



Session 8
Winter 2015–16
Primary

Jesus brings good news

LUKE 4:14–30

prepare



PRAYER

God, the width and depth of your love is amazing. Help me to love all people as you do, without turning away from those who are oppressed and in need. Amen.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

To hear Jesus' message of good news

STORY SUMMARY

Jesus returned to Galilee and taught; everyone praised him. In the synagogue in Nazareth, Jesus read from the scroll of Isaiah. The scripture proclaimed good news for the poor and the year of the Lord's favor. Jesus told them that the scripture had come true. Jesus implied that his words wouldn't be accepted in his hometown, comparing the people to Israelites in Elijah and Elisha's time. The crowd turned against him, but Jesus slipped away.

teaching tips for primary

Jesus proclaimed good news in the synagogue. What is that good news for children? Help them think about what it means for today. For young children, the good news about Jesus' message may be learning that they are loved and treasured, hearing that God helps people in need, or knowing that everyone is included.

Being a teacher for children usually means that you miss the adult classes. There are materials included here to encourage you in your faith. The Dig deeper essay on the next page provides background information and inspiration as you prepare. Before or after the session, read a blessing written by Jan Richardson, which is based on Luke 4 (see Media connections).

Decide which Explore activities you will do, and check Supplies and To do throughout the session to see what needs to be prepared.

This account of Jesus in the synagogue at Nazareth is unique to Luke's Gospel. It is the first thing Luke tells his readers about Jesus' public ministry, and it introduces several major themes that are repeated in the rest of the Gospel. The text consists of an introductory summary (verses 14–16), two main parts (verses 17–22 and 23–29), and a conclusion (verse 30). In each of the parts Jesus makes a proclamation and the people respond. These sections contrast significantly in mood but each is vital for understanding Jesus' ministry.

Jesus' public ministry begins

Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit at his baptism and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested. His public ministry in Galilee now begins under the power of the same Spirit.

As an observant Jew, Jesus would have attended synagogue regularly. It was common practice for adult males to read scripture and offer words of interpretation. On this particular occasion Jesus is chosen to read and is given the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He reads Isaiah 61:1–2a, including the line “to let the oppressed go free,” from Isaiah 58:6. This text encapsulates his future ministry.

Just as Isaiah's announcement gave hope to the Babylonian exiles, these same words would have reminded Jesus' contemporaries, oppressed by Rome and harsh economic conditions, of God's promises for future salvation. With these words, Jesus provides concrete content of the good news of the kingdom of God. Jesus goes further, however, implying that he is the one who will inaugurate the kingdom. He announces that these promises have been fulfilled in the hearing of his listeners; that God's reign of salvation and justice is beginning “today.” The crowd is amazed. They can hardly believe that such remarkable words can come from the lips of a hometown boy.

LUKE 4:14–30



The mood shifts

Jesus sees through their admiration and reveals the “inner thoughts of many,” as Simeon predicted at his presentation in the temple as an infant.¹ He quotes two proverbs that suggest the crowd will expect him to show them some mighty deeds. Instead of catering to their demands, he reminds them of two Old Testament stories in which God extended mercy not to insiders but to outsiders: to the widow at Zarephath and to Naaman, the leprous Syrian.² God's grace extends beyond Israel—it will not be constrained by finite human expectations. Such words jerk his listeners out of their complacency and self-centeredness

and infuriate them. Jesus' gracious words are indeed good news for some, but they also create conflict and will eventually lead to his suffering and death, as the conclusion of this scene previews.

The good news of Jesus Christ

It will become evident in the rest of the Gospel of Luke that Jesus is indeed inaugurating the kingdom.³ He will preach good news to the poor, both the economically poor and those marginalized in other ways. He will bring release to those captured by sin, sickness, evil spirits, and debt. He will open the eyes of the blind, both the physically blind and those blind to the will and purposes of God. He will proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, words that would have called to mind the Jubilee year, at the heart of which lay cancellation of debts. Every fifty years Israel was to give the land a rest, cancel all debts, release any Israelites who had been sold into slavery, and return ancestral land to the original owners. The imagery from this Jubilee year characterizes what God has anointed Jesus to do.

1. Luke 2:35.

2. 1 Kings 17 and 2 Kings 5. Here Luke pairs stories of a man and a woman, something he does frequently, showing the inclusive nature of God's salvation.

3. See especially Luke 7:18–23.

gather

supplies

- *Shine Songbook and CD*
- *Year Two Songbooks* (optional)
- CD player
- Basket
- Coins

BUILD COMMUNITY

Welcome the children as they come in. Ask them if they know what “news” is. Do their families ever watch the news on TV, listen to it on the radio, or read it online or in a newspaper? Ask for examples of good news and bad news. What good or bad news would they like to report from their own weeks? Tell them that in today’s story, Jesus brings good news to his hometown.

WORSHIP TOGETHER

Sing “Come and See” (track 3, page 8 in the *Year Two Songbook*) and “Yezu Azali Awa” (Jesus Christ Is Present Here) (track 21, page 31, in the *Year Two Songbook*).

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Jesus proclaimed good news for the poor. There are many people in the world who do not have enough food to eat or the money they need for housing, heat, or transportation.

Set a small basket in the middle of the group. Turn on “Generous God” (track 6) as quiet background music. Give each child a coin. Ask children to pray silently that God would help someone who is in need—either themselves or another person. As children finish praying, they can place the coin in the basket. Give each child another coin. Pray:

Loving God, we want to show your love this week—by sharing, giving, or being a loving friend. Amen.

Have children place their coins in the basket. Take these coins to the church’s offering, either today or next week.

media connections

- Internet search for “Epiphany 3: To Proclaim Release” by Jan Richardson, found on her blog *The Painted Prayerbook* (for teacher nurture)
- *Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen* by Dyanne Disalvo-Ryan
- Internet search for “Christian’s Buddy Bench,” an idea developed by an 8-year-old boy (article appears on the Good News Network website)
- Internet search for Global Gospel video “Jesus’ rejection at Nazareth”

Bible memory

The Bible memory passage comes from today’s Bible text. Have children read verses 18–19 with you during the story, the portion that is printed on the scroll portion of the Bible memory poster.

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.

—Luke 4:18–19

experience

SHARE THE STORY

Open a Bible to Luke 4 and show the Bible story illustration on page 182 in *Shine On*.

Display the Travel guide poster from the poster pack and point out Galilee and Nazareth on the map. Look at the photos as well.

Use the story figures from the poster pack as you share the story, with a cloth underlay representing Nazareth. Bunch the edge of the cloth to represent the cliff.

Have children say the words of the Bible memory passage with you during the story. They can read what is printed on the scroll portion of the Bible memory poster. This begins, "The Spirit of the Lord . . ."

WONDER AND REFLECT

Talk about the story together. Use the following questions to encourage wondering and help the children make meaning from the story. Allow time for reflection or conversation in between.

- I wonder how the people in Nazareth felt when Jesus came to teach them.
- I wonder why God sent Elisha to someone from an enemy country.
- I wonder what Jesus' message really meant.
- I wonder what it would be like if everyone had enough food. I wonder what it would be like if everyone had a warm and safe home

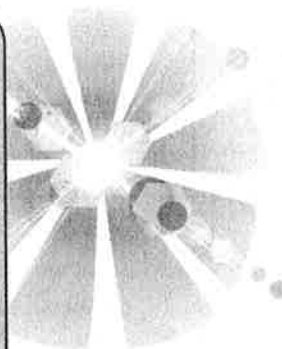
PEACE NOTES

The good news Jesus proclaimed was for all people. The stories he told about Elijah and Elisha reminded the listeners that God's care was for people who were not Israelites, and even for those from enemy countries.

Ask a question, such as, "Is there someone at school or in your neighborhood who is not your friend yet?" or "Who might you play with that you don't usually play with?" Then have children draw a picture on page 4 of the Primary leaflet to show one way they could show God's love to someone who is not part of their family, church, or current circle of friends.

teaching tip

The Bible story mentions the release of captives. Some children may have relatives or family friends who were or are in prison. This can be a source of embarrassment or shame for children, so speak with respect and sensitivity whenever referring to prisoners. Do not talk about specific situations or people, and move the conversation along if children begin focusing on things they have heard about prison. The heart of this session is about the good news of God's love for all people; focus on that.



Jesus brings good news

Luke 4:14-30

supplies

- Bible
- *Shine On: A Story Bible*
- Primary leaflets
- Pencils or crayons

poster packs

- Travel guide poster
- Story figures
- Bible memory poster (Luke 4)

storytelling props

- Cloth

to do

- Cut out and mount story figures (from the poster pack) onto blocks, cups, cardboard tubes, or craft sticks. Practice telling the story with the figures.

explore

CREATE

Have children try writing Greek letters on page 3 of the Primary leaflet. Then cut page 3 off the rest of the leaflet. Follow the instructions on page 4 to make the page into a scroll.

supplies

- Primary leaflets
- Pencils
- Scissors
- Craft sticks, unsharpened pencils, or chopsticks
- Tape

MOVE

Jesus stood up, read from the scroll, handed the scroll back to someone, and sat down. Have a scroll relay using these movements. Have groups of children sit across the room from each other. Give a rolled piece of paper (“scroll”) to one child. That child stands up, unrolls the paper, and says, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.” Then the child rolls the scroll back up, runs across the room, hands the paper to another child, and sits down. Continue in this pattern, running back and forth across the room until everyone has a turn with the scroll. Younger children could say a simpler sentence such as “I have good news.”

For smaller groups: Play until each child holds the scroll two or three times. See how quickly the group can complete the task.

supplies

- Rolled piece of paper

RETELL

Play “Growing with Jesus.” The game board is in the poster pack; the game cards are on page 95 in this guide and at www.ShineCurriculum.com/Extras. When a 4 is rolled, that player shares one thing about today’s Bible story before placing the card for today’s story (Jesus holding a scroll) on the game board.

supplies

- “Growing with Jesus” game board (from poster pack)
- “Growing with Jesus” game cards (from Additional resources)
- Die

LEAFLET

Children can read the news stories on page 1 of the Primary leaflet. Children can color the correct signs on page 2 to help the travelers find the way to the correct destinations. They can refer to page 182 in *Shine On* as needed. **Solution:** Jesus–Nazareth, synagogue; Elijah–Zarephath; Naaman–Syria.

supplies

- *Shine On: A Story Bible*
- Primary leaflets
- Crayons or colored pencils

other ideas

- Make a collage of faces, symbolizing that Jesus’ good news is for all people.
- Elijah and Elisha cared for people in faraway places. Talk with the children about missionaries, service workers, or programs that your church or denomination supports around the world.



bless

PRAY

Gather together in a circle. Pray:

God, you sent Jesus to bring good news. Help us remember that your good news is for everyone. Amen.

Sing “Dios de la esperanza” (May the God of Hope) (track 5, page 10 in the *Year Two Songbook*).

SEND

Read these words from Isaiah 40:9 as a blessing for each child.

You who bring good news, lift up your voice with a shout, do not be afraid!

Make sure to send leaflets home with the children.

supplies

- Primary leaflets
- *Shine Songbook and CD*
- *Year Two Songbooks* (optional)
- CD player



Telling the story of Jesus and of God's love for each person is such a privilege.

—Katie Shaw Thompson
Eldora, Iowa

leader's closing prayer

Though the crowd's reaction to Jesus seems extreme, perhaps this is a clue to how radical Jesus' proclamation really was. His message of God's kingdom was for all people, not just his own group, and he claimed it was beginning “today.” Take a moment to ponder the meaning of Jesus' message in today's world.

God, help me this week to share Jesus' message of good news with all. Amen.