

January 27, 2013

Lesson 23: Jesus' Disciples Pick Grain on the Sabbath

Luke 6:1-16

One sabbath while Jesus was going through the grainfields, his disciples plucked some heads of grain, rubbed them in their hands, and ate them. But some of the Pharisees said, 'Why are you doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?' Jesus answered, 'Have you not read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? He entered the house of God and took and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and gave some to his companions?' Then he said to them, 'The Son of Man is lord of the sabbath.'

On another sabbath he entered the synagogue and taught, and there was a man there whose right hand was withered. The scribes and the Pharisees watched him to see whether he would cure on the sabbath, so that they might find an accusation against him. Even though he knew what they were thinking, he said to the man who had the withered hand, 'Come and stand here.' He got up and stood there. Then Jesus said to them, 'I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to destroy it?' After looking around at all of them, he said to him, 'Stretch out your hand.' He did so, and his hand was restored. But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.

Now during those days he went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God. And when day came, he called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles: Simon, whom he named Peter, and his brother Andrew, and James, and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James son of Alphaeus, and Simon, who was called the Zealot, and Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.



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The Big Story Truth: Jesus teaches that God's kingdom has always been about giving life.

About the Scripture Passage: In this Scripture passage, Jesus is confronted by Pharisees who are debating what is "lawful" to do on the Sabbath. Keeping one day a week as a Sabbath for rest and holiness was part of God's law. The Pharisees were those whose job it was to make

sure that God's law was followed. So it was very important to them to know what was and wasn't allowed to be done on the Sabbath and that everyone else knew it too.

When Jesus and his disciples were seen picking grain to eat because they were hungry on the Sabbath day, the Pharisees accused Jesus of breaking God's law. What they didn't understand is that Jesus is God! And Jesus wasn't breaking the law, he was following it in the right way.

Jesus taught by his example that God meant for the Sabbath to be life-giving. The Sabbath was made to be a special time for God's people. Holiness isn't just a routine keeping of law. The holiness of the Sabbath is resting from our daily work so that we have time for worship and prayer, but it is also caring for our neighbors- feeding the hungry, healing the sick and injured.

*Jesus' Disciples Pick Grain
on the Sabbath*

Luke 6:1-16



For Your Reflection

1. How do you keep the Sabbath holy? Does the command feel like a negative thing to you (describing what you can't do) or does it feel like a welcome rest?
2. What activities are life-giving to you? What is life-giving to others around you? How are these activities part of your Sabbath day?

Making the Connection: Kids in our Sunday School program will have heard the word “sabbath” earlier this year when we talked about the 10 commandments. What’s happening in this text though is a concept difficult for young children to understand. For the youngest of kids, laws and rules are simple and black and white. Older kids might begin to understand that there are different interpretations of a rule (especially if that interpretation can get them out of trouble!) But the concept in this passage of religious leaders debating what is the right or wrong way of keeping the commandments might be difficult to grasp for the youngest grades. Instead, the lesson for these younger classes will focus on the idea that Jesus was saying that it is always the right time to love God and love our neighbor. There is never a time when it is wrong to care about those around us. Loving us is something that Jesus does ALL the time. Loving others and helping them in any way is what we are called to do ALL the time too.

Where in the World Are We?

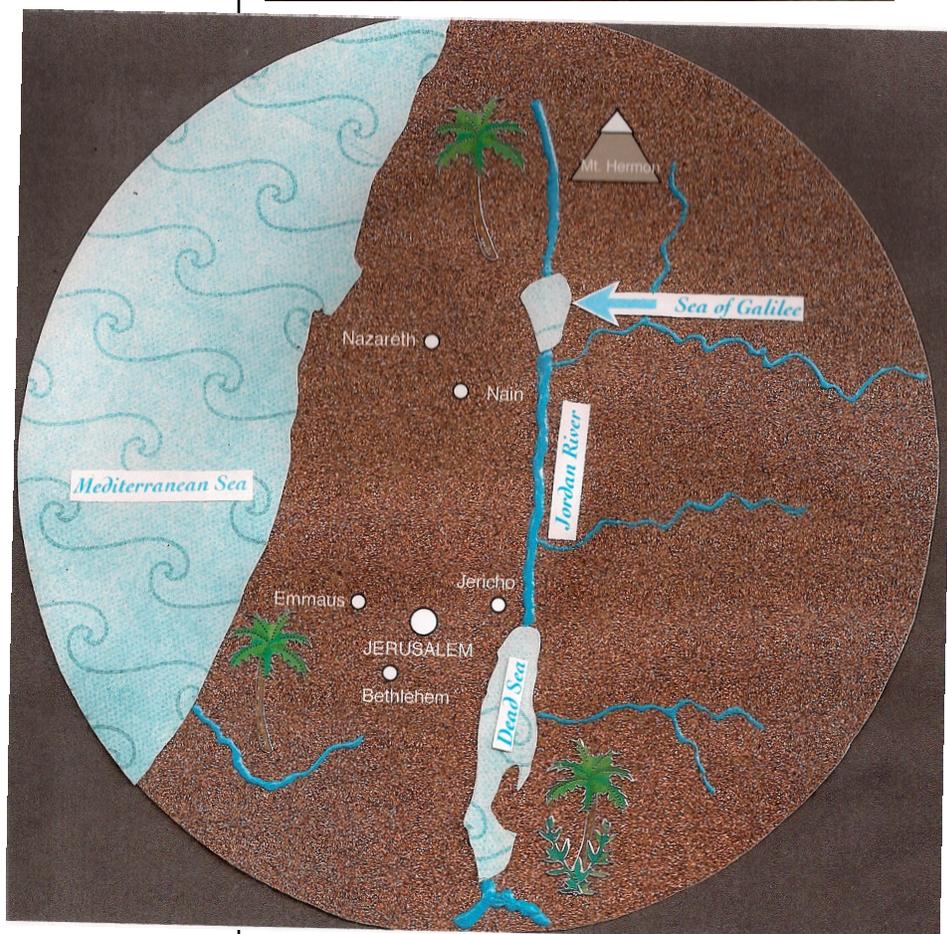
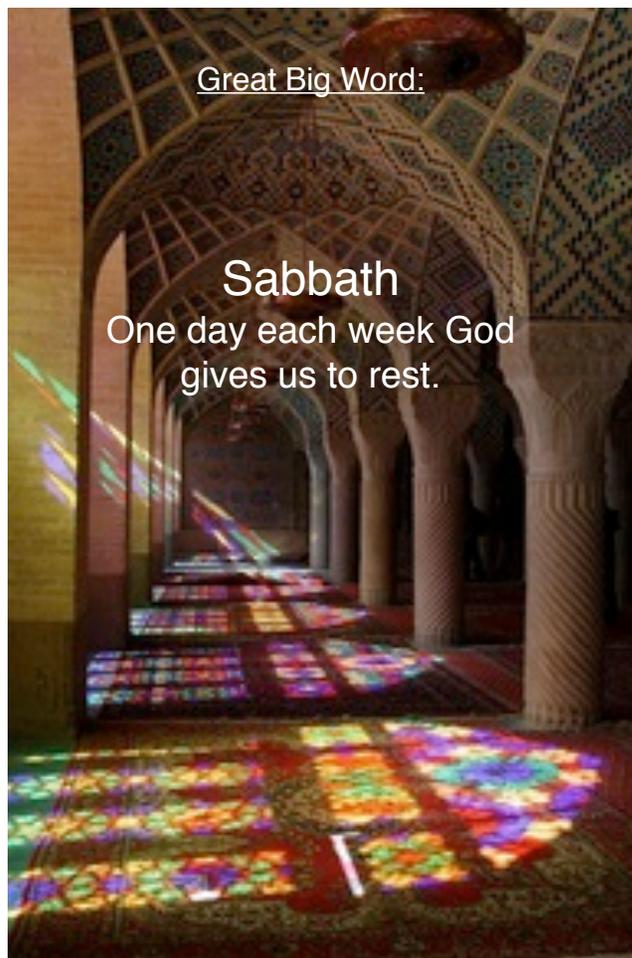
Today’s lesson doesn’t have a specific town associated with it. What we do hear in verses just a little earlier (Luke 5:17) is that the Pharisees have come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem to hear Jesus. Later after this passage (in Luke 6:17) we see that crowds are coming from Judea and Jerusalem (to the South) all the way to Tyre and Sidon (way up North). In other words as Jesus is teaching, word is spreading and people

Loving

Great Big Word:

Sabbath

One day each week God gives us to rest.



Preschool

Materials:

- Copies of the “Always the Right Time!” Bible story handout for each child
- Variety of clocks and calendars
- Plastic watch party favor for each child
- Permanent markers
- Optional: CD player, days of the week and Books of the Bible songs
- Additional Activity Supplies: Paper for making signs/posters,
 - Cardboard box to decorate for food pantry donations

Before the Children Arrive:

Collect several watches, calendars, stopwatches, clocks, etc. and lay them out on the table or floor around which you will be gathering with the kids.

Experiencing the Story:

As children arrive, welcome them into the room to sit down around your collection of calendars/clocks. Ask them if they know what these things are and what they are used for. Affirm their answers. These are all things that help us tell time or tell what day it is. People use these things to know when it is time to do things. Like your parents might use a clock to know when it is time to get up in the morning or to go to bed. They might use a calendar to write up a doctor’s appointment or to know how many days it is until a special event like a birthday. Show the kids how each square of the calendar represents a different day of the week. Ask the kids if they know any days of the week songs. If they do, let them each take a turn singing one for the class. If you know one, teach it to the kids. Tell the kids that today we are going to read a story about Jesus and that in this story people were mad because people thought Jesus wasn’t doing things on the right day! Give each child a copy of the story handout “Always the right time!”

Activity:

Say: Jesus showed us how important it is to take care of God’s people all the time. What are some ways that you help take care of other people? (giving hugs, helping a grandparent, singing a song to someone who is sad, helping a friend,

etc.) Today for our activity, we are going to make a reminder that it is always the right time to help others!

Be sure that each child's sleeves are rolled up. If you have paint/craft shirts available, have the children slip those on to prevent accidental marks on clothing. Warn children how important it will be for them to be very careful with these permanent markers!

Give each child a plastic watch. Set out the container of permanent markers for them to decorate the watch with. Encourage them to draw pictures that will remind them of Jesus' love for them all the time and the ways that they can show that love to others too!

While the students are working, turn on the books of the Bible and other Sunday School songs in the background.

Additional Activities:

1. Run with the idea that these kids, even though they are young, can make a big difference in the world! Encourage the kids to make posters and ask the congregation for help in collecting items for the local food pantry. If your church has a box in the entryway for collecting food items, visit it and check to see what is inside. If your church doesn't yet have a box for these donated items, have your class make one!
2. Snack idea: Eat some grain! While we don't have a field we can pick something fresh to eat from right now, we do have foods that are made from grains. Cereal is one of those foods! Give each child a bowl of cheerios and talk about how grain is something we still eat today.
3. Give students time to color the Bible story book handout.
4. Play "memory" using the decks of Bible Book cards. Be sure to help the kids name the books of the Bible as they turn the cards over or make a match! Ask the whole class to join you in saying the name each time so they become familiar with pronouncing the names!

Early Elementary

Materials:

- CD player (ipod or other means of playing music)
- Chairs
- Bible Story handout (1 copy per child)
- Blank Calendar (1 copy per child)
- Stickers (Each child will need 52 stickers-- so get a big pack!)

Before the Children Arrive:

Set up the room so that the chairs are in a circle. (If necessary move any tables out of the way so that you have enough room to comfortably and safely play musical chairs.)

Experiencing the Story:

Welcome kids in and have them find a seat in one of the chairs. Ask them if any of them have ever played the game “musical chairs.” If someone has, encourage that student to share the rules of the game. (While the music is playing, the students get up and walk around the circle of chairs. When the music stops, they sit down in a chair. The challenging part of the game is that there are not enough chairs in the circle for all the students. The number of chairs should be set up so that there are enough for all but one of the players. Usually this provides a humorous scramble to be the one to get to the chair first! The person who winds up without a chair to sit on is out of the game. Play continues removing a chair each round until only one player is sitting. This player is the “winner.”)

Play a game of musical chairs with the class. Afterward talk about the “rules” of the game. When the music was playing, it was time to move. When the music stopped, it was time to sit down and rest. Today our Bible story is about times when it was ok to be moving and busy and times when people were supposed to rest.

Ask the kids if they remember hearing the word “Sabbath” before. If needed, prompt them to think back to learning about the 10 commandments. One of the commandments was to keep the Sabbath holy. Keeping the sabbath meant that there was one day a week that God wanted the people not to work but to have time to rest and pray and worship. In today’s Bible story, people were getting

angry at Jesus because they thought he was breaking the “rules” of the sabbath. They thought he was doing something on that day that he wasn’t supposed to be.

Read the story together from the Bible story page.

Say: Jesus loves us all the time and wants his people to be fed and healed no matter what day it is. It is good that God has given us times for work and times for rest. That is important. But it is also important to know that ALL times are times when God wants us to love and care for others.

Activity:

For today’s activity, kids will be making their own calendars for them to hang up at home to remind them that God loves them every day and to show that love to others every day too!

Pass out the blank calendars. Talk with the kids about how each square represents a different day. Show them how each month is laid out so that there is a column for Sunday, Monday, Tuesday.... etc.

Tell the kids that we as Christians have Sunday as our Sabbath day. Its the day that we come to church for worship and that we often times try not to have to do extra work. Kids don’t have to go to school on Sunday. (You can talk with the kids about sometimes adults do have to work on Sunday, so some people have to find another day to take some Sabbath time off.) But for the most part as kids anyway, Sunday is a good Sabbath day. Have kids put a sticker of a smiley face or a cross or some other kind of reminder on each Sunday in the calendar as a reminder that it is God’s special day!

Then, give kids time to decorate the calendar, draw pictures, and otherwise make it their own. Encourage them to write or draw things on the calendar that they could do to show God’s love and care for others around them.

REMEMBER: As kids are working, this would be a great time to say the books of the Bible together. Take time to hang up the pieces of their sunflowers for as many new books as can be named.

Upper Elementary / Middle School

Materials:

- Spark NRSV Bibles
- Blank Card Stock squares (enough for approx. 10 per child)
- Chalkboard or Chart Paper
- Crayons, Markers, etc.
- Smash Books
- Optional: Bible Jenga, Books of the Bible Playing Cards

Before the Students Arrive:

Write the words “Laws We Live By” on the top of the chalkboard or chart paper.

Experiencing the Story:

As students arrive in the room, ask them to help you list some of the laws or rules that we live by in our society. (If they are having trouble, start with the rules you have in your classroom and work your way up.) What are laws we follow in the mall, at school, etc. Some of your students may be not too far away from learning how to drive. Ask kids what rules/laws they know about driving. Guide them, asking questions, until someone talks about a speed limit on a road. List this with all other suggestions up on the chalkboard/chart paper. If no one has already mentioned it, ask the kids if the 10 commandments belong up on our list. See how many of the 10 they can remember and list.

Now start a little debate with the kids about the laws up on the board. If the speed limit is part of our law, is it illegal for an ambulance to go 75 mph in a 65 mph zone? Why or Why not?

Tell the kids that in today’s Bible story, Jesus and the Pharisees were debating one of God’s laws- the law about the Sabbath day of rest. Ask the kids if they know what a Pharisee is. If not, have them look up the word Pharisee in the glossary in the back of their Bibles. (It’s found on page 1411.) A Pharisee was a religious leader whose job it was to know God’s law and how best to keep it... but in the story that we are going to read today, Jesus and the Pharisee disagreed on how to obey God’s law.

Read the story in Luke 6:1-16. Talk about the questions in the box on page 1136 of the Spark NRSV Bible. This past week was Martin Luther King Day. How did breaking the rules play a part in our country becoming a safe place for all people of all colors and backgrounds to live?

Jesus teaches that loving and helping others has never been against God's law. God's law has always been about helping and healing. It's people that turned it into something different. Jesus' teaching shows that the sabbath day of rest is not a law that is meant to harm or be an excuse to ignore what others around us need. Rather, the sabbath is supposed to be a life-giving opportunity for us to focus on God and caring for our ourselves and one another. Jesus showed by his example that he loves us all the time and that we are called to share and show that love every day of the week!

Activity:

Invite the class to think about how they could observe the sabbath in the right way.... using it as a time for rest for our bodies, focusing on God, and caring for others. Show the kids some sample cards from "52 Ways to Make a Difference." Tell the kids that someone made up these cards to give people ideas for ways to make a difference in the world. Our activity for today is to make up our own set of Sabbath Suggestions cards. On the plain cardstock provided, have kids write/draw some ideas for how they could keep the sabbath holy and how they can love and care for others no matter what day of the week it is. Give each student time to complete several cards (they can take blank ones home to finish later if they want to.) As they work, give them these guidelines:

- The activities should be life-giving (which means it is encouraging to you and to those around you.)
- The activities should be practical ways that you can live out what God has asked you to do for others... help feed the hungry, heal the sick, spread the good news of God's forgiveness and love.
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Additional Activities:

- Give kids time to write some definitions of words and ideas that they learned today in their smash books. These words might include: sabbath, Pharisee, civil disobedience, life-giving.
- Use any extra time to play a game reinforcing the Bible book memory challenge. Play another round of Bible Book Jenga or use the Books of the

Bible playing cards to have a speed challenge to see how fast the class can work together to put them all in order.