



**Session 8**  
**Winter 2015-16**  
**Junior Youth**

# Jesus brings good news

**LUKE 4:14-30**

## prepare

### PRAYER

*God, as I hear Jesus' bold announcement of good news, help me know what you are calling me to do in your mission to the world. 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 junior youth

Youth are often asked, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" In today's story, Jesus seems to answer that question. How might this story inspire youth to set some of the same goals for their own lives? Today's session offers youth a chance to think about how they may be satisfied with the way things are, and like the crowd in the story, not want to hear Jesus' words of change. Peace notes helps them to think of concrete ways Jesus challenged the cultural norms and how they might follow his example.

Today, Bible memory may work best as youth are coming in, before Build community. 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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

- *Songbook and CD*
- *Year Two Songbooks* (optional)
- CD player
- Yarn or masking tape
- Two signs reading "Good news" and "Bad news"
- Scripture reflection (from Additional resources)
- Index cards or card stock
- Glue

## poster pack

- Bible memory poster (Luke 4)

## to do

- Run a line of yarn or masking tape down the length of your room for Build community. Put a sign reading "Good news" at one end and one reading "Bad news" at the other.
- Make copies of the Scripture reflection from page 100 and cut them out. Use card stock or glue the verses on index cards.

## media connections

- Vincent Van Gogh's painting *Prisoners Exercising*
- "Mercy" song by Dave Matthews Band from YouTube or *Away from the World* CD
- Internet search for "good news"
- James Tissot's painting *Brow of the Hill Near Nazareth*

## BUILD COMMUNITY

As youth come in, invite them to position themselves along the "good news, bad news" line according to whether their week had more good news or bad news. They can choose to stand anywhere along the line. Invite youth who wish to share why they chose that position. Encourage the group to listen in the story for the good news Jesus shared, and for what people heard as bad news.

## WORSHIP TOGETHER

As Jesus began his public ministry, he invited people to come and see what God had sent him to do. If your group likes to sing, teach a new song from the Shine CD—"Come and See" (track 3, page 8 of the *Year Two Songbook*). Song lyrics are also found at the back of *L.E.D.* If your group would rather listen, invite them to reflect silently on the words. Then offer this opening prayer:

**God, as we come and see what Jesus is all about, help us join him in showing your love and mercy. Amen.**

## SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Today's story again shows the importance of scripture in the life of Jesus. Have youth spread out into different parts of the room and give each a card with the Scripture reflection from page 100 of this guide. Remind them that these verses are ones Jesus would have known. Invite them to read them several times slowly. Encourage them to carry the card with them through the week, putting it where they will see it. Invite them to pay attention to where Jesus reads a version of these verses in today's story.

### Bible memory

Today, focus on the words Jesus read from the scroll in his hometown synagogue. Divide the youth into two groups and read the following phrases antiphonally from 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

Share that today's story took place immediately after Jesus returned from his time in the wilderness. Have all youth turn to Luke 4:14–30. Ask one strong reader to be narrator, while another strong reader reads the words of Jesus. The Jesus reader should stand for verses 18–19, when Jesus reads from the scroll, and then sit down again. The Jesus reader will also read verses 21 and 23–27 while seated with the group.

Instruct the other youth to turn and whisper to each other after verse 14, as if spreading rumors. The whole group may smile at the beginning of verse 22, and then read the ending question in unison—“Is not this Joseph's son?” After the narrator finishes the final verses, sit in silence for a few moments to contemplate what happened.

## WONDER AND REFLECT

Have the group sit together with Bibles open as they reflect on some of the questions below.

- Imagine how Jesus felt returning to teach in his hometown, where everyone knew him since he was a boy.
- I wonder why Jesus chose this passage to read.
- I wonder what Jesus meant by saying a prophet is not accepted in his hometown.
- I wonder why the crowd liked what Jesus said at first, and then became so angry. What changed?
- I wonder how people try to silence Jesus' words today.

## PEACE NOTES

We often assume the status quo is fine—at least when things are going well for us. But Jesus challenged “the way things were” again and again. Have the group think of examples of how Jesus acted outside the norm. Some examples: scolded the Pharisees, approached and healed lepers, healed on the Sabbath, talked to women, associated with tax collectors and other outcasts.

Jesus' good news of release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, and freedom for the oppressed is good news for all of us! When we accept others the way Jesus did, and work to make things fair, we help to bring in a new kingdom of peace. Provide paper and colored pencils or markers for youth to doodle as you play “Unity” from the Shine CD (track 20). They might draw ways they can help bring good news, or simply express their feelings about Jesus' words.

**Jesus brings good news**

**Luke 4:14–30**

## supplies

- Bibles
- *Shine Songbook and CD*
- CD player
- Paper
- Colored pencils/markers

# explore

## CREATE

Make a “God’s kingdom” mural. Post a large world map on the wall, or lay it on a table. Provide large markers or paints and brushes for youth to write phrases or draw images on the map. Encourage them to think of ways God calls them to share good news with others. *Option:* Decorate an old globe or individual globe banks instead.

### supplies

- Large world map
- Markers or acrylic paints/brushes
- Old globe or globe banks (optional)

## MOVE

Jesus stood while reading scripture from the scroll. Play the “Sit or stand?” game. Read the statements from page 99 of this guide. Youth stand if they think the statement is from the Bible, and sit if they think it is not. Share the answers with the group.

### supplies

- Sit or stand? (from Additional resources)

## RETELL

Distribute squares of paper labeled 14–15, 16–17, 18–19, 20–21, 22–24, 25–27, 28–29, and 30. Have youth work as individuals or in pairs to create a group comic strip that retells the story. Each youth or pair should draw what happened in the verses on their square of paper. For example, if they got the square labeled 14–15, they might draw Jesus approaching the synagogue. Put the squares together to form one comic strip. Then challenge the group to cut the story down to just four squares. Which parts seem most important?

**For smaller groups:** Each individual can work on more than one square, or the group can pick out the most important scenes to draw.

### supplies

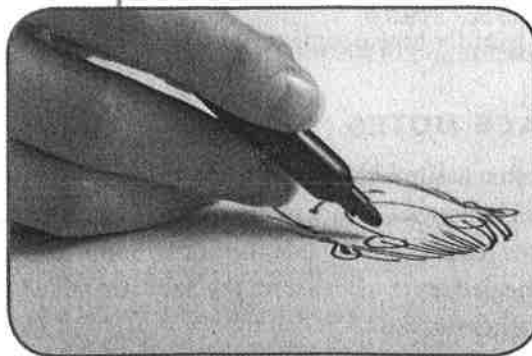
- Bibles
- Labeled squares of paper
- Markers

## L.E.D.

Divide the group into pairs and have them do the two quizzes on page 17 of *L.E.D.* Then talk about the activity, reading the rest of the page. On page 18, ask two youth to read the widow’s story from the newspaper as the widow and Elisha. Then have another youth read aloud the story of Naaman’s healing. Talk about what the widow and Naaman had in common. What do these stories teach us about who God’s good news is for?

### supplies

- *L.E.D.* magazines
- Pencils



## other ideas

- Learn American Sign Language for Luke 4:18–19. Go to [www.ShineCurriculum.com/Extras](http://www.ShineCurriculum.com/Extras) to learn the signs.
- Jesus announced that God’s good news is for “outsiders,” too. Look online for examples of “outsider art.” Have youth create artwork using recycled materials or cast-off items.

# bless

## PRAY

Gather the group and invite youth to think of someone they know who needs to hear good news this week—in particular, God's good news. Place tealights on a table. Invite youth to think of these people's names or speak them aloud as they light a candle. Play "God's Light Shines" from the Shine CD, track 8, during this time. Close with this prayer or one like it:

**Christ, let the light of your good news shine on all who need to hear it this week. Amen.**



## SEND

Send the youth with this blessing from Proverbs 15:30:

**The book of Proverbs says, "The light of the eyes rejoices the heart, and good news refreshes the body." Go, and walk in the light of God's good news!**

## supplies

- Shine Songbook and CD
- CD player
- Tealights
- Matches/lighter

*Don't always rely on volunteers! Sometimes asking a specific person by name allows a shy or introverted youth to feel included without the need to compete with more extroverted youth.*

—Carrie Smith  
Clayton, Ohio

## leader's closing prayer

Who in your life is waiting to hear good news? Light a candle for them and know that God's promises are for each of us—especially the poor, oppressed, and broken-hearted ones who need good news the most.

*Lord, help me shine your good news as I reach out my hands in mercy to those struggling in poverty, in compassion to those living in captivity, and in healing to those walking in darkness. Amen.*