We listen to Jesus, our Teacher.

- Angry listeners reject Jesus’ message, because they cannot see Jesus as an authentic teacher.
- We will present Jesus as a teacher and leader from whom we learn and follow.
- In today’s core session, we explore with children a story of Jesus teaching in the face of anger and rejection.

**Question of the Week**
What makes me uncomfortable about Jesus’ words or actions?

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**Core Session**
- Getting Started (colored tablecloths, candles, bells and/or flowers)
- Gospel Story: Jesus Speaks the Truth
- Mural (long strip of paper)
- Praying Together (optional: matches)

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**Enrichment**
- Welcome the Good News
- Singing Together
- Music and Movement: Stravinsky’s *Firebird*
- Bible Skills for Third Graders
- Info: Children and the Gospel
- Info: Strong Feelings
- Info: Where You’ll Find Everything Else

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**Helps for Catechists**
- More about Today’s Scriptures
- Reflection
- The Scriptures and the Catechism
- The World of the Bible: Prophet

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**Scripture**


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Jesus the Teacher

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4th Sunday in Ordinary Time – C
Getting Started (5-10 minutes)

Tape or pin the Jesus the Teacher poster, attached to this document, in the storytelling area of the room.

Invite children to explore the poster. Discuss:
◆ What does Jesus look like in the poster?
◆ What is he holding?

Explain that Jesus and the Bible go together in a special way. The Bible tells us stories about Jesus, our teacher. Jesus himself knew many of the stories in one part of our Bible, the part we call the Old Testament.

Invite children to “enthrone” a Bible near the Jesus the Teacher poster. Ask them to prepare a special place, for example, by covering a table with one or more colored cloths.

The Bible takes the central place on the table. Children can arrange around it such items as flowers, candles and bells. As the children work, encourage them to discuss their memories of the Bible.

Gospel Story (5-10 minutes)

Jesus Speaks the Truth

Jesus traveled many places, but one day he returned home. He entered the synagogue. It was time for prayer. The man in charge asked Jesus to read a passage of scripture.

Jesus stood. The scripture was written on a scroll, and Jesus unrolled the scroll. Jesus read, “The Spirit of God is upon me. God has chosen me to tell good news. The time has come when God will save all God’s people.”

Jesus looked around the synagogue of his hometown. “I am the one God has chosen,” he said. “God has chosen me to save God’s people.”

The synagogue was silent. The people stared at Jesus, who had grown up in this same town. “Wasn’t his father Joseph?” one of the people whispered.

“If he’s the one God has chosen, why hasn’t he worked any miracles here?” muttered another person.

Jesus knew what the people were thinking. “I tell you,” he said, “I think people everywhere will welcome me more than you. You think you know all about me because I grew up here. You want to see for yourselves the miracles I have done elsewhere. But my work will be done as God wants, not as you want.”

The eyes of the people grew hard. “How dare you speak to us like that!” they said. “How dare you!”

“Don’t let him speak to us like that!” yelled a voice in the synagogue. The crowd rose up and dragged Jesus out of town. The crowd was so rough that it almost pushed Jesus off a cliff.

But Jesus stopped the people without even touching them. I don’t know how Jesus did this, but he simply walked away, right through the middle of the angry crowd. Then Jesus left his hometown, where no one would listen, and went on his way to do God’s work.

Mural (10-20 minutes)

Activity Soundtrack: Play “The Finale” from Stravinsky’s Firebird Suite. (Open your Winter-C Seasonal Resources folder, then click on Companion Music for options on obtaining this music.)

Remind the children that in today’s story Jesus walked right through the middle of the angry crowd to get away. Invite the children to make a mural to portray this scene.

Ask each child to use construction paper to make a figure of an angry person. Ask one child to make a figure of Jesus instead. Ask the children to draw on a long strip of mural paper a hill that ends in a rocky cliff. The children glue their figures onto the hill to display the scene from today’s story.

You can hang the finished mural on a wall of the room.

Praying Together (5 minutes)

Gather the children around the enthroned Bible. If the decorations include candles, light the candles.

Ask if anyone would like to read from the Bible words that Jesus read in today’s story. Show Luke 4:18-19 to any volunteers. Allow volunteers to read as much or as little as they like of these two verses.

Close by praying:
◆ God, thank you for the Bible and for Jesus. Thank you for being with Jesus and with us during hard times. Amen.

Note: If you use At Home with the Good News, either distribute this week’s papers to the children before they leave or e-mail the papers to their families.
Welcome the Good News
(10-15 minutes)
On page 1 of today’s Welcome the Good News you’ll find an illustrated version of today’s story.

In Welcome God’s Word on page 2, children look up verses from Luke and brainstorm safe ways to handle angry feelings. Children will also find an activity called With Your Family that can lead at home.

As a related activity, you will find a Feelings Roleplay about telling the truth when it’s hard, just as Jesus did, attached to this document.

Singing Together (5-10 minutes)
From Singing the Good News you and the children can sing together:
◆ “Apples and Oranges” (p. 20 of the songbook)
◆ “Give a Little” (p. 36 of the songbook; also available as an MP3)

Note: To access both the songbook and its attached MP3 files, open your Winter-C Seasonal Resources folder, then click on Singing the Good News.

Music and Movement (10-15 minutes)
Stravinsky’s Firebird
Children invent creative movements to accompany music that expresses diverse emotions. Often children invited to invent movements simply choose pantomime. In this activity, we help them create shapes that express the feelings of the music as a preparation for expressing the mood of the gospel.

Ask children to begin by making shapes with their bodies they can hold as still as statues. Ask each child to create a brand-new shape they’ve never made before:
◆ What might a hard shape look like? a soft shape?
◆ What might a big shape look like? a small shape?

Invite children to makes shapes that reflect the different feelings they hear in music. Begin with an exciting or fast-paced piece, such as Stravinsky’s “Berceuse and Finale” from The Firebird Suite. (Open your Winter-C Seasonal Resources folder, then click on Companion Music for options on obtaining this music.)

First ask children to listen to the music:
◆ Does this music feel “big” or “small”? hard or soft? open or closed?

Ask the children to make shapes that match their answers.

After 5-10 minutes, switch to a more meditative, quiet work, such as “Freedom is Coming.” (Open your Winter-C Seasonal Resources folder, then click on Companion Music for options on obtaining this music.)
Again ask first about the music:
◆ Does this music feel “big” or “small”? hard or soft? open or closed?

Ask the children to make shapes that match their answers.

After the movement, ask:
◆ What strong feelings did we hear about in today’s story?
◆ What shapes could we make to show those strong feelings?

Now read again today’s story. Ask:
◆ Does this story feel “big” or “small”? hard or soft? open or closed?

Ask children to make shapes that match the mood of today’s story.

Bible Skills for Third Graders
(10-15 minutes)
Help the children use the Table of Contents, chapter and verse numbers to find Luke 4:21-30 in their Bibles. Ask the children to follow along as you read the passage aloud.

Ask the children to reread the verses and find the names of places, such as “Syria.” List the children’s answers on a board or newsprint.

Then help children find maps in the back of their Bibles. The children work together to locate these places on the map(s). You can also help them find Nazareth, where today’s story takes place.
Improved your core session with enrichment activities.

For children, affirm several messages from today's story: Jesus is our teacher. Jesus knew difficult times. Jesus, our teacher, is with us in every difficult time.

In naming Jesus as teacher, we want to bear in mind that Jesus is the teacher each of us longs to have. On the one hand, Jesus is the One who understands us and accepts us, just as we are today. On the other hand, Jesus is the One who will not stop working with us until all God's desires for us are fulfilled. The simplest way we convey this message of constant, loving presence to young children is in the refrain of today's story-review game: Jesus is near.

Strong Feelings

The pieces of music we suggest for today's movement activity evoke the deep, mysterious feelings that children can experience without being able to express them in words. Stravinsky's music from The Firebird is especially evocative: the firebird is a figure of Russian mythology, a symbol of both blessing and curse. This symbol sums up the human condition: With God, life is a blessing. Without God, we may experience life as a curse.

Strong feelings can bless us, too. We may not be comfortable feeling anger, but anger is what motivated the prophets of Israel to denounce injustice in the rich and comfortable. We may not be comfortable feeling sad, but Jesus easily wept at the tomb of his dear friend Lazarus. God has given us our feelings as part of the blessings of human life.

Children can experience their feelings as blessing when they have adults available who acknowledge their own strong feelings, model appropriate ways to handle strong feelings and show enough emotional security that they can stay present to children caught up in strong feelings themselves.

Look for opportunities to model these behaviors yourself. If you have a helper, it's appropriate to say, "Kai, will you help me with this problem? I feel frustrated trying to solve it myself." When you see a child dealing with strong emotions, it can be helpful to say, "I see you're feeling angry about your crayon breaking. Would you like to get another crayon or would you like to take a break from drawing?"

Where You'll Find Everything Else

Attach to this Session Plan you will find:
- Backgrounds and reflections for today's readings, titled More about Today's Scriptures.
- A Feelings Roleplay activity you can use to invite children to explore how to tell the truth in difficult situations.
- A copy of today's Gospel Story to hand out to children or e-mail to their families.
- This week's At Home with the Good News to hand out to children or e-mail to their families.

Open your Winter-C Seasonal Resources folder, then click on Seasonal Articles to find:
- Information on Winter-C's Models of the Faith.
- An article for catechists and/or families titled Learning through Music.
- A printable article for catechists and/or family members exploring The Lord's Prayer.
- An article for catechists and/or families further exploring Paul's Corinthian Letters.
- An article for catechists and/or families examining The Influence of Jewish Worship on today's Christian worship.
- An article for catechists and/or families exploring the variety of traditional Prayer Postures and Gestures.
- The Introduction for Primary for Living the Good News.
More about Today’s Scriptures

Today’s readings invite us to consider the power given us through God’s love and presence. Jeremiah protests his call to prophesy, but God commands him to speak boldly. Paul teaches a quarreling community that, while all the spiritual gifts have value, it is respect and love for each other that deeply empower us. Jesus proclaims that the power of his ministry will not be confined to his hometown or even to his faith community.

Jeremiah 1:4-5, 17-19

Today’s reading describes Jeremiah’s call to be a prophet according to the typical pattern of the Old Testament: call, hesitation and divine affirmation.

Like Moses, Isaiah and Ezekiel, Jeremiah pleads his incapacity to serve as God’s prophet but is overruled. The Lord will put the words of God in Jeremiah’s mouth.

Jeremiah’s job is to stand firm, not to quaver before the hostility of his audience but to speak clearly the judgments of God.

God makes no promises about the ease of his mission; in fact, Jeremiah is guaranteed a battle. Nevertheless God’s presence is with Jeremiah, undergirding his obedience with divine strength.

1 Corinthians 12:31–13:13

Today’s reading sets Paul’s praise of love within the context of his explanation of the meaning of spiritual gifts. Apparently the Corinthians struggled with the evaluation and exercise of spiritual gifts within the community. Greater honor was given to those who possessed the more extraordinary gifts such as “deeds of power,” apostleship or prophecy.

Paul insists that no spiritual gift, no matter how powerful, is a true measure of a person’s spiritual maturity. Without love, the gifts are worthless. Instead, *agape*, God’s unmerited love to us and from us to others, is the essential gift of divine life and is the necessary context that gives all the spiritual gifts value.

In contrast to other spiritual gifts, love, faith and hope are permanent. Love is the greatest, for faith and hope are the response to love, which both precedes and follows them.


Jesus’ sermon in the synagogue at Nazareth and the public’s reaction to it foreshadow the meaning of his ministry, its rejection by Israel and the consequent mission to the Gentile world.

The people apparently want Jesus to do for his hometown what he has done elsewhere, perhaps to validate Jesus’ own claim (4:21). He reminds them of other occasions when God directed ministry outside the nation. The reaction of the people points back to the temptation (4:9) and forward to the crucifixion that took place outside the city.
Reflection
We like our categories, and we like them tidy. Then along comes Jesus, defying neat boundaries and boxes. Is he rabbi or carpenter? Ordinary working man or eloquent speaker? Good ol’ Joseph’s son, or heart-stopping prophet? And if he’s a home-grown Nazareth boy, why does he do greater deeds in Capernaum? His universal views seem to annoy those with jingoistic tendencies. How DARE God do good beyond the pale of Israel?

So Paul speaks of the greatest gifts as not easily quantified or categorized. The only things that endure can’t be noted on a spreadsheet or saved in a bank account: faith, hope and love. Instinctively, we know this. Seeking greatness, we don’t necessarily turn to church or political leaders. We look instead to caring people: the abuela who makes everyone welcome; the friend whose eyes affirm us; the married couple whose obvious love for each other spills over onto those around them.

Where will we find Jesus today? One hint appears in the last line of today’s gospel reading. He disappears by going “straight through their midst.” So he’ll be found where we least expect him—right where we are, doing whatever we’re doing. Now THAT defies categories!

The Scriptures and the Catechism
The foundation of our Christian community is the theological virtue of love (CCC, #1812–29, 2087–94). Paul’s eloquent description of love as the greatest gift to be sought for is also a challenging examination of conscience for all of us. As Christians we are called to a life of love that permeates every detail of our ordinary lives. Justice without love is not yet truly Christian.

The World of the Bible
Prophet
Biblical prophets (Greek, to speak for or on behalf of someone) speak as God’s intermediaries to the king and the covenant people. Rulers tended to forget that they were to rule according to God’s covenant law and not for their own interests.

The prophets spoke on behalf of God, reminding the people of God’s agenda and encouraging trust in God rather than in human power and wisdom. They also spoke on behalf of the poor and downtrodden who often had no one else to speak for them.

Although their words were often taken as predicting the future, their predictive power was nothing more than a consequence of their belief that God always comes in judgment to punish evil and in mercy to reward good. God’s judgment of sin and reward of salvation were accomplished in and through the political and social life of the people.

Prophets revealed God’s hidden presence in the political, social and personal events of their times. Being attuned to God’s word, the prophets showed a world that invited cooperation with God to establish and maintain right relationships. Through their double vision of the world from both the divine and human perspectives, prophets taught how to see, evaluate and act in the world as God instructed.

Prophets encouraged hearing and heeding God’s message. But they were never just interested in good ideas, but in good lives that met the demands of the right relationships with God and with others. They offered a new vision of the world and demanded that people change themselves and their ways because of God’s presence.