

Online Curriculum for Evangelism Training for Adults with Special Needs

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A Senior Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for graduation
in the Honors Program
Liberty University
Fall 2015

Acceptance of Senior Honors Thesis

This Senior Honors Thesis is accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation from the Honors Program of Liberty University.

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Abstract

The purpose of this project is to address the discrepancy between Liberty University's mission to train all individuals to be Champions for Christ and the lack of access to higher education for individuals with disabilities. My role in this project will be to come alongside the School of Education (SOE) in helping to write the curriculum, create the activities and manage the creation of a new online program that teaches Bible foundations and evangelism strategy. This project will be developed after consulting literature of best practices for teaching adults with disabilities using online technology. The outcome of this project has the potential to be wide reaching for people with various disabilities at various cognitive levels. This course can impact many people with the Good News of Jesus Christ by giving individuals essential knowledge about the Bible and ways in which to share their faith. In addition, since it is an online program, it is easily assessable all over the country and world. This course will empower individuals to make a difference for the Kingdom of God.

Online Curriculum for Evangelism Training for Adults with Special Needs

Liberty University's slogan has always been to "train champions for Christ" (Liberty University, 2015). Liberty University is committed to developing Christ-centered men and women with values, knowledge and skills essential to impact the world. Its mission includes educating individuals who will excel in whatever area God has called them to, bringing him glory by making valuable contributions to their community and workplace (Liberty University, 2015). The ultimate goal of this mission is to train people to fulfill the Great Commission of making disciples (Liberty University, 2015). Though Liberty's desire is to train every individual without discrimination, a discrepancy arises when it comes to individuals with disabilities.

A barrier exists for students who desire to learn but lack the intellectual capacity to learn at the average level of instruction. Higher education targeted for students with cognitive disabilities – particularly in the area of biblical and evangelism training— do not seem to exist and if so are not easily accessible. The Chancellor and Liberty University as a whole have expressed that providing inclusive education for all learners is important. A training program designated to bridge this gap would also provide education for individuals who would otherwise have no opportunity. For this reason, the School of Education (SOE), in partnership with the College of Applied Studies and Academic Success (CASAS) and the School of Divinity, has begun this project to develop a non-credit online course to equip students with biblical and evangelism training. Under the supervision of Dr. Dunn of the SOE, I will help to create the curriculum and activities and put it into the online learning program.

Literature Review

When considering some of the literature of best practices for teaching students with disabilities in the online setting, I discovered four different components that I will incorporate when creating this online curriculum including differentiating instruction, maintaining trust, providing consistency and including visuals.

When developing this curriculum, a learner-centered approach is of the utmost importance. The Macrothink Institute conducted research that shows that a transformative online learning environment, one where students are encouraged and motivated to move beyond passive learning, must be a learner centered approach and environment (Wilson, Berkowitz, Bullock, Cockrell, Rodriguez, & Onwuegbuzie, 2012). In order to make online learning learner-centered, it must be more engaging, including using different methods to present information (Wilson, Berkowitz, Bullock, Cockrell, Rodriguez, & Onwuegbuzie, 2012). I will differentiate course material to accommodate a range of learning styles as best practices suggest that a combination of audio, video, text, and other means gives the opportunity for students to learn in the way that suits them best (Hashey & Stahl, 2014). Though differentiation is essential in order to keep students engaged, trust must be established for them to feel safe as learning occurs best when students feel safe.

Best practices for online education suggest that establishing trust is essential for students to enroll and to stay in online classes (Wang, 2014). Wang (2014) suggests that credibility, design, instructor socio-communicative style and privacy and security are all trust-inducing factors in online learning. Components of these factors include a program that is easily accessible, a contact that is available to answer questions, a sense of

community and warmth from the provider/instruction. Based on the previous research, when developing this online course, I will create lessons that are personal, warm, visually appealing and consistent, making use of soft colors, a kind voice for narration and easily accessible instructions and materials (Wang, 2014). In addition to strategically creating a “welcoming appearance” and “feel”, providing a predictable format will increase learning and reduce anxiety.

This course will be highly structured and predictable as best practices of online education explain that students, particularly with autism (ASD), tend to benefit from structure, particularly consistency in knowing the step by step structure of a course (Sabella & Hart, 2014). Students with ASD benefit from online courses because they tend to be presented in a more linear fashion instead of cluttered lessons, focusing on fewer concepts at a time (Sabella & Hart, 2014). The course will also include a glossary of definitions and times to stop and review and/repeat as necessary. Online education is beneficial for students with ASD because they can work at their own pace, repeat instructions and activities as many times as is necessary (Sabella & Hart, 2014). It is for this reason that each lesson of the course will be in the same predictable format, starting with the introduction, then video instruction, definitions defined, a memory verse, hands on activity and an online review activity/game using a program called Raptivity.

Online education is highly beneficial because it has the ability to incorporate more visuals than regular classrooms. According to Sabella & Hart (2014), research suggests that students with ASD benefit from visuals so the course will be very structured, incorporating visuals for every activity, and also incorporating illustrations to accompany

the narration of each lesson. This will help to keep the children engaged so maximum learning will result.

Finally, this research of best practices for engagement in online learning will be directly applied as the foundation upon which this curriculum is built. Differentiated instruction, intention trust-building components, consistency in format and visuals will all be used to enhance learning. While this paper is the written version of this project, the final project will be accessible in an online classroom format. The following lesson sequence, lesson plan format and individual lesson plans are a product of this research so that this curriculum can be an effective tool in training individuals with special needs to be champions for Christ.

Lesson Sequence

There will be a series of eleven lessons focusing on biblical and evangelical training. The lesson titles are as follows:

Lesson 1: Creation

Lesson 2: Purpose

Lesson 3: The Fall

Lesson 4: The promise

Lesson 5 Messiah (Christmas story)

Lesson 6: Jesus (Life and death)

Lesson 7 Resurrection

Lesson 8 Salvation

Lesson 9: Relationship

Lesson 10: Identity

Lesson 11: Love

Lesson Plan Format

Each lesson will include five components that will be laid out in the lesson in five steps, which are as follows:

Step 1: Symbol: Each student will receive a long bookmark with the symbols in order from top to bottom. Each week the students will color the symbol of the week. The bookmark will be a tool available to them when sharing the Gospel. Each symbol will be a cue so the students do not forget each important part of the story.

Step 2: Lesson (drawing narration): Each lesson will be audio recorded and placed behind a series of illustrations that correlate with the words and ideas of the lesson.

Step 3: Definitions: A word bank with important words from each lesson and their definitions will be available in each lesson. One glossary will be accessible at all times that contain a list of all definitions for the course. All vocabulary words throughout all lessons will be linked to the glossary.

Step 4: Memory: One memory verse per lesson relating to the lesson's topic.

Step 5: Hands on Activity: This activity is different each week but it involves applying the information learned in the lesson and bringing information from previous lesson together.

Individual Lesson Plans

Lesson 1: Creation

Step 1: symbol. Earth.

Step 2: lesson (drawing narration). There was once a time when the earth did not exist. Neither did planets, animals or people. It was formless and empty, but there was God, One God made of three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This God can be described as the Trinity. God, the trinity, has always existed and forever will. Into the nothingness God spoke and with the miraculous power of words alone, all things were created. Today we will be learning about the beginning of all beginnings, the beginning of *life*.

On the first day, God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. Then he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light “day” and the darkness “night.” And God saw that the light was good (Gen. 3-5, NLT).

On the second day, God said, “Let there be a space between the waters to separate the waters of the heavens from the waters of the earth.” God called the space “sky.” And God saw that it was good (Gen. 6-8).

On the third day, God said, “let the waters beneath the sky flow together into one place, so dry ground may appear.” God called the dry ground “land” and the waters “seas.” Then God said, “Let the land produce plants and trees that bear fruit. And God saw that it was good (Gen. 1:9-12).

On the fourth day, God said, “Let lights appear in the sky to separate the day from the night. These lights will mark the seasons, days and years. God made two great

lights—the larger one, the sun, to shine in the day, and the smaller one, the moon to shine in the night. He also made the stars. And God saw that it was good (Gen. 1:14-18).

On the fifth day, God said, “Let the waters be filled with living creatures, and let birds fly across the sky.” So God created sea creatures and every living creature that swims. And God saw that it was good (Gen. 1:20).

On the sixth day, a very special day, God said, “Let the earth produce every sort of animal—livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and wild animals.” And God saw that it was good (Gen. 1:21-25).

Then, still on the sixth day, for the first time without words, God formed a man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man’s nostrils, and the man became a *living person*. God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he placed the man he had made to tend and watch over it. God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone so I will make a helper who is just right for him” (Gen. 2:18).

So God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the God took out one of the man’s ribs and closed up the opening and made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man. Now the man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame.

On the seventh day, God finished His work of creation, so he rested. God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all His work of creation (Gen. 2:2-3).

Step 3: definitions. *Trinity:* One God in three persons, God, Jesus and the Holy *Spirit*. This can be understood as how one person can have different roles, like a man

being a father, son and worker. In the same way, God can be understood as a Father, Jesus can be understood as a son and the Holy Spirit can be understood as a worker.

Good: beautiful, best, better, bountiful, cheerful

Create: to make or produce, to cause something new to exist

Step 4: memory. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1).

Step 5: hands on activity. When it is most convenient, go outside or go to a window. Take your notebook. Take time to think and to observe the things around you. What is the most interesting thing you see that is created? Think back to all God has created. Write down the reason you chose your item. Please also draw the item in the space provided below.

Lesson 2: Purpose

Step 1: symbol. Hands holding.

Step 2: lesson (drawing narration). What is the purpose of life, the reason for living? We learned last lesson that it was God who created the whole world, including humans. But now the question is *why*? Since God is the inventor, it would be make sense to check out the owner's manual to see what the invention is about, right? The Bible is like God's owner's manual and it shows His creation their purpose. The Bible says that humans were created to be His friend and be like him.

As the Godhead (the Father, Son and Holy Spirit) were about to create the first human, God said "let us create man in our image"— to be like him (Gen. 1:26). God intimately designed you to be an image "reflection" of him, like a mirror. God designed your height, skin color, personality, preferences and desires! You were made in His image on the inside too. You are different from all of God's creation. There is no one else that God has designed just like you! You are absolutely unique and beautiful to God.

Thinking back to the beginning, when Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden. It was beautiful, filled with trees and delicious fruits. But the best part of all is that Adam and Eve lived as close friends with God. They walked with him and talked with him; they were His friends. Life was amazing. God told them to care for the garden and to have children to bring more people into the world. Knowing God and spending time with him, this is what life was meant to be like for all humans. This life was meant to be forever with God, except something bad happened and something got wedged between the God and Adam and Eve and their perfect relationship was not perfect anymore. (We'll learn about this next lesson).

The thing to remember is, not only did God make every person and he loves every person, but he also wants to be each one's friend. Deep down, every person, even though they may not know it has a desire to fulfill their purpose, because the purpose of human life, before anything bad happened, is simply relationship with God. Every life is special and has purpose because God made it!

The problem is, many people do not know who they are and that they are special because they don't know who God is or what the Bible says.

Step 3: definitions. *Image:* a reflection, like in a mirror

Purpose: reason behind something

Step 4: memory. "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14, NIV).

Step 5: hands on activity. If I told you that you had marker on your face, you would go to a mirror to see if it was true, right?! In the same way that you look in a mirror to see what your face looks like, you will never know who you are on the inside if you don't look into God's mirror, which is His Word, the Bible.

1) Find a mirror in your home: Go look into it and ask yourself this question.

"Would I know what my face looked like without a mirror?"

2) Now, think of things you like about yourself, things that are special about you or things that that you are really proud of.

3) Make a list of at least three (3) things on the outside, which you can see in a real mirror. (Example: your hair, your smile, your bellybutton).

- 4) Make a list of at least three (3) things on the inside, which you can't see with a real mirror but you can see in God's mirror, the Bible. (Example: your kindness, your generosity, your joy).

Lesson 3: The Fall

Step 1: symbol. Snake.

Step 2: lesson (drawing narration). Last lesson we learned that Adam and Eve were living happily in the Garden of Eden. They were in love with each other and in perfect relationship with God. God had given them everything they could ever need or want. This is what their life was meant to be like, but God, a loving Father, knew that it wouldn't be true love if they did not have the freedom to choose God or not, so he gave them the choice. When God placed the man in the garden, he told them, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die" (Gen. 2:16-17). This tree was in the middle of the garden, and beside it was the tree of Life.

It was not long after that Eve, Adam's wife, found herself in conversation with a snake, but she did not know that it was Satan himself in disguise. Satan is God's enemy. He used to be one of God's angels but he was jealous and wanted to be like God so he decided to go against him. Since his goal to destroy God is impossible, he chose to try to destroy God's most loved creation, humans. Satan, tricked Eve, asking her a question "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'" Eve told him they can eat from all the trees of the garden besides the one in the center, or else they will surely die. This is where Satan told them a lie "You will not certainly die, for God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Eve believed Satan, saw that the fruit looked delicious and that it would give her wisdom and ate of the tree. She then gave some to Adam and he ate as well. This simple act of disobedience was sin, doing what God told them not to do and it did bring

death. Their physical bodies did not die. Their Spirit inside did die and this separated their close friendship with God.

Their decision to disobey God brought several results. Their sin brought the knowledge of evil (bad things) and they hid from God out of shame, aware for the first time that they were naked. God killed, for the first time, an animal to make clothes for Adam and Eve out of its skin.

Life became more difficult for Adam and Eve. For Adam, the ground was cursed and it would take sweat to grow food to eat. For Eve, there would be much pain in childbirth. The most terrible result of their disobedience was that Adam and Eve were separated from God and they had to leave the garden. God still loved them very much, but remember the tree of life that was also in the garden? God knew that if they ate of that tree, they would live forever and He did not want them to live forever in the fallen state that they were in, full of sin. But, God had another plan to deal with this problem and we'll talk about this plan in the next lesson.

This is the reason that every human is born with sin. The good news is, though sin entered the world, God is a God of love that is much stronger than sin and He did not leave or turn away from His special creation. Instead, He made a plan.

Step 3: definitions. *Obedience:* to follow commands or rules

Disobedience: to not follow commands or rules

Sin: not obeying God's commands

Satan: God's enemy. He hates God and hates God's children.

Freedom: the right to act, speak or think independently

Step 4: memory. “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”

(Romans 3:23, NIV).

Step 5: hands on activity. Have you ever sinned? (For example, disobeyed, made a mistake, or spoke angry words? The Bible says that everyone has sinned.

- 1) Make a list of your sins of things you feel guilty about or you know that are wrong. (Don't worry you are the only person who will see this list, so be honest with yourself). I bet you feel bad about this list.
- 2) Now, erase or scratch out your list. Even though all humans sin, God is going to fix this “sin” problem and erase not only your list but every sin in the whole world.
- 3) How do you think that He will do it? Now make a prediction, (a smart guess) about what you think the plan will be!

Lesson 4: The Promise

Step 1: symbol. Ring.

Step 2: lesson (drawing narration). The amazing thing about God is that he never gives up and his love never fails, even when people do. As Adam and Eve began to have children, and their children began to have children, the earth became more populated and sin and disobedience began to take over the world because every person was born with a sinful heart. People did many terrible things but the worst of all was that they forgot about God, they did not listen to him and they did not love him. God saw how human hearts were trapped in sin and he knew that it was impossible for them to take care of their sins on their own. God knew that a Rescuer was needed, Someone to remove all the sins of the world for all time and rescue God's children from the hold of Satan. The problem was, most of the people did not think that they needed a Rescuer; they thought they were fine just as they are.

So, to show people His holy standard, God gave the law. The law is a list of strict, specific rules and regulations. They are "do's" and "don'ts", like "do not steal", "do not be jealous" or "do not murder." This law also included many sacrifices, where people would have to kill animals as an offering to God. The blood of the sacrifices would temporarily take away the sin of people. The problem with the law was that its rules were impossible to keep so the sacrifices had to be offered again and again for sin.

But the Law wasn't God's great rescue mission. This rescue mission was called Messiah. God's Son Jesus is the Messiah. God made a promise to the people that He would send someone to take care of sins *once* for all. God told the people that the Messiah would be a perfect man, one who had never sinned. Though no human could

obey it all, Jesus would and in doing so, Jesus would remove every bad thing about the law.

This promised Messiah was Jesus, the Son of God and Savior of the world. God said the Messiah would come as a child but He would also be the King. He would bring peace to all of mankind. The people eagerly waited and waited, for hundreds of years, for this Messiah to come, and YES, He did come.

Step 3: definitions. *Promise:* a commitment to follow-through with your word

Messiah: Jesus, the promised One

Sacrifice: something very costly that is given up

Law: strict, specific rules and regulations from God

Step 4: memory. “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given” (Isaiah 9:6, NIV).

Step 5: hands on activity. Has anyone ever given you an important promise and you had to wait for a long time? Once you think of that promise, answer the following questions in your booklet:

- 1) What was the promise?
- 2) Who gave you the promise?
- 3) Did the person keep the promise? Did the person fulfill their promise?
- 4) How did that make you feel?

Even though people may or may not keep their promises, remember that God always keeps His promises!

Lesson 5: Messiah (Christmas story)

Step 1: symbol. Baby cradle.

Step 2: lesson (drawing narration). Though many years passed by before the promised Messiah came to earth, God did not forget His promise. At just the right time, about 2000 years ago, in a little town called Nazareth, an angel sent from God appeared to a lady named Mary. She was young and not yet married. The angel told Mary that she was chosen by God to carry His son, Jesus, in her womb. Mary was very surprised and probably a little scared, but she said Yes to God. It was a beautiful miracle; and the Virgin Mary got pregnant with the Son of God.

We call this story the Christmas story because it was when CHRIST came into the world. And nine months later, he came! Mary and her fiancée Joseph were away from home in Bethlehem when the baby was ready to be born. They found shelter in an animal's stable and that is where Jesus was born. They wrapped him in rags and placed him in a manger, a trough where animals eat their food!

Meanwhile, God was announcing the birth of baby King Jesus. Angels appeared to a group of shepherds who were watching their sheep in the night! The angels told them of the good news that the Messiah, the King and Savior had been born in Bethlehem. They were frightened at first but they left right away and were overjoyed when they got to meet Jesus, God's great gift to the world.

God also announced this great gift by placing a bright star in the sky to lead Wise Men to Jesus so that they could worship him and bless him with gifts. The star led the wise men from a faraway land. By this time, many people had heard of this news and some people were not very happy.

So Jesus grew up. He played with His friends, had to take baths and eat His supper. Mary and Joseph raised him and loved him. He looked like an ordinary child but Jesus was different because he was fully God and fully man, and he was perfect, never once did he sin. Jesus grew in knowledge as he grew in stature and from a young age, he studied the Bible.

When Jesus came, little did the world know that it would never be the same again! His birth changed everything; that is why we still celebrate it!

Step 3: definitions. *Christmas:* a celebration of the birth of Christ

Manger: trough that animals ate out of; where baby Jesus was laid

Step 4: memory. “For God so loved the world that he gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16, NIV).

Step 5: hands on activity. Take a minute to think about Christmas. In your booklet, answer the following questions:

- 1) What does Christmas mean?
- 2) What do you usually do to celebrate Christmas?
- 3) What do most people think Christmas is all about?
- 4) Draw a couple pictures of symbols that you see around Christmas time that you would not be able to find in the Christmas story of the Bible?
- 5) Will anything change about the way you celebrate Christmas now that you know or were reminded of the true meaning of Christmas?
- 6) Draw some pictures that would be included in the true Christmas story.

Lesson 6: Jesus (Life and death)

Step 1: symbol. Cross.

Step 2: lesson (drawing narration). Jesus grew from a baby to a man. He learned to be a carpenter, like His adopted father Joseph. The Bible says very little about His life until he was 30 years old. However, when he was 30, His life changed and His ministry began. He was baptized in water. A baptism is when someone is dunked under water in a ceremony as a symbol of their death to their old self, as Christ died on the cross and how they are alive in their new self, as Christ rose from the dead and is alive. Baptism is a public declaration of who we love and follow, Jesus. After Jesus' baptism, the Bible says that the Holy Spirit descended on Him like a dove. It was the Holy Spirit that gave Jesus power! And from that day on, Jesus went about doing the work of His Father, God.

Jesus was a teacher, telling people about the Good News that there is a way to God and forgiveness for all sins, and that it is all found in Him. He told the people that the promised Messiah had come and it was Him! He taught his followers and large crowds the way that God wanted them to live and He showed them how to live by His example.

Jesus was known for His love that he offered in many ways to many people. You wouldn't have found Jesus fine-dining or sunbathing with the rich people of the day. Instead, you would have found him sitting with the homeless, holding children, or laying His hand on the sick or disabled and healing them. Jesus didn't like people for how important they were or how they looked but instead, He focused on their heart, what was on the inside. Jesus saw the value in each person and He stopped, even just for one.

It wasn't long before people were mad at Jesus and wanted to kill Him. The religious and government leaders were jealous of the miracles He did and the way all the people loved and followed Him. They thought that He was lying when He said He was the Son of God and the King of the Jews. So they made a plan to crucify Him.

Jesus *was* God though and he was strong enough to save Himself and not let their plan succeed. But the thing is, Jesus knew that because of sin, there had to be a sacrifice for sins to be forgiven. Jesus knew that he was the perfect sacrifice. He knew that his innocent death would mean that all sinners would be cleansed of sin and there would now be no need of any other sacrifice. He knew that it had to be done.

However, Jesus knew it would be difficult and that He would have to experience the pain, suffering and sin of the world. He asked God if his suffering could be removed, if there was any other way, but His love was too strong and there wasn't another way.

He was praying in a garden when the soldiers came to take him away. They beat Jesus, with whips that had shards of glass on the end. They crushed a crown of thorns onto His head. They stripped him of His clothes. They made him carry His wooden cross up a hill. Then they nailed him to it, through His hands and His feet. He cried, moaned, bled, and suffered. He was publicly embarrassed. They stabbed him in the side. With His last breath he cried, "it is finished". Then he died. Then the earth began to shake and the sky became dark in the middle of the day! His followers were devastated and the evil leaders thought that they had won. But the story was not over yet!

Step 3: definitions. *Carpenter*: a person who makes and repairs objects or structures out of wood

Baptism: Immersion into something. Water baptism in the Bible is an immersion into water. It is a symbol of the death of one's old self with Christ when he or she believed in Him, and his or her new life with Christ as He resurrected from the dead.

Holy Spirit: a part of the Trinity, one God in three persons Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Crucify: put (someone) to death by nailing or binding them to a cross, especially as an ancient punishment.

Step 4: memory. “But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8, NIV).

Step 5: hands on activity. In your booklet, answer the following questions.

- 1) Have you ever given up something very special for someone you loved? Explain what it was and the reason you gave it up?
- 2) Has anyone ever given up something very special for you? Explain what it was and how it made you feel?
- 3) Jesus gave up His life for you. It was a costly sacrifice but you were worth it to him. Explain how does that make you feel?
- 4) With a washable marker, draw a dot on both of your hands and feet. Whenever you see them throughout your day, remember the pain that Jesus went through just for you!

Lesson 7: Resurrection

Step 1: symbol. Empty tomb/stone rolled away.

Step 2: lesson (drawing narration). Jesus Christ, the Son of God was murdered on a cross 2000 years ago. They buried His body in a tomb nearby and rolled a huge stone over it. Life went on. People still worked, cooked and slept. But little did they know the news they were about to hear. Three days later, the tomb was empty, Jesus had risen from the dead! When two women went to visit the tomb early in the morning, they were awestruck to find the stone rolled away and the grave linens intact, but no body. Angels appeared to the women to tell them that Jesus wasn't there, he was no longer dead, but alive.

Jesus then appeared to some of His friends. He showed them the holes in His hands and he told them to wait, because he was going to Heaven and that He was giving to them the Holy Spirit, which would come with power. Then, He spoke His last words before he left to go to heaven. His friends leaned in to listen. *This must be important*, they thought. He said:

Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age (Matthew 28:19-20, NIV).

The resurrection of Jesus changed everything. It proved that He was fully God yet fully man. It also proved that He was indeed the Son of God. When He rose from the dead, sin and death lost their power and all sinners were set free because their sins were now paid for in full forever. The Bible says that the same power that raised Christ from

the dead lives in those who believe! You will need God's strong power to help you through life and to do the things that Jesus wants you to do. This is the Good News of the Gospel! Because Jesus conquered death, he brings the dead to life and makes old things new. Now there is *nothing* that can separate you from the *love* of God and God is delighted to let His goodness shine through you.

Step 3: definitions. *Resurrection:* the dead being brought to life

Disciples: a learner/student

Step 4: memory. "Nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord". (Romans 8:39 *paraphrased*)

Step 5: hands on activity. Watch the video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=huFra1mnIVE>

In your notebook, see the "before the cross and after the cross" chart. Write three things that changed because of what Jesus accomplished on the cross

Lesson 8: Salvation

Step 1: symbol. Gift box.

Step 2: lesson (drawing narration). So now you have gotten most of the love story, from the creation of the world and the need of a savior, to Jesus coming, dying and defeating the grave by being raised to life. Now, you are ready to know what to do about it. This is great news because there is now a free offer, for all people, for you, it's a free gift from a loving God. This gift is called *salvation*. It is a big word that means to be set free from sin and given new life. The Bible says that all people are trapped in their sin and they cannot get out by themselves. But, when Jesus Christ came to earth and died and rose again, he rescued all people from their sin and His offer is new life!

The word *salvation* does not only mean to be saved from sin and hell, but it also means to be whole, healed, prospered, and brought to safety. Do you feel hurt, lonely, ugly, trapped, sad, mad, or guilty? Do you need to be rescued? Jesus wants to save you and set you free! Since Jesus was innocent and he died for you, you don't need to pay the punishment for your sin. Jesus loves you and it makes him sad if you are not living in freedom because he knows that gave His life so that he could give you His free gift. He is waiting for you to come to Him to open it.

There was once a story of a father with two sons. One of the sons asked the father for money and ran away from home. While he was away, he wasted all the money and then there was a great famine, not enough food in the land. The son found a job feeding pigs but he was so unhappy and hungry. He remembered just how much his dad took care of him and how much he loved him. He felt bad for how he had ran away but made up in him mind that he would go home and apologize and ask to be a servant in his father's

house. On his way back, his father saw him in the distance and ran to meet him, hugged him, wept and told his servants to prepare a great celebration meal. The older brother was jealous of the father giving the lost son things that he did not deserve but the father was excited that his son, once dead was now alive. He was lost but was found! (Luke 15). No matter how someone ended up wandering, God, like this Father in the story, wants all His lost children to return so that they can again be in relationship with their Heavenly Dad.

If you would like to make a decision to be saved, to accept the gift of salvation that God has given to you, and to run home to your Daddy, it is not a complicated matter but it is a very important decision!

The Bible says that anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Romans 10:13). It is a free gift, God has already done bought salvation for you, but you have to accept it. Like a gift that someone gives you. They can buy the gift and wrap it up and bring it to you, but if you never open it, you never really experience the blessing of the gift. To open the gift you must simply believe that Jesus loves you, that he died and rose again to pay the price for your sin so that you may live a life in freedom, in love with him and then go be with him in heaven when you die! If you have already opened the gift and made this decision, pay attention because this will help you for when you have an opportunity to talk with a friend that may have never decided to follow Jesus before. This is a decision that you must really believe, not just words of a prayer that you repeat. If you haven't made this important decision and you would like to, all you need to do is pray and ask Jesus and it's yours. This is the biggest and most important decision of your life. It simply means responding to His love and saying "yes" to him. This means giving

Him complete control, leaving everything else aside. You are free to talk to God in your own words but if you would like, you can repeat this short prayer:

Dear Jesus, thank you for everything that you have done for me. Thank you that you loved me so much that you came to earth and died and rose from the dead for me. I believe in you and I want to live for you. Thank you that you wash all my sin away and make me new. Please come and live in me I want to live for you, Amen.

That's it! The Bible says that if you ask, you will receive so now salvation is yours and the most amazing thing is that when you ask Jesus to save you, the Holy Spirit comes to live inside of you! Now you are a new person. The old you is gone and now there is a new you! Praise God! Now you are a Christian, a follower of Jesus.

Step 3: definitions. *Salvation:* It is a big word that means to be set free from sin and given new life. Salvation is a new birth.

Faith: believing in what you cannot see.

Grace: kindness that you didn't do anything to deserve.

Christian: follower of Jesus.

Step 4: memory. "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13).

Step 5: hands on activity. For this activity, you are going to make a short video of yourself using your phone or the webcam on your computer. In this video, you are going to explain your experience with Jesus. Choose the prompt that fits you best.

- 1) If you are a Christian, share about what led you to make that decision.
- 2) If you are not a Christian, explain your thoughts and questions about this Truth about Jesus.

- 3) If you are unsure, explain your thoughts and feelings and the reasons you are unsure.

Lesson 9: Relationship

Step 1: symbol. Bible and folded hands.

Step 2: lesson (drawing narration). Now, for all of you who have received God's beautiful gift of salvation, in the past or even just recently, maybe some of you are thinking, *okay, now that I have a personal relationship with Jesus, what do I now?* That is a great question and the best place to find those answers are by reading the Bible, praying, and fellowship. Don't worry. I will explain to you what that means!

Think of a friend or family member that you are close with. If you do not talk with that person or spend time with them, your relationship with them will suffer and you will probably drift apart. It is the same way with your relationship with God. God loves quality time and quality conversation. Just like an old or new friend, you need to spend time with God and talk with him to get to know him more! Though you cannot sit down and talk to God in a human body, God is very much a person, just one that we cannot see with our eyes. Part of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, lives on the inside of a believer so God is there to talk to at all times! Communicating with God is called prayer. He always listens, always cares, always leads, and always answers, even if we don't hear it. The Bible says that God loves the prayers of His people and he loves fulfilling their desires. You will find that the more that you talk to God, the more you will hear back in your heart!

While prayer is a very important way to maintain your relationship with God, the most important way to hear from God is to read the Bible. The Bible is not an ordinary book inspired by humans but the Bible is a book that was inspired by God. The Bible is God's message to us. He wanted us to know who He is and how He created us to live so

He told several men, thousands of years ago, what to write and they wrote it down so we would have God's words to read. The Bible tells us about who God is, what God is like, how he feels about humans and also who humans are, what they are like and what they are to do. The Bible is an exciting book of endless learning and it is a look into the heart of God!

So, if you are wondering what to do and how to learn, the best way to do that would be spend time with God, while you are reading the Bible, pray and ask God for help to understand it. The Bible says that the Word of God is alive and active (Hebrews 4:12). The Bible isn't an ordinary book, but it is a supernatural book and the Holy Spirit inside of you is a good teacher. Making this time with God is something extremely important, because it will help you learn and grow.

Another way to grow in your relationship with God is to fellowship. This is just a big word that means to spend time with other people who have a relationship with Jesus too. That way you have people to help you when you have questions or when life gets difficult. It doesn't really matter where you spend time with these people but if you don't know anyone else that has a relationship with Jesus too, then a good place to look is a church that teaches the Bible. Going to church is a great place to be taught more about the Bible and to meet other people who are living for Christ too.

You will find that through prayer, reading the Bible and spending time with other Christians, you experience more life and joy as you get to know Jesus. This doesn't mean that life will be perfect and nothing bad will happen. But it does mean that you are never ever alone and that no matter what happens, no one can ever take away your relationship with Jesus.

Step 3: definitions. *Bible:* a special book, the Word of God

Prayer: communication with God

Communication: the process of using words or actions to exchange information

Fellowship: spending time with other people who have a relationship with Jesus

Step 4: memory. “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you” (Hebrews 13:5b).

Step 5: hands on activity. Take some time now to spend time with God. Find a spot where you won’t be distracted. This may be in your room, on your deck outside or wherever works best for you. You will need to bring

- Bible
- Pen
- Booklet (or a journal if you have one)

Follow these directions:

1. First of all, pray and ask God to help you understand His Word, ask him to show you or remind you of His truth. (You could say: “Jesus, please help me to understand truth about you today, amen.”)
2. Ask God to bring to your mind a passage in the Bible for you to read, take a few moments to listen. Go to the passage that he leads you to and if you feel like you don’t hear anything, choose one of the following passages:
 - Matthew 18:1-6
 - Luke 5:17-26
 - John 6:1-15

3. Read the passage (Be sure to ask God any questions that you may have as you go)
4. After you finish reading the section, think about what you read. In your booklet, choose and answer at least two of the following prompts
 - a. What does the passage tell you about God?
 - b. What does the passage tell you about you?
 - c. Draw a picture to illustrate the story in your booklet if you would like.
 - d. What did you learn?
5. You are finished! Pray and thank God for what he taught you and how he loves you so much!!

Lesson 10: Identity

Step 1: symbol. Name tag (with *I am...* written on it)

Step 2: lesson (drawing narration). Now that you have learned or are reminded of what Jesus has done for you and the relationship that is available to you, you are ready to dive into just who the Bible says that you are! The Bible says that you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. It is important to know who you are because if you don't know the truth of what the Bible says about you, you won't live in that freedom.

There was once a story of a poor old lady who was about to die. Her husband had died many years ago and a neighbor went over to help her pack up her few belongings. While she is there, the neighbor noticed a piece of paper framed on the wall and she asked the old lady if she knew what it said. The lady said "no, I can't read, what does it say?" The neighbor then told the lady that the paper was her husband's will, declaring that he was a very wealthy man and all of his fortunes were left for her. The lady was so sad before for many years, she lived in poverty and she did not know all that was available to her, and now it was too late.

The Bible is God's word and in it, he tells of the great gifts and benefits for His children but if children don't know what the Bible says, then they will miss out on all the good God has for them.

Here are some verses in the Bible that show the truth of who you are:

- 1) First, God says that he made you and that he knows you.

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you" (Jeremiah 1:5).

- 2) You are a new creation. The past is in the past.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

- 3) You are forgiven. *“For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us” (Psalm 103:11-12).*

- 4) Jesus gave His life for you because he considers you a friend.

“Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (John 15:13).

- 5) You were dead in your sin, but now you are alive with Christ.

“But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved” (Ephesians 2:4-5).

- 6) Christ has set you free from the power of sin.

“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery” (Galatians 5:1).

- 7) He has adopted you.

“In love, he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will” (Ephesians 1:5).

- 8) You are God’s child and he is your Dad.

“Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in His name, he gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12).

- 9) He cares about you.

“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7).

10) God loves you.

“Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. His love endures forever” (Psalm 136:1).

11) God loves ALL people, from every country, every language and every family!

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

12) God has good things planned for your life.

“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2:10).

13) There is nothing to be afraid.

“There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear...” (1 John 4:18).

14) God is with you always, you are never alone!

“God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you’” (Hebrews 13:5).

One of the most important thing you can learn to do as a follower of Jesus is to learn to tell what is the truth and what isn’t the truth. Remember Satan, he is our enemy and his goal is to seek, kill and destroy. One of the best ways that he destroys people is to get them to believe lies about themselves or about God. Know what the Bible says about you will help when a thought comes into your head like *“I am such a failure, I keep messing up and I bet God is so mad at me.”* When a thought comes, pray and then look to find what the Bible says about that particular topic. What the Bible really says it that you are an overcomer and that God loves you, no matter what you do and he is not frustrated or mad with you, in fact he is just waiting for you to turn to him! Confront these lies from Satan with the truth of God’s word and the lie will have to disappear because when light invades darkness, the darkness can no longer even exist.

Step 3: definitions. *Identity:* who makes a person who they are (one's identity can only be found in Jesus).

Step 4: memory. "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20).

Step 5: hands on activity. Follow the link below to watch a video.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uiz_jTpWy3o

Use a piece of construction paper or cardboard (like in the video) to make your own sign telling your story. On one side, include a word or phrase of your identity without/before Christ. On the other side, include a word or phrase of your identity with/after Christ.

Lesson 11: Love

Step 1: symbol. Heart.

Step 2: lesson (drawing narration). Now that you know your identity and how God sees you, I bet you are feeling free and you are wanting to share this really good news of Jesus with other people, right?! That is a great thing and it is exactly what you are made for! Maybe you are thinking, *but I don't know what to do*, there is good news for you: Sharing Jesus is as simple as showing love. Jesus doesn't give you a huge list of rules for you to obey, but in the Bible when the people asked Him what the greatest, most important rule was, this is what He said: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37-39).

The Bible says that we love because He first loved us! Jesus loves you with all of His heart and He wants you to love him back with all of your heart, he wants you to give him all of your time and all of your desires because he has given everything to you! That is the most important thing. But, next is loving others as yourself! Your "neighbor" is absolutely anyone except you. This could be family, friends, a stranger on the street or a stranger in another country! Think of how you would want to be treated. Would like people to listen to you, to feed you, to do special things for you? I bet that makes you feel happy? The Bible says that we are to love others just like that, just how we would want to be treated.

Jesus is love so when you love somebody, you show them who Jesus is. Love comes in many different ways, shapes and sizes. It won't always look the same but it will

always make a difference! The two main ways to show love is through your actions and through your words.

Loving God through your actions means living your life in a way that pleases God, not doing things that would make God sad, like saying mean things, taking things that aren't yours, or being lazy. Instead, this means giving God your time and using your hands and feet and to be faithful with what God has given you, for example, work or school or whatever you spending your time.

Loving God with your words means praising him and thanking him continually. It means speaking positive things to others and also to yourself. It means using your words to encourage other people and to be a good friend. Loving God with your words also means sharing His good news with other people.

Loving people through your actions often looks like serving them, thinking about others as better than yourself. This could mean doing the dishes for your mom, taking out the trash for your dad, taking your neighbor out to ice cream or selling one of your belonging to give the money to a friend in need. Loving others can be as simple as sharing a smile with a stranger on the street and working hard and having a positive attitude at work.

Loving people through your words may perhaps be one of the best ways that you can show God's love. The Bible says that the power of life and death is in the tongue! This means that your words are so important that it can bring life (good things) or death (terrible things). With your words, you can encourage, give hope and confidence and tell people the way that God sees them. This could look like "Hey, Jesus cares about you so

much. Give him all your worries because you are his special child!” It can be as simple as that!

Lastly, one way that you can combine actions and words to display the love of Jesus is to simply ask someone if you could pray for them. This is a very respectful way to bring up spiritual matters and it’s a way that gives people an option to respond. Praying for someone shows them that you care enough about them to give up your time to talk to God on their behalf!

By stepping out of your comfort zone to “do” love or “speak” love, you will change the world with the love of Christ. It is during these conversations that you will also get to explain the story of Jesus and His rescue mission to the world. If they are interested, tell them the whole story because it is good news and everyone who doesn’t know is missing out!

Step 3: definitions. *Encourage:* to give hope, confidence, and support by speaking truth.

Step 4: memory. “We love because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

Step 5: hands on activity. Today’s activity includes 2 parts.

1. Make a plan of ways that you are going to show your love to others.

Use the table in your booklet list their name in the left column and then a specific idea on how to love them. Choose at least 10 people (you can list “stranger” if you would like to write an idea of how to show love to someone that you do not know).

Remember to use both your words and your actions to show Jesus love.

2) Ask someone if you can pray for them. (Pray first and ask God who he would like you to pray for. Sometimes, it's easier to start with someone that you know but you are free to ask someone that you don't know as well")

- a. Say "Hello, my name is _____ (say your name) and I was wondering if I could pray for you?" (If it is someone that you know, you don't need to introduce yourself).
- b. If they say "no", say "okay, have a good day!"
- c. If they say "yes", you can ask, "is there anything special that you would like me to pray about?"
- d. If they say "no", you can say "Okay, let's pray" and then you can pray whatever God puts in your heart to say. This is a great time to tell people who they are and how God sees them. (Example: "Thank you God that you love my friend, thank you that you see him/her as righteous, beautiful and special. Bless my friend today and give him/her your joy").
- e. If they say "yes", you can pray about those special requests, while you also remind them about how God sees them.

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