 20-21.)

**CREATING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

**Option 1. Flame Pictures**

Prepare a supply of small fabric scraps in a variety of prints and solids that suggest the color of flames. Cut these in strips, triangles, and narrow rectangles. Give each child a sheet of sturdy paper, and ask the class members to choose scraps, arrange these on paper to form flame pictures, and glue them in place.

**Option 2. Wind Streamers**

For each child, cut three pieces of red crepe paper streamers approximately three feet long. Tape or staple the three pieces around the edge of a 3-inch disk cut from cardboard. Punch two holes in the disk, and place a 10-inch piece of yarn through it. Tie in a loop to make a “handle.” The children can place the loop over a finger, and run in the wind.

**GAME** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Play a Pentecost surprise game. With music playing in the background, ask one child to cover her/his eyes while the others hide in the room. When the music stops, the one child’s eyes are opened. All the other class members jump out from their hiding places and shout “Surprise! It’s Pentecost!” Repeat so that every child can be the one to be “surprised.” (If the class is large, the game may be played with groups of hidiers and groups with eyes closed for each round.)

**DOING** (*Time: 15 minutes*)

Red is the liturgical color for the Day of Pentecost. Plan a snack time, with red foods for the children. Consider using fruits and vegetables, such as red seedless grapes, red pepper slivers, red cherry tomatoes, red radishes, and strawberries or raspberries. Cranberry, another red juice may be used. Say a Pentecost grace, and sing Happy Birthday to the Church.

**WONDERING** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Symbols for Pentecost are wind, fire, and a dove. Wonder about the wind. Where does it come from? Where does it go? Wonder about fire. It makes us feel comfortable and cozy on a winter’s day and is fun to sit around on a campout. Wonder about the gentle dove. How can the Holy Spirit be all these things?

**MUSIC** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Sing the refrain of “Hail thee, festival day” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 225; *We Sing of God*, 42).

Use any instruments that were made and saved during previous sessions in this unit: paper-cup bells, sandblocks, sand shakers, cymbals, praise horns,

rhythm sticks, and drums. (You may also use regular rhythm instruments.) Distribute these among the class members. March around the room playing the instruments to accompany the music of the hymn. Perhaps you might join with other classes and have a parade around the parish hall or the churchyard. Play the music from the tape *Children Sing!* as part of the celebration.

### **CONVERSATION** (*Time: 10 minutes*)

Introduce a conversation about the Church's celebration of Pentecost. We call this festival day the "birthday of the Church." (Display Poster No. 10 in the Teacher's Packet, showing the birthday cake, red kites, and the church in the background.)

Talk about what happens on Pentecost in your congregation. Ask:

When we go to church on this day, what color can we look for? Where do you think you will see that color (red)?

What do you think the people will sing? What will they thank God for on this day?

(If your church has a special celebration after the Pentecost liturgy, such as a cake or balloon launching, talk with the children about what will happen.)

### **TAKE-HOME CARD**

Card 36 has a Pentecost picture, a Scripture verse, a hymn refrain, and a note to parents. Remind the children to take the card home and add it to their collection. They should have 36 different cards for this year.

### **SAYING GOODBYE**

Say the following prayer of thanksgiving. Add any line that seems appropriate.

Thank you, God, for Pentecost;  
Thank you for the songs we sing.  
(*Pray for the concerns of the children.*)  
Watch over us as we go,  
And keep us in your care. Amen.

Hold hands in a circle and say:

Teacher: Let us bless the Lord.  
Children: Thanks be to God.

### **TEACHER'S REFLECTION**

Make a list of all of the children you have had the privilege of being with during this year. Consider how important they are in the Christian community. Pray for them, by their names, recalling ways they have touched your life.