



# Be the Story Curriculum for Narrative Lectionary

## Year D- Gospel of John Spring Semester

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By Pastor SiriAnna Strommen

## A Few Reminders

**The Lesson:** Each lesson is meant to last between 20-30 minutes. If you have longer than that, you may need to proactively come up with another activity such as music, or games, or something active for the kids.

**Centering Breath:** This may be a difficult part for kids to do, but it is amazing to see the effect it has on kids when they get into it and take on the challenge. The point is to teach kids a tool for calming and centering themselves that they can use when they feel anxious, or simply want to connect with God. This is a Spiritual Practice.

**Timeline:** The reason many churches are using the Narrative Lectionary is because it tells the story in order. No matter your age, it is helpful not just to learn Bible stories, but to understand that there is a flow and arc to the Bible. It isn't random. By reviewing the timeline you are building that storyline for the kids and reinforcing the stories. But, of course, it is also a great catch up for kids who missed a week or two.

**Wondering:** This curriculum avoids giving a definite interpretation of the story and instead encourages kids to wonder and come up with multiple meanings. I may reinforce a few ideas with activities, but that doesn't mean other ideas are wrong.

**Activity:** The activities chosen are NOT YOUR ONLY OPTION! If you don't like them, please use something else. You know your kids best. However, the activities I chose were meant to be diverse week to week (not a coloring sheet or craft every time), and ultimately to open up a part of the story in a real way. While there is nothing wrong with coloring a picture of Paul after studying him, if we can do an activity that helps us to understand Grace that might stay with kids longer.

**Feedback:** I love hearing what creative additions or twists teachers have taken on the lesson. Please send me your ideas of what worked!

Blessings to you all!

This is holy work, inviting children to find themselves in the Story of God.

## Pastor Siri

## Sample Schedule

### **9:45-9:55** Gathering Time

- Welcome
- Singing the Old Testament or New Testament song together using a chart with the books as a guide
- Introduce theme of the day. What part of the Bible is it from? (Point to chart)
- Collect offering for the charity of your choice. Keep a record and tell the kids weekly how you are progressing on your goal.
- Celebrate birthdays

### **9:55-10:10** Music

### **10:15-10:45** Lesson of the Day

## January 2: Jesus Says Come and See

**Note:** John the Baptist always understood his role as the first act, the arrow pointing to someone else. Here he encourages his own disciples to follow Jesus. And Jesus does not simply preach to people, but rather invites his would-be followers to do just that: follow him and “see” for themselves who he is and what he is about.

**Begin with Centering Breath:** Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

**Timeline:** You might be beginning a new timeline now! Quiz kids on what stories they remember from the Old Testament, and explain we are now going to add stories from the New Testament, specifically from the Gospel of John, which is one of four accounts of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection.

**Story:** John 1:35-51 or SPARK pg. 246 “The Lamb of God”

**Sample “I wonder” statement:**

- I wonder how John the Baptist knew Jesus was so important
- I wonder what it would be like to follow one person around and be their disciple everyday
- I wonder what the voice of God sounds like
- I wonder what Jesus looked like
- I wonder if Jesus told funny jokes

**Who are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?**

**Ask for Prayers:** At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

**Prayer of the Day:** Dear Jesus, you are the Lamb of God, the one who takes away the sin of the world. Give us the faith to follow you every day and show us how we can do that. Amen.

**Activity One:** Lamb of God Wash cloth Project (Need white washcloths, rubber bands, pink felt, and a bow)

- Give each child a washcloth. What do you do with the cloth? (*Clean! Jesus takes away the sins of the world. He WASHES us clean. He is the lamb of God.*)
- Roll one side up tightly to the middle. Roll the other side up tightly to touch the middle. It should look like a long scroll.
- Roll it into thirds, folding it over each other (like a cinnamon roll).
- With a rubber band, make a “neck”, holding it together. The end of the rubber band can rest on the top, creating a kind of face.
- Add a felt nose and ears (these should be pre-cut), inserting them into the folds.
- Tie a bow around the neck.
- You should now have a Lamb of God washcloth.



Add a picture/symbol/word to the Timeline.

## January 9: Wedding at Cana

**Note:** This is the first “sign” Jesus gives in the Gospel of John. Signs were meant to illustrate God’s power on earth. So, what does turning water into wine at a wedding mean? The jars of water were for religious ritual purification. What does it mean that Jesus turned those into wine for a wedding? It certainly says something to the effect that God is a god of joy! Many times, in the Bible heaven is likened to a wedding feast. God’s presence is full of abundance, community, and delight.

**Begin with Centering Breath:** Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

**Timeline:** Go through the timeline so far.

**Story:** John 2:1-11 or SPARK pg. 410 “Wedding at Cana”

**Sample “I wonder” statements:**

- I wonder what Jesus’ mother Mary was thinking
- I wonder why Jesus didn’t want to help at first
- I wonder what it means that Jesus’ first miracle was turning water into wine
- I wonder if Jesus likes parties
- I wonder if heaven is like a wedding party

**Who are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?**

**Ask for Prayers:** At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

**Prayer of the Day:** Dear God, you bring life to the world and joy where there is sadness. Let us offer joy and hope to those around us as well. Amen.

**Activity: Throw a “Surprising” Dinner Party**

- Plan and set up several hidden surprises around the room before class: a CD player with fun music, donuts, simply little party gifts, party hats, noise makers.
- Now, have all the kids help you to set the table with napkins, plates, forks, and cups
- Pour water into the cups and have a modest array of snacks- maybe pretzels and raisins
- Begin the party! After a few minutes, you can ring a bell and say, “hey, God has a surprise for our party!” Then reveal one of the items.
- Continue these “surprises”. Discuss how God has good things in store for us, but sometimes they come later, or sometimes we just don’t see them yet.

**Add a picture/symbol/word to the Timeline.**

## January 16: Jesus Cleanses the Temple

**Note:** The Spark Bible does not have this story, but it is an important one, so I suggest retelling it. Here we see Jesus get angry. It’s important to realize that there is nothing wrong with the emotion of anger. When we see someone being hurt or abused, we should be angry and step in if we can. And that is why Jesus gets angry: the temple should be a refuge, where people can go to meet God. Instead, he sees corruption on many levels, which can damage people’s relationship with God. It is often how we react in anger that matters but anger itself can be a powerful signal that something is wrong.

**Begin with Centering Breath:** Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

**Timeline:** Go through the timeline so far.

**Story:** John 2:13-25 or RETELL:

*Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Passover festival. When he went to the temple, he saw people selling cows and sheep and doves to sacrifice to God. This was very normal. He also saw tables where people would change your money from regular coins to temple coins. This was also very normal.*

*But Jesus noticed that these people didn’t seem to be doing their job because they loved God, but to make money. This made Jesus so angry, he took the time to make a whip of cords. Then, he threw the whip around and scared off the people selling animals and changing money.*

*People were very confused and asked him why he was doing this!*

*Jesus told them that one day this temple would fall to the ground, but he would build it back in three days.*

*This was more confusing! They didn’t understand that Jesus was really saying one day he would die and in three days rise again. Jesus was trying to tell them that soon everything was about to change. Our faith in God would be bigger than what everyone did in the temple.*

**Sample “I wonder” statements:**

- I wonder why Jesus was so mad
- I wonder if Jesus was ever mad about other things



- I wonder if there are things today that would make Jesus mad
- I wonder if I ever get mad about something at it's okay to feel that

**Who are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?**

**Ask for Prayers:** At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

**Prayer of the Day:** Dear God, church is a place where all people come together to worship you. Young, old, sick, well, happy, sad, rich or poor. Help us all to make church a place where everyone feels safe and welcome. Amen.

**Activity: Sanctuary (safe place)**

- **The goal of the game is for everyone to get to the Sanctuary. You may want to find a larger space or combine classes for the game.**
- Roles: One Jesus, two or three Catchers, the rest are Runners.
- Designate a place in the far end or corner room that is the sanctuary. This is the safe place. If you are within the perimeter, you cannot be tagged out. You can define the boundaries with pillows or other objects.
- Everyone stands in a line on the other end of the room except for a few “catchers”. Their job is to tag people out. But Jesus stands apart and can touch anyone and say “Sanctuary” to save them. They then get to freely go to the Sanctuary safe place.
- When you say “GO!”, the kids run to the opposite end of the room and the catchers try to tag out as many kids as possible. At the same time, Jesus is tagging as many as he/she can to bring them to the Sanctuary.
- **Every time the kids have made it to the other side of the room, you say “GO!” again until all the kids are either out or in the Sanctuary.**
- You can replay with new Catchers and a new Jesus as much as you want. Which Jesus rescued the most people?

**Add a picture/symbol to the Timeline.**

### January 23: Nicodemus

**Note:** For this being such a famous story, it can seem rather abstract! Nicodemus is taking everything Jesus says too literally. Born again? He's thinking about mothers' giving birth. Jesus is trying to get him to think figuratively- our spirits need to have a new birth, one that can only come from God. Jesus is here to make that happen.

**Begin with Centering Breath:** Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

**Timeline:** Go over the stories so far on the timeline to help the kids understand the narrative flow of what we are learning so far from the Bible.

**Story:** John 3:1-21 or SPARK pg. 416 “The Light of the World”

**Sample “I wonder” statements:**

- I wonder why Nicodemus wanted to talk to Jesus
- I wonder why he came at night when no one could see him
- I wonder if Jesus was surprised to see a Pharisee come to talk to him
- I wonder if Nicodemus was confused
- I wonder what I would say if I were to have a conversation with Jesus alone

**Who are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?**

**Ask for Prayers:** At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

**Prayer of the Day:** Dear God, in Jesus we see that you loved the world so much you became human. You showed us in every way possible that you love us, even in Jesus’ death on the cross. Thank you. Amen.

**Activity: God so Loved the World (Need black construction paper, white paper cut in 1/3s, paper for the “word”, washable blue, green, black paint, scissors, and pens or thin markers.**

- Give each kid a black piece of construction paper
- If they are younger, have pre-cut round (2/3 a size of paper) papers for the world. If they are older, they can cut the best circle they can. (If you have a creative method for that, use and share!)
- Paint the globe blue and let that paint dry. Set aside.
- If they are younger, you can have pre-printed verses of John 3:16 to simply paste on. If they are older, you can give them a blank square of white paper to write it on.
- Glue the passage to the bottom of the page
- Now take green paint and make “continents” on the world.
- Glue the globe to the black piece of paper
- Finally, let kids “paint” their hand and mark the globe.



**Post a picture/symbol on the timeline.**



## January 30: The Woman at the Well

**Note:** This Samaritan woman is so shamed by her community she must go get water in the heat of the day to escape the other women. Yet, in that culture, women couldn't divorce their husbands. So, it wasn't her fault she'd had all those husbands, nor that she was living with a man who wasn't her husband. Jesus reaches across cultural taboos to talk to her, both a Samaritan and a woman, and engage her in a conversation about God. Never does he shame her, but simply lets her know he knows who she is.

**Begin with Centering Breath:** Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

**Timeline:** Go over the stories so far on the timeline to help the kids understand the narrative flow of what we are learning so far from the Bible.

**Story:** John 4:1-42 or SPARK pg. 420 "Woman at the Well"

**Sample "I wonder" statements:**

- I wonder why Jesus went to Samaria
- I wonder if Jesus knew he was going to meet this woman
- I wonder what it means that Jesus is living water
- I wonder what it would be like to meet Jesus

**Who are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?**

**Ask for Prayers:** At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

**Prayer of the Day:** Dear Jesus, you know everything about us and love us. Thank you for being living water- love that lasts forever- for all of us. Amen.

**Activity: Living Water (need water bottles, sticky labels- like name tags)**

- Before class, place water bottles by the baptismal font in your sanctuary. Make sure there is water either in the font, or in a pitcher than can be poured.
- Now, ask the kids where they could go in the church for water if they were thirsty.
- Now, ask the kids where they would find Living Water.
- Walk quietly around the church and look at the different symbols- do any of them have water on them?
- When eventually make it to the font. What is this for? What happens here?
- At the font we get the promise that God loves us forever. The water symbolizes the living water Jesus wants to give us.
- Find the water bottles and place the labels on them. Write something like "Jesus is the living Water". Younger kids may need pre-printed labels.

- If you have time, invite the kids to “intrude” on an adult forum or coffee fellowship, and give away the Living Water.



Post a picture/symbol on the timeline.

### February 6: Healing Stories

**Note:** In the Gospel of John, Jesus does seven “signs” that are meant to point to something significant about God. These aren’t just miracles, but they reveal who God is and what God wishes for us. In this story, as opposed to similar versions in the other Gospels, Jesus isn’t impressed by this official’s faith. It isn’t until Jesus goes above and beyond by doing a remote healing that the official really comes to belief. Jesus may have been speaking to the official and to the larger audience at the same time: “You just want me for my miracles, you don’t actually see this is God at work”. But the healing that happens lets us know that Jesus can be trusted at his Word.

**Begin with Centering Breath:** Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

**Timeline:** Go over the stories so far on the timeline to help the kids understand the narrative flow of what we are learning so far from the Bible.

**Story:** John 4:46-54 (5:1-18) or Summary Below

## Summary:

*Jesus returned to Cana in Galilee, where he had changed water into wine at a wonderful wedding! There was a man in charge whose son was very sick in the nearby town of Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus was in town, he went to him right away and begged for Jesus to heal his son so he wouldn't die.*

*Jesus said, "I'm not sure you really believe God is at work unless I do a miracle."*

*The man said, "Sir, please come before he dies!"*

*Jesus said, "I don't even have to come with you. Go to him and see that he will be just fine."*

*The man believed Jesus and started on his way. Before he got home, his servants met him and told him that his son was alive and well. The man asked exactly when he'd recovered. The servants told him, and the man realized it was exactly the time of day when he'd been speaking with Jesus. So, he believed, along with his entire house of family and servants.*

*This was the second sign of God's love and power that Jesus did.*

## Sample "I wonder" statements:

- I wonder why Jesus doubted the man's faith
- I wonder if the father had a hard time believing Jesus had healed his son
- I wonder if the servants were surprised the son was healed right away
- I wonder who the man thought Jesus was
- I wonder if any of us have seen a miracle

## Who are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?

**Ask for Prayers:** At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

**Prayer of the Day:** Dear Jesus, everything good comes from God. We thank you for our life, for our family, for our food, for our health, for our toys, for our pets and the little animals in our yard and parks. Thank you for our life! Amen!

## Activity: "Trusting Jesus"

- Brainstorm various people you might see in your day. This could be mom, dad, sister, grandma, teacher, friends, or neighbors.
- Ask the kids to name the people they trust to tell the truth. Why do they trust them?
- Ask the kids if there are people they don't necessarily trust to tell the truth. Why don't they trust them? This may be strangers who haven't proven themselves trustworthy, or people who have lied to them in the past.
- Ask the kids to name something they have that they love very much. This could be a pet or a possession.
- Who would they trust to take care of their beloved if they needed someone? Why did they choose that person?
- Not everyone is trustworthy. That means, they don't hold our trust well, we don't believe they will care for us or what we love very well.
- Jesus wants us to know that we can trust him. We can believe what he says, and we can let him take care of the things we love.

## February 13: Bread of Life

**Note:** This story comes after Jesus feeds the 5000 people. They seek him out and essentially want him to do another miracle. But he tells them that what they truly desire is spiritual food. When he describes himself as the Bread of life, the people get weirded out and many leave. It may be that while Jesus told the truth, many of us can't always handle the truth!

**Begin with Centering Breath:** Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

**Timeline:** Go over the stories so far on the timeline to help the kids understand the narrative flow of what we are learning so far from the Bible.

**Story:** John 6:35-59 or Summary below:

**Summary:** *One day, Jesus feed thousands of people with a miracle of bread and fish. Everyone was so excited! Jesus wanted to show them that God loved them and wanted to care for them. That night, Jesus and the disciples crossed the sea to go somewhere else.*

*But the next day, the crowd had found him. "We've been looking for you, Jesus! Where did you go?" They said.*

*"Are you hoping for another miracle of food?" Jesus asked them. "Food is important, but what you really are hungry for is God."*

*"Hungry for God?" They thought. That sounded strange!*

*"I am the Bread of life," Jesus said. "When you listen to my words it is like your heart is eating yummy soul-food. God sent me to fill up your hearts."*

*"Wait a minute," they said. "You are just the son of Joseph, what do you know about God?"*

*"I know God," Jesus said. "And you can, too. Eat of my words and you will live."*

*They thought this was too strange and many of them left.*

*But the disciples were still listening. They understood that Jesus had something even more important than dinner to give them. They loved to listen to his words about God.*

**Sample "I wonder" statements:**

- I wonder why people just wanted Jesus to give them more bread
- I wonder why people left Jesus
- I wonder if I would have stayed with Jesus like Peter and the disciples did
- I wonder if Jesus might ever confuse me as I get older

**Who are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?**

**Ask for Prayers:** At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

**Prayer of the Day:** Dear Jesus, you are the Bread of Life. You want us to be health in our bodies and our spirits. May we always listen to you, so we grow up strong and loving. Amen.

**Activity: What is Good to Eat?**

- Bring a grocery bag full of diverse food items such as rice, cans of beans, apples, carrots, almonds, whole grain bread as well as something like donuts.
- Pull out one of the nutritious items and ask the kids to talk about why it's good for them. They may know about vitamins, fiber, protein, or they may just know that carrots are "good for their eyes" and so forth.
- Choose the donuts and bread for last. Bring them both out and ask which one is better for us.
- We can talk about how donuts are delicious and fun! But if we ate them all day, we would get sick. There would be too much sugar and no nutrition such as fiber, protein, or vitamins.
- Ask if you can eat bread (or something similar) every day? Yes!
- This is why Jesus said he was the Bread of Life. He believes God is something you can and should focus on every day and it makes your heart and soul healthy.

## February 20: Living Water

**Note:** This story, like many in John, uses metaphors that might be confusing to kids who are literal thinkers. We can focus instead on the fact that Jesus wanted to help people in many ways, but that people didn't always want to listen to him. The reasons were sometimes bizarre! In this story, they were actually concerned he was from the wrong town!

**Begin with Centering Breath:** Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

**Timeline:** Go over the stories so far on the timeline to help the kids understand the narrative flow of what we are learning so far from the Bible.

**Story:** John 7:37-52 or Summary Below:

**Summary:**

*Jesus was in the temple in Jerusalem teaching the people. He said, "if anyone is thirsty, they can come to me and their spirits can get a drink. As the scripture says, 'out of the believers' heart shall flow rivers of living water'."*

*Some people said, "wow, Jesus is a prophet from God!"*

*Others said, "yes, he is the messiah."*

*But others said, "who does he think he is? Isn't he from Galilee? I thought the messiah was supposed to come from Bethlehem where King David used to live."*

*They began to argue, and some people got so mad they wanted to arrest Jesus.*

*The Pharisees, the leaders at the temple, heard all this and went to the temple police and said, "you should arrest Jesus."*

*But the police said, “I don’t know. We haven’t heard anyone say the things he does.”  
“Are you crazy, too?” The pharisees told the police. “Listen to us, this crowd doesn’t know a thing!”*

*But then Nicodemus, one of the pharisees, stepped forward. “We can’t judge Jesus without first talking with him in private. Our law says so.”*

*But the other pharisees got mad. “Are you also from Galilee? No prophet has ever come from Galilee, so Jesus can’t be a prophet!”*

## Sample “I wonder” statements:

- I wonder why the pharisees were so worried about what town Jesus was from
- I wonder if people today get focused on the wrong things
- I wonder how we can trust Jesus today

## Who are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?

**Ask for Prayers:** At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

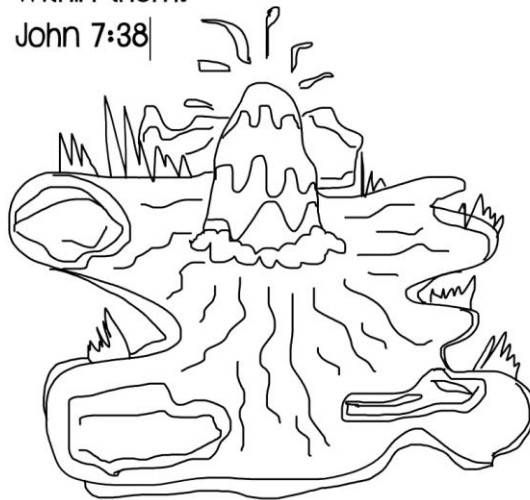
**Prayer of the Day:** Dear Jesus, help us when our spirits are thirsty and dry. Help us to see you when you are trying to guide us in the right direction. Thank you for caring about us always. Amen.

## Activity: Color in one of the Coloring Sheets below:



Visit [www.kidadi.com](http://www.kidadi.com) for more free coloring pages

“Whoever believes in me,  
as Scripture has said,  
rivers of living water  
will flow from  
within them.”  
John 7:38



**Post a picture/symbol on the timeline.**



## February 27: The Man Born Blind

**Note:** This story is filled with metaphors that make sense to us as adults. Jesus healing a blind man allows the man to “see” that he is the Son of God. This enrages the Pharisees who are unable to “see” who Jesus truly is. The story is meant to make us question who is truly blind in this world and who really sees. It has nothing to do with physical ability, and everything to do with our faith in God and what God is doing in this world.

**Begin with Centering Breath:** Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

**Timeline:** Go over the stories so far on the timeline to help the kids understand the narrative flow of what we are learning so far from the Bible.

**Story:** John 9:1-41 or SPARK pg.432

**Sample “I wonder” statements:**

- I wonder how it must feel to not see and then to see
- I wonder how why people believed the blind man had done something wrong to be blind
- I wonder if we are ever afraid of God doing good things in the world
- I wonder if you have ever had God do something amazing in your life

**Who are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?**

**Ask for Prayers:** At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

**Prayer of the Day:** Dear Jesus, thank you for helping us to believe in you. We hope that our eyes are always ready to see you no matter when and where you come to us. Amen.

**Activity: “Is this Jesus?”**

- Ask the kids to name things that make them sad or scared. Write these down or draw a symbol for each thing on a board in a list.
- Ask the kids to name things that make them happy and excited. Write these down or make a symbol for each on the board in another list.
- Ask the kids which list is the one Jesus would want for us.
- Have the kids draw their favorite of the things that make them happy or excited.

**Post a picture/symbol on the timeline.**

## March 6: Jesus Raises Lazarus

**Begin with Centering Breath:** Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

**Timeline:** Go over the stories so far on the timeline to help the kids understand the narrative flow of what we are learning so far from the Bible.

**Story:** John 11:1-44 or SPARK pg. 440 “Lazarus”

**Sample “I wonder” statements:**

- I wonder why Jesus cried if he knew Lazarus could come back from the dead
- I wonder if Mary and Martha understood what Jesus could do
- I wonder if Lazarus was surprised to be alive again
- I wonder what the people watching thought

**Who are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?**

**Ask for Prayers:** At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

**Prayer of the Day:** Dear God, in the winter it is cold and snowy, and the trees are bare, the leaves are gone. It can almost look like the world has died. But every spring you bring it back to life with new leaves and baby animals, flowers, and grass. You can do the same in our hearts. Thank you, God. Amen.

**Activity: TP Lazarus**

- Divide the kids into teams of three with a TP roll for each team.
- Let the kids choose a “Lazarus”.
- When you say go, they have to wrap him up the best they can. You can time them, if you want, but it’s quality work not speed work.
- When they are done, you will say “Lazarus, Come out!” and the wrapped kids must try to burst out.
- The strongest wrapping wins!

**Post a picture/symbol on the timeline.**

## March 13: Jesus Washes Feet

**Note:** Some of you might be saying- wait, did we just skip to Maundy Thursday? Well, kind of. This Cycle of Narrative Lectionary has made a bold move- to take the story of Holy Week and spread it out over all of Lent. In some ways it makes sense: many families don't go to Maundy Thursday or Good Friday worship, so they miss the heart of our Christian faith that leads up to Easter. At least this year, you know your kids will get to talk and think about every step of the Holy Week journey over Lent.

This is a beautiful story. It shows Jesus' true humility. It isn't an act! He is willingly doing a slave's job to prove the point that God's love is ultimately humble, too! And furthermore, anyone who is a true Christian will embrace that humble servant lifestyle as well.

**Begin with Centering Breath:** Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

**Timeline:** Go over the stories so far on the timeline to help the kids understand the narrative flow of what we are learning so far from the Bible.

**Story:** John 13:1-17 or SPARK pg. 462 "The Last Supper"

**Sample "I wonder" statement:**

- I wonder if the disciples knew what was about to happen
- I wonder if it was weird to have Jesus wash the disciples' feet
- I wonder what Jesus was thinking

**Who are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?**

**Ask for Prayers:** At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

**Prayer of the Day:** Dear Jesus, you taught us that the most important rule to follow was to love others as you love us. Help us to be loving Christians. Amen.

**Activity: Act out the Washing of the Feet**

- Get a pitcher of water and a basin.
- Ask the kids to line their chairs up away from the table and take their shoes and socks off.
- Wash their feet, saying their name and smiling at each one as you do.
- When you are done, ask them how it felt. If it felt strange, why did Jesus ask us to do this for each other?

**Post a picture/symbol on the timeline.**

## March 20: Peter's Denial

**Note:** It's so important to remember that these great figures of the Christian faith made huge mistakes. We often hope to believe if we had lived in the time of Jesus, we would have been believers. But even here we see one of Jesus' closest disciples denying his master. But the point remains, we may not be faithful, but God is.

**Begin with Centering Breath:** Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

**Timeline:** Go over the stories so far on the timeline to help the kids understand the narrative flow of what we are learning so far from the Bible.

**Story:** John 18:12-27 or SPARK pg. 468 "Jesus is Betrayed"

**Sample "I wonder" statements:**

- I wonder what it would be like to be too afraid to tell the truth
- I wonder what it would be like to know your friend betrayed you
- I wonder what courage feels like
- I wonder how scared Peter must have felt

**Who are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?**

**Ask for Prayers:** At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

**Prayer of the Day:** Dear God, you know how hard it can be for us to say what we feel, what we think, what we believe. Sometimes people make fun of us, or they don't understand. Sometimes we can get in trouble. You understand we can be afraid, and you can give us courage to do the right thing. And you forgive us when we don't. Amen.

**Activity: Forgiveness** (You need a pitcher of water and a basin)

- Ask the kids to list things they have done (or others did) that they knew was wrong. (You might have to start with your own childhood confessions) Write these or draw a picture of them on the white board.
- Ask the kids to identify how they felt after they did this wrong thing. (Afraid?)
- Offer a Rite of Forgiveness:
  - Invite the kids to line up.
  - Pour the water into the basin. Remind them that in baptism we are forgiven.
  - Dip your finger in the water and put a sign of the cross on their forehead saying, "Jesus forgives you and loves you."

**Post a picture/symbol on the timeline.**

## March 27: Jesus and Pilate

**Note:** Pontius Pilate is an interesting character in the Bible: he comes off quite well for the most part, and the blame is put on the religious leaders of the time. At the end of the day, those that love power and control will always try to get rid of people like Jesus. It isn't about the Jews or Pontius Pilate or anyone else. We, as humans, kill our prophets because they challenge the way the world works. What is important is to see how Jesus behaves: he doesn't fight or argue or try to save his life. He knows that love is more powerful than violence and death.

**Begin with Centering Breath:** Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

**Timeline:** Go over the stories so far on the timeline to help the kids understand the narrative flow of what we are learning so far from the Bible.

**Story:** John 18:28-40 or SPARK pg. 474 "Christ the King"

**Sample "I wonder" statements:**

- I wonder if Jesus was scared when this was happening
- I wonder what Pontius Pilate really thought about Jesus
- I wonder if God can take bad things in our life and make them turn out okay
- I wonder if Jesus knew God was with him

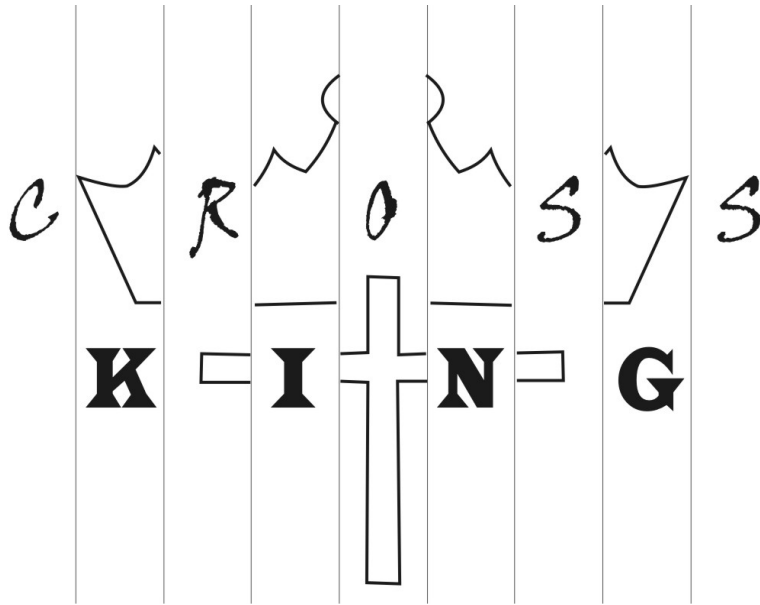
**Who are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?**

**Ask for Prayers:** At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

**Prayer of the Day:** Dear God, sometimes it seems as if bad people are more powerful than good people. Sometimes things in the world can be sad. Please help us to remember that you are always with us and your ways will always win. Amen.

**Activity: Christ the King through the Cross**

- Each kid gets a sheet of paper and can color or decorate it as they wish
- Afterwards, they can accordion fold along the lines
- Show them how to see just the cross or just the crown
- How are these related?



Post a picture/symbol on the timeline.

## April 3: Jesus Condemned

**Note:** We are officially on Good Friday. It is “good” because the result benefitted us as humans. While this may be sad, it is the heart of our Christian faith, and important to discuss with kids of all ages. It’s okay to be sad! It’s okay to remember that God can always do something with our sadness as well.

**Begin with Centering Breath:** Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

**Timeline:** Go over the stories so far on the timeline to help the kids understand the narrative flow of what we are learning so far from the Bible.

**Story:** John 19:1-16a or SPARK pg. 476 “The Day Jesus Died”

**Sample “I wonder” statements:**

- I wonder how Jesus felt through all this
- I wonder how the disciples felt
- I wonder how the soldiers felt
- I wonder if God can take our saddest and worst days and do something good with them



**Who are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?**

**Ask for Prayers:** At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

**Prayer of the Day:** Dear God, sometimes there are very bad days. Sometimes people do very bad things to each other and it's hard to understand why. We know that you don't want those things to happen, and you are always with people who are hurting. Help us to know you are always with us as well. Amen.

**Activity: Paper Plate Calvary Hill**



**Post a picture/symbol on the timeline.**

## April 10: The Crucified Messiah (Passion Sunday)

**Note:** This is normally Palm Sunday, at least in the beginning of worship. Normally we begin worship with the waving of palms and often move onto the story of the death of Jesus afterwards. But in this unique telling this year, we have already moved to the cross. But the lectionary gives the choice of still observing Palm Sunday. We will do that today, but you have the choice to continue to read John 19:16b-22 with the kids and give it a Good Friday focus.

**Begin with Centering Breath:** Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

**Timeline:** Go over the stories so far on the timeline to help the kids understand the narrative flow of what we are learning so far from the Bible.

**Story:** John 12:12-17 (Palm Sunday) with SPARK pg. 454 “Palm Sunday”  
OR John 19:16b-22 (Good Friday)

**Sample “I wonder” statements:**

- I wonder how Jesus felt at this part of the story
- I wonder how the people felt watching Jesus
- I wonder how the disciples felt
- I wonder what I would notice if I had been there myself

**Who are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?**

**Ask for Prayers:** At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

**Prayer of the Day:** Dear God, we know that a long time ago Jesus died on the cross. It is a sad thing that people didn’t understand who Jesus was. Sometimes we don’t understand things we should, either. Sometimes we are mean to people we should be nice to. Help us to be loving. Amen.

**Activity Choice One: Palm Sunday (green construction paper and wooden stir stick)**

- With green construction paper, trace the kids’ hands several times.
- Cut out and glue to a wooden stir stick.

**Activity Choice Two: Passion Sunday Meal**

- Place bowls of each food item on the table. Point to each one and ask first what this might signify from the story of Jesus’ Passion.
- Explain each item and invite the kids to “try” as much of the items as possible.
  - Olives: The Mount of Olives where Jesus prayed and was arrested
  - Peppermint Patties: The silver coins Judas received for betraying Jesus
  - Hershey’s Kisses: The kiss Judas gave to Jesus
  - Plastic Cocktail Swords: The sword Peter used to cut the ear off the slave

- Hard-boiled Eggs: The Rooster crows at Peter's denial
- Ritz crackers with peanut butter (or another topping) and crushed pretzel sticks to make the crown of thorns
- Salt and Vinegar Chips (pickles work here, too): Vinegar given to Jesus to drink
- Big Pretzel rods: Cross



Post a picture/symbol on the timeline.

## OFF FOR EASTER!!

### April 24: Thomas

**Note:** I find it fascinating that we call Thomas “doubting Thomas” for simply acting like everyone else. No one believed that Jesus was alive at first, barely even the women at the tomb! Everyone needed to see Jesus before they believed- everyone! This story isn’t meant to single Thomas out as a bad example, but rather to give Jesus the platform to bless those who do not need to see to believe. We also see that Jesus still had scars from his crucifixion. Somehow, scars are not bad! They make us who we are!

**Begin with Centering Breath:** Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

**Timeline:** Go over the stories so far on the timeline to help the kids understand the narrative flow of what we are learning so far from the Bible.

**Story:** John 20:19-31 or SPARK pg. 492 “Doubting Thomas”

**Sample “I wonder” statements:**

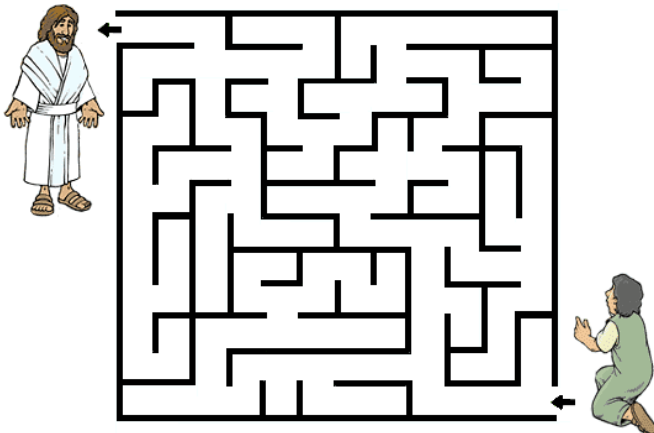
- I wonder if I would have believed that Jesus was alive if I had been a disciple
- I wonder where Thomas was the first time Jesus appeared to the disciples
- I wonder what things we know about now that we didn’t know existed in Jesus’ time

**Who are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?**

**Ask for Prayers:** At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

**Prayer of the Day:** God of wonders, you understand how hard it can be for us to believe in you. You understand we cannot know everything that is possible. Help us to keep wondering, to keep being curious so we can learn our whole life long.

**Activity ONE:**



**Activity TWO: SCAR STORIES**

- Invite the kids to share a story of a time they got hurt. Do they have a scar? A bruise to show if recent? Any surgeries that left a mark? (As an adult you can share your stories!)
- Did they learn anything from the experience? Would they do the same thing again?
- Sometimes our scars tell a story. Sometimes we learned something about ourselves and our limitations. Jesus doesn’t need us to be perfect and never make any mistakes. Jesus expects we will!

**Post a picture/symbol on the timeline.**

## May 1: Paul's Conversion

**Note:** Paul is a very interesting man. Looking at how vehemently he defends God's acceptance of people based on faith and not on works seems to indicate that this may have been a sticking point for him before. I often wonder if Paul was incredibly hard on himself, judging himself as harshly as he judged others. I often wonder if Paul's encounter with Jesus was a release from his own internal persecution, one that changed his life, and the course of the church.

**Begin with Centering Breath:** Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

**Timeline:** Go over the stories so far on the timeline to help the kids understand the narrative flow of what we are learning so far from the Bible.

**Story:** Acts 9:1-19 or SPARK pg. 514 "Saul to Paul"

**Sample "I wonder" statements:**

- I wonder if I have ever been wrong about somebody
- I wonder if God ever wishes I would change my mind
- I wonder if anyone here has had a dream about an angel or about Jesus

**Who are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?**

**Ask for Prayers:** At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

**Prayer of the Day:** Dear God, sometimes we can be wrong! You love us anyway. Sometimes we do something that hurts other people. You love us anyway. Sometimes we have bad ideas. You love us anyway. Show us the way so we can be as loving as you are. In Jesus name, amen.

**Activity: Painting the Light of Jesus**

- Let every child have a small canvas, a cup of water to wash brushes, a few brushes, and wash-able paint.
- Kids can go off on their own, but a structured guidance is a great start:
  - Choose a color to paint the edges of the canvas such as orange or red
  - Paint the inside a light yellow, make it nice and thick!
  - Before the paint dries, take your brush and go from the inside of the yellow out, smearing the two colors into each other.
  - Keep moving from the center out in every direction, creating shards of light
- This may be enough! Kids can add a black shadowed figure of a person at the bottom, representing Paul or themselves. Maybe a few trees on the bottom edge, or a horizon.

**Post a picture/symbol on the timeline.**

## May 8: Paul and Silas

**Note:** I find it powerful that Paul was able to remain calm amid the earthquake, and because of his gentle leadership, none of the prisoners ran away. This so impressed the jailor he converted. He wanted to know what Paul possessed, what belief, would cause him to behave so radically different from anyone else. At its core, Christianity teaches a world view that might give us a different enough perspective that we do not behave as others do in moments of crisis. Hopefully, we learn to react with less fear, more trust, more patience, and more compassion.

**Begin with Centering Breath:** Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

**Timeline:** Go over the stories so far on the timeline to help the kids understand the narrative flow of what we are learning so far from the Bible.

**Story:** Acts 16:16-34 or SPARK pg. 536 “Paul and Silas”

**Sample “I wonder” statements:**

- I wonder if Paul was scared when the earthquake happened
- I wonder why the prisoners didn’t run away
- I wonder what the Jailor expected to happen after the earthquake
- I wonder if I would be as calm as Paul in a scary situation

**Who are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?**

**Ask for Prayers:** At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

**Prayer of the Day:** Dear God, sometimes things happen we can’t control! Sometimes there are storms with thunder and lightning. Sometimes there are hurricanes or earthquakes. But you are always with us, showing us how to help others and trust in you. Amen.



**Activity: NO PRISON CAN HOLD ME**

- Cut strips of different colored paper
- Have the kids write a “I am with you always-God”, one word per colored strip
- Glue, tape, or staple the words into a chain

**Post a picture/symbol on the timeline.**



## May 15: Paul's Sermon at Athens

**Note:** We don't have this story in the SPARK Bible, but I included one of the SPARK stories that focuses on Paul's letters. Young ones can think still get the basic ideas of what Paul taught, while older kids can hear an interesting story about how Paul tried to connect the current Greek culture with Christian understanding. It is important to realize how much of conversion has to do with bridge-building!

**Begin with Centering Breath:** Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

**Timeline:** Go over the stories so far on the timeline to help the kids understand the narrative flow of what we are learning so far from the Bible.

**Story:** Acts 17:16-31 or SPARK pg. 540 "Paul's Letters"

**Sample "I wonder" statements:**

- I wonder if Paul was ever scared to travel so much and speak to people about Jesus
- I wonder what it would be like to hear Paul speaking
- I wonder what Paul looked like
- I wonder how we can talk to other people who believe differently than us

**Who are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?**

**Ask for Prayers:** At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

**Prayer of the Day:** Dear God, you are everywhere and in everyone's hearts! Help us to listen and learn from other people, and share our thoughts, too, in a nice conversation. Amen.

**Activity for Younger Kids: TELLING THE GOOD NEWS**

- This is, essentially, the Telephone Game.
- Sit in a circle and whisper to one kid a message such as "Jesus loves you and is with you always". A longer message has a great chance of being distorted through the circle.
- Play as long as you wish!

**Activity for OLDER KIDS: LISTENING**

- Ask for a volunteer to sit across from you while the other students watch. Instruct the kids they are only to listen, not interrupt or comment.
- Tell a story about something that happened recently. Please use feelings and thoughts. Make it personal.
- Now ask the other person to summarize it the best they can. Be sure to point out if they missed something important!
- Now, invite kids to pair up and share a story of something that happened recently that made them feel happy or sad or angry.

- Make sure they follow the pattern: Person A shares, Person B listens with no commentary or interruption. Person B summarizes what they heard, and Person A affirms or gently corrects. Then, they trade. Repeat with new partners as often as possible.
- AFTERWARDS: Was this easy? Did people miss important details? How difficult is it to be quiet and listen to others? Did it make you feel important to be listened to?

**Post a picture/symbol on the timeline.**

### May 22: Partnership in the Gospel

**Note:** Philippians is a great book, and this passage is filled with thanksgiving. Luckily, the previous story in the Bible introduced the letter to the Philippians.

**Begin with Centering Breath:** Cover your eyes and fill up your tummy with air and quietly, slowly let it out. Do this slowly and quietly five to ten times.

**Timeline:** Go over the stories so far on the timeline to help the kids understand the narrative flow of what we are learning so far from the Bible.

**Story:** Philippians 1:1-18a or SPARK pg. 554 “Paul and the Philippians”

**Sample “I wonder” statements:**

- I wonder what the first Christian church was like
- I wonder what worship was like and what songs they sung
- I wonder what it would be like to go to Sunday worship in a house rather than a church building

**Who are you in the Story? What does the Story mean for you Today?**

**Ask for Prayers:** At this point you can ask kids what they want prayed for today. Include these somewhere in the prayer of the day.

**Prayer of the Day:** Dear God, how special are churches! They are a place to come and worship, to sing, to learn, to make friends, too. Bless our church and help it to be a blessing to others, in Jesus’ name. Amen.

**Activity: Thanksgiving for church members!** (You will need: baggies, twist ties, name-tag size stickers, goldfish crackers)

- Find out the average attendance at worship on a Sunday.
- Have enough materials for each person who attends, divided by the amount of Sunday school kids you have.
- Divide up the stickers. For writers, have them write “I thank my God for you”. For non-writers, they can draw hearts and crosses, etc.
- Put the stickers on the baggies. Decorate further if you wish.
- Put gold fish in the baggies and tie shut.
- Hand out the baggies before worship. If possible, ask the Pastor to use this in a Children’s sermon, how we are all a part of this church, all important, etc.

**Post a picture/symbol on the timeline.**

**Thank you and Enjoy the Summer!!!**