

January 13, 2013

## Lesson 21: Jesus Preaches in Nazareth



**Luke 4:14-30**

*Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:*

*'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.'*

*And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.' All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, 'Is not this Joseph's son?' He said to them, 'Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, "Doctor, cure yourself!" And you will say, "Do here also in your home town the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum."' And he said, 'Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's home town. But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up for three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.' When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.*

# Jesus Preaches in Nazareth

Luke 4:14-30

January 13, 2013

**The Big Story Truth:** The word “gospel” means “good news.” Today we hear that Jesus has come to bring good news to all of us- especially those who are sad because of illness or injustice. In God’s kingdom, those things won’t be around anymore!

**About the Scripture Passage:** The quote that Jesus reads in this scripture passage is from Isaiah. We heard it a couple of Sundays ago as we studied the prophets and waited during the season of Advent to celebrate Jesus’ birth. Jesus reading this piece of scripture makes clear that he is the one who fulfills the Scriptures. In the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus preaches, teaches, and heals. At first the crowds seem ok with that. But by the end of Jesus’ brief sermon, they are ready to throw him off a cliff! They are upset not because Jesus came teaching and preaching and healing. But

because Jesus’ declares that God’s work through him will not be only for those who by birth belong to the family of Abraham but also for those who are Gentiles. Jesus came for the poor and the outcast as well as for those who are proud and strong. This was an unpopular message to the crowd Jesus was speaking too.... but it is also good news for anyone that has ever found themselves on the “outside” of an exclusive group. God’s love and Jesus’ salvation is not just for a select few. It is for all of us! That really is good news!

## For Your Reflection

When have you found yourself excluded from a group? How did it feel?

Does the announcement that Jesus is for everyone sound like good news to you or is your faith challenged a little by that statement?

This week in your prayers be sure to include people you don’t like or are hard to get along with.



Great Big Word:

# Holy Spirit

God's breath and God's presence that lives in us.



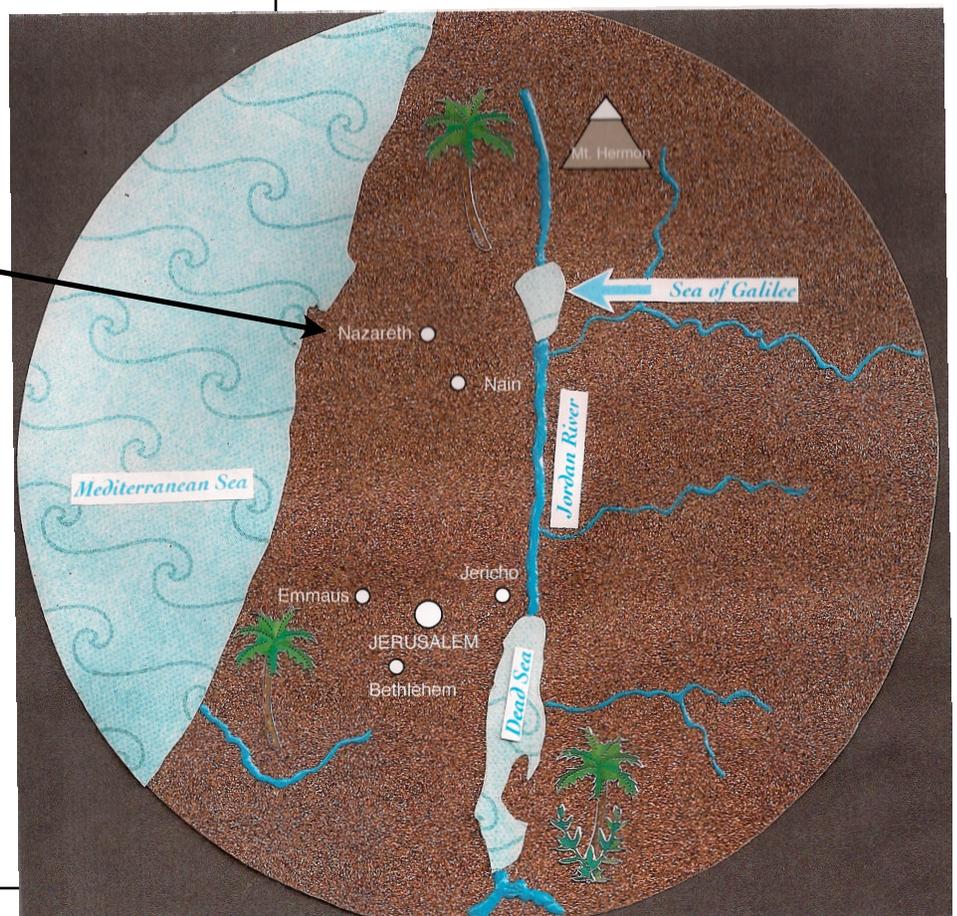
## Making the

**Connection:** Young children naturally feel compassion for those who are sad and hurting. It makes sense to them that Jesus loves all of us. It's when we get a little bit older that we start to put limits on God's love and grace. Older children know what it is like to be excluded from a group of friends or an activity. Middle school is infamous for "clicks."

Even as adults we often, without even thinking, participate in doing the excluding. This passage calls all of us back to remembering that the good news of Jesus is for ALL people.

## Where in the World Are We?

This scene takes place in Jesus' hometown in Nazareth. With your class be sure to find Nazareth on the map and move the Jesus magnet figure there.



# Preschool

## **Materials List:**

- Spark Story Bible
- Bible Bookshelf poster
- Copy of smiley face handout for each child
- Crayons, yarn, colored paper, other assorted art supplies
- Round crackers, skittles, tube frosting, licorice yarn
- Smiley face stickers
- Smiley face gummy snacks

## **Before the Children Arrive:**

Make sure enough copies are made of the smiley face handout and all supplies are gathered for snacks. You may want to give a few adults you know will be around the church a heads up that you and the class will be visiting during this Sunday School hour!

## **Experiencing the Story:**

Gather with children around the table or on the floor so that you can see all of the children's faces and they can see yours. Tell them that we are going to read a story today about Jesus. In today's story, Jesus said that he came to tell everyone that Jesus loves people who are poor and who are sick and who are in prison. Ask the kids who can tell you what it means to be poor. (repeat with to be sick, to be in prison.) Ask the kids to show you with their faces what it would feel like to not have enough to eat or to be not feeling good. (Encourage the kids to make sad faces.) But Jesus came to tell all people that he loves them. God even loves those who are poor, or sick, or in prison. How do you feel when you hear that news? (Encourage the kids to smile the biggest smiles they can!)

The stories of Jesus are in a part of the Bible called the Gospels. (Point to the Bible Bookshelf poster at the four books at the top of the New Testament shelf). Gospels is a big word that means good news! Say the word "Gospel" with me. What does it mean? (Good News!)

Ok. Let's read our Gospel story for today! Read Jesus Goes to Nazareth (Spark Story Bible pages 252-253).

**Activity:**

Say to the kids, “Jesus wanted everyone to know that he loves them. Today for our activity, we are going to tell people the good news that Jesus loves them!” Lead the kids on a hunt around the church for adults in the building. Have the kids give each person they see a smiley face sticker and say “Jesus loves you!”

When you are done, return to your classroom and have kids decorate the smiley face handout that they can take home and put up on their refrigerator or in their rooms as a reminder that Jesus loves them too! If you have enough stickers, send part of a sheet home with the kids so that they can give some stickers to their parents or others they see during the week.

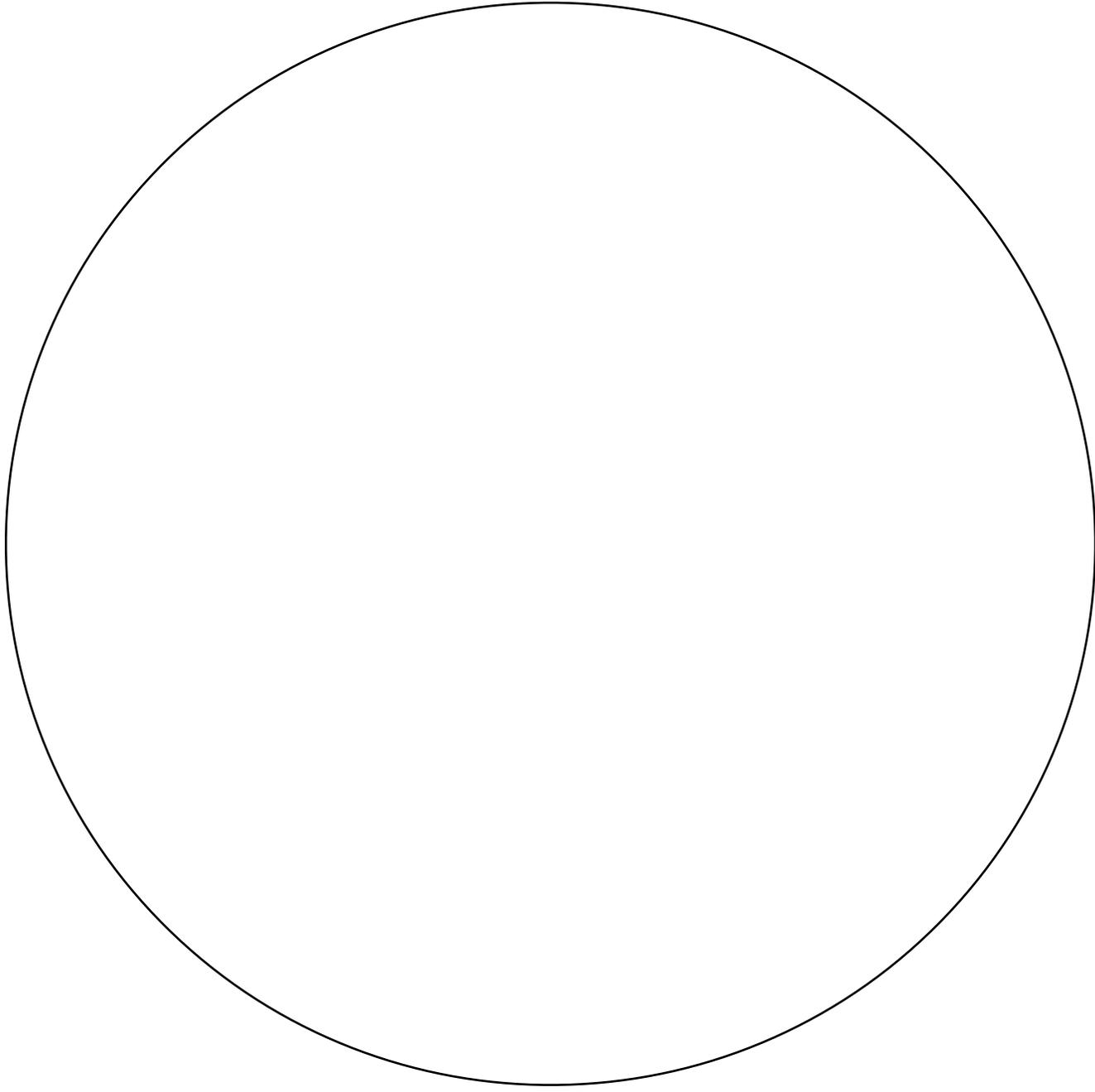
**Snack:**

Gather round crackers for a face, skittles for eyes, rope licorice for a smile. Allow kids to decorate a face to eat or take home. Send kids who are heading to church with a package of smiley face gummy snacks (they are a Wal-Mart store brand snack) that they can eat during the service as they remember the good news Jesus came to tell!

**Additional Activity:**

Find a copy of the church’s bulletin. Show kids how the names of those who are sick or in special need of prayers are printed in the bulletin. Have the kids make smiley face cards for those on this list this week as a reminder of God’s love.

Jesus brings good news of God's love!



# *Lower Elementary*

## **Materials List:**

- Classroom Map & New Testament Magnified Map
- Spark Story Bible
- Card Making Materials (Paper, stickers, glitter glue, etc.)
- 2 Sets of Bible Book Playing Cards

## **Before Students Arrive:**

Make sure all supplies are gathered. Grab a copy of the church bulletin for this morning.

## **Experiencing the Story:**

Gather students around the classroom map. Talk about some of the names of towns that you see on the New Testament magnified map. Are any of the names on the map familiar? How about Nazareth? What do the kids know already about Nazareth? Nazareth was the place where the angel first came to Mary to tell her that she was going to have a baby. Nazareth is also the town in which Jesus spent most of his life. Nazareth was his hometown the way that Akron or Craig (name the hometown of kids in your class) would be for us. Today we are going to read a story of what happened when Jesus was talking to people in his hometown, Nazareth.

Read “Jesus Goes to Nazareth” (Spark Story Bible pages 252-253)

Say to the kids: “Jesus came to tell us that Jesus loves everyone! That news is especially important at times when we feel very sad or discouraged or like other people don’t care about us. Sometimes when people are sad or sick they especially like to hear from others that they are loved! Did you know that each and every Sunday we pray for people who are sick in our congregation and community? We even print a list of names of people with specific prayer concerns in our bulletin so that people can take the list home and pray for them during the week. Here is today’s list.” Show the kids the prayer list in the bulletin.

**Activity:**

Ask the kids if they know of anyone else not already on the list who could use some extra special prayers. It could be someone in their family or someone from school that is going through a tough time. Once you have a big list made, assign each of the kids one or more names from the list. Say a prayer together as a class, having each child say the names of those that they were assigned. Then tell ask the kids to make cards for the people they were assigned reminding them that God loves them and so do we!

Before the end of class, give the kids time to write in their Smash books. Ask them to write down (or draw) how it makes them feel to know that God loves everyone... even those who are poor, sick, and in prison. Does it make them angry like it did the people in Jesus' hometown, or does it make them happy? Then have the students write (or draw) what it makes them feel like to know that God loves each of them too!

While kids are working, ask if anyone has memorized more books of the Bible so that pieces can be added up on the wall to their sunflowers. Anyone who finishes their cards and smash books early can be invited to play Memory matching game with the Bible Book playing cards.

# *Upper Elementary/Middle School*

## **Materials List:**

- One index card for each student
- Some kind of delicious treat for each student
- Spark NRSV Bibles
- Students' smash books
- Bible Book Jenga

## **Before the Students Arrive:**

On 3 of the index cards, make a gold star. (If you have a class with 4 or fewer students only make 1 with a gold star). On the other index cards, put a red dot. Shuffle the index cards and place them face down. Remove all the chairs from the room so that there are only enough chairs for the students with gold stars on their cards and you.

## **Experiencing the Story:**

Stand at the door as students enter the room and give them each one index card as they enter the room. Hold the cards in your hand so that neither you or the students can see the mark on the card.

As you go to take your place at the table, make sure that those with the gold stars get to sit in the chairs and shoo away any other students. As you begin your conversation, only talk to the students who had gold stars on their paper. Pretend as if the other students aren't even in the room.

Tell the students (of course only the ones with stars!) That you have good news. You've brought treats for today's class. Make a big show of pulling out some special delicious treat and giving one to each of the students with stars on their cards. Be sure to have one yourself!

(By this point, the kids with plain dots on their cards should be complaining!)

Finally, acknowledge their complaints saying something like: "What? What's wrong? This isn't fair? What's not fair about this?"

After listening to the kids' complaints and reasonings for why things aren't fair, tell the kids that you think they are ready now to read the Bible story for the day.

Have the kids who don't have chairs come up close to the table. They may need to sit on their knees or sit on the floor, but gather them in so that they can be part of the reading and conversation.

Read together Luke 4:14-30 in their Spark NRSV Bibles.

After reading, ask the class what the people thought about Jesus at the beginning of the story (verse 22 is a clue!) How did the people feel about Jesus at the end of the story (look at verse 29).

Have a conversation with the kids about what they think caused this change. Tell the kids to imagine that the group Jesus was talking to a group of people with gold stars on their card who thought that Jesus was announcing good news for them! (Like those with stars getting that delicious treat!) They were excited and happy about that! But Jesus went on. Jesus said that there are lots more people-- Gentiles (people who were not part of the Jewish family) and those who were sick, and in prison, those with diseases, the people that not many others liked-- that Jesus came to spread God's love to as well. And that message was not so popular. In fact, they were going to throw Jesus off a cliff for preaching that message! But it really is good news for everyone that God loves us all!

Tell the kids where they can find the chairs to be brought back so that everyone has a place to sit. Get out enough delicious treats for everyone to have one. Take the index cards and throw them in the trash.

Get out the student's smash books and have them write (or draw) what they are thinking about this story and their experience coming into class today. How does it feel to be the one excluded? How does it feel to know that with God we all are included?

### With Any Extra Time...

Our major goal for Sunday school between now and the end of the year is to memorize the books of the Bible. With whatever time you have left, play Bible Books Jenga. Take a block of Jenga blocks with the names of the books of the Bible written on each side of the blocks and stack them up. The first player starts with Genesis (or Matthew if you are using a New Testament set). The player must remove the piece labeled with the next book of the Bible on it... no matter where it happens to be located in the stack. The goal is not to be the one to knock the stack down! If you have time time play the game more than once, choose whether to begin again at the beginning and challenge yourselves to get farther through the list of books or to resume play with the book you were on when the previous tower fell.