

God's Plan: 2 LOVE Us 4-Ever!

Bible Story

The Infinite Implementation

Mark 16:15; Acts 1:1–11; 2:4,41–47; 4:32–35

So . . .
now what
do I do?

Bible Verse

"Lead a life of love, just as Christ did. He loved us. He gave himself up for us." Ephesians 5:2

You can
live as God's
child and
show His love
to others.

Session Goals

1. PARTICIPATE in telling the story of the Early Church.
2. DISCUSS ways to show God's love to others.
3. THANK God for promising to love us forever, and ask for His help to show love to others.
4. CHOOSE to become a member of God's family, as the Holy Spirit leads.

Spark Principle—Chain Reaction

A series of events caused by the one before. Sharing God's love with others can start a chain reaction and go on and on and on!



Heart

For centuries, the heart has represented love. When we become members of God's family, we receive a new life and a new heart! Whenever you see a heart, you can remember how God loves you and how as a member of His family, God's child, you can show His love to others.



Heart Prep by Henrietta Mears

Salvation is a complete and finished work of God for us. Jesus on the cross said, "It is finished!" (John 19:30). God's plan was complete and finished in that moment! When we believe, we receive a new life, a new heart. We are made new creatures; we are given a new mind and new service opens before us. The new commandment of love is the only commandment of our new life.

Probably if you or I had gone through as much as Jesus did to make salvation possible, we would have been tempted to assure the spread of our work by some supernatural means. But when the Lord Jesus Christ went back to heaven, He left only a group of people to continue His work—a people called out of the world for His glory.

The Church is the organization that the Lord has ordained to carry on His work. The whole process of evangelization boils down to one point: Someone must tell of the love of Christ and the need to accept Him as Lord and Savior. You and I and all those who have partaken of His salvation are the only messengers that He has. Throughout all of history, the Lord's people have with varying degrees of steadfastness continued this work. Now it is our turn.

The Lord promised that the gates of hell will not prevail against His Church. Instead, it will triumph until Christ returns. You and I can triumph, too, if we will let the Lord work in our lives to make us examples of the way in which members of the Body of Christ should act, both toward Him and toward others.

Daily Recap

At the end of each session, take time to reflect on what happened. Use these questions as a guide:

- What did you learn this week? What do you think the kids learned this week?
- Thank God for the things that happened this week—the best, the worst, the strangest and the most laughable!
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you and your children show God's love to others every day.

Materials

Optional Bible Story materials listed on page 37.

Bibles



Lab Journal



Session 5 Daily Plan Pennant



Session 5 Bible Story Poster from Bible Teaching Poster Pack



jumbo craft sticks



brick or other heavy object



markers



Tell the Bible Story

Preparation: Mark Acts 2 and Ephesians 5:2 in your Bible. (Optional: Use Post-it Notes to mark Bible.)

Place a table near where you will be leading the Story Starter activity. Place craft sticks on the table following this pattern: Lay two sticks in an X shape (photo a). Place a third craft stick under the end of the craft stick on the bottom of the X, and over the other craft stick (photo b).

Place the next craft stick so that it lies on top of the third craft stick, with its end under the other end of the craft stick on the bottom of the X (photo c).

Continue weaving craft sticks in this manner, keeping pressure on the last craft stick placed. When you have a long chain, place brick or other heavy object on the last craft stick to hold it in place.

Note: Check out our Pinterest boards to see a video on how to do this “Cobra Weave.”

is known as a chain reaction. Did you see how the craft sticks all flew up one at a time? A chain reaction is a series of events, each caused by the one before and causing the event that follows. In the same way, each craft stick was sent flying by the one before and also caused the next craft stick to fly up.

Let’s look back on what we’ve learned about God’s awesome plan. Who created everything? Volunteers respond. **God did!** Everything began with God and His great love for us. **Volunteer with “God” strip staples it into a circle.** (See “Bring the Bible Story to Life!” on page 37.) Hold up Bible and open to Acts 2 bookmark. **Today’s Bible story is from the book of Acts, which tells us about the “actions” of Jesus’ followers. We’ll hear how Jesus started a chain reaction that with His help we can keep going on and on and on—forever!**



Story Starter

I can’t believe it’s our final day at SonSpark Labs! Before you came in, I used craft sticks to make this very interesting design. Come check it out—but use your eyes only. Don’t touch any part of it. Children examine the craft-stick chain—

but make sure they don’t move the brick!

Notice the brick. It doesn’t really belong here, does it? So I think I’ll move it . . . Lift brick to set off the chain reaction and send craft sticks flying. Ask children to help you gather the craft sticks.

Wow! That was really exciting! That was what



Teacher Tip

If you have more than one rotation of children in your Bible Story Center, ask one or more volunteers to set up your craft-stick chain reaction. As you are telling the Bible story and leading children to work in their *Lab Journals*, volunteers can be setting up the chain reaction for the next group.

Bring the Bible Story to Life!

Before session begins, cut construction paper of various colors. Cut two strips for each child, with several additional strips. Some of the additional strips you will write on; others are for visitors to VBS. On separate strips, use a marker to write each of the following words or phrases: "God," "Jesus," "Jesus' friends," "Believers in Jerusalem" and the name of your church. Give each prepared strip to a different volunteer. As indicated, create a chain by using a stapler to staple each strip into a link.



The Infinite Implementation

Mark 16:15; Acts 1:1–11; 2:4,41–47; 4:32–35

Jesus Returns to Heaven

All the friends of **Jesus** were so sad the day He died.
Three days later, they couldn't quite believe that He was now alive.
And then they SAW Him—not just once—but time and time again.
For 40 days He walked and talked and ate and prayed with them.

"Go into all the world," He said. "Tell others what you know—
The price for sin has now been paid because God loves you so."

Then later, as they watched, He disappeared up into heaven.
An angel promised that one day He'd come to Earth again.

Jesus' Friends Begin to Tell the Good News

Jesus' friends in Jerusalem spent lots of days in prayer.
Then at a feast called Pentecost, with crowds from everywhere,

The Holy Spirit helped them tell the news to everyone—
They heard the good news of God's Son in their own tongue.

Three thousand people then believed the good news they'd just heard!
And they all were filled with wonder at the things that had occurred!

Jesus' few friends were so much more than you might think.
They were—in the chain of God's great plan—a most important link!

The Church in Jerusalem Grows

The good news kept on spreading, and the crowds just grew and grew—
And no one wanted to go home when feasting days were through.

Volunteer with "Jesus" strip places it through "God" link and staples it into a circle.

Volunteer with "Jesus' friends" strip adds it to chain.

They gathered in the Temple courts to learn more every day.
They met in groups from house to house to eat and talk and pray.

The **believers in Jerusalem** knew God wanted them to share
With those who'd come from far away and needed help and care.

So all of them began to give—moms, sisters, dads and brothers—
They even sold their extra things to share with one another.

And in the way they lived their lives they've showed us what to do—
We all can live a life of love as Jesus wants us to.

These very first believers were much more than you might think—
They were—in the chain of God's great plan—a most important link!

The Sharing Continues

Before long, Jesus' enemies caused trouble once again;
And lots of these believers had to leave Jerusalem (Acts 8:1).

Some went back home. Some traveled on to places far and near—
But everywhere they went they shared God's love with those who'd hear.

And so the news has spread and spread until this very day—
That's why YOU'RE hearing of God's love. He's planned it just that way!

Conclusion

You are here today because someone shared God's love with you. This church has helped you know about God's amazing plan in YOUR life.

Today's Daily Plan is "God's Plan: 2 LOVE Us 4-Ever!" God loves you!
And He wants to share that love with you forever—so that you can share it with others!.

Our Bible verse for today, Ephesians 5:2, says, "Lead a life of love, just as Christ did. He loved us. He gave himself up for us." God made us and He loves us! God wants us to know and love His Son, Jesus. And God wants us to share that amazing love with everyone we meet. Now that you know God loves you, what can you do to show your love for Him? **Allow time for children to complete chain as described at right.**



Experiencing and sharing God's love begins with becoming a member of His family. Invite children interested in knowing more about becoming members of God's family to talk with you or another leader after class. See "Leading a Child to Christ" (p.1).

Prayer

Let's thank God for His love. Lead children in repeating prayer after you, one phrase at a time. **Thank You, God, that You promise to love us forever. Help us show Your love to others every day. We love You! In Jesus' name, amen.**

Volunteer with "Believers in Jerusalem" strip adds it to chain.

Skit Option

As a fun alternative or supplement to this Bible story, ask leaders, youth helpers or other volunteers to perform "The Story Continues" Bible story skit in *ShowTime! Assemblies*.

Volunteer with "name of your church" strip adds it to the chain.

Distribute two paper strips and a marker to each child. Children write their names on one of the strips and the name of someone with whom they can share God's love on the other. Assist children with writing and spelling names as needed. Children add their strips to the chain and tell what they will do to share God's love with others.

Apply the Bible Story

Bible Story Review

To review the Bible Story, lead children to complete “So . . . Now What Do I Do?” activity on page 18 of the *Lab Journal*. As children work, ask these questions to guide conversation:

- **In today’s story, what did Jesus tell His friends to do?** (Go into the world and tell others about Him. Tell others Jesus died for their sins.)
- **What was church like for Jesus’ followers?** (Met in one another’s homes. Ate together. Prayed together. Shared everything they had.)
- **What happened when Jesus’ followers had to leave Jerusalem?** (They went all over the world. They showed God’s love, sharing with others and telling people about Jesus.)

Active Review

Children sit in a circle to play Hot Potato. Play songs from *Music & More CD*. As music plays, children pass brick (from Story Starter) or other small object (like a heart-shaped pillow) around the circle. After a few moments, stop the music. The child holding the brick answers, or chooses a volunteer to answer, one of the questions above. Repeat until all questions are answered or as time permits.

The question in today’s Q&A is “So . . . now what do I do?” After hearing our story, how would you answer that question? Volunteers respond. The Q&A answer is that “You can live as God’s child and show His love to others.” Showing God’s love is a lot like a chain reaction—it can go on and on and on! When someone does something loving for us, we can do something loving for someone else. And then that person can show love, and other people can show love. It just goes on and on!

Showing love to others is a big part of God’s plan. But the best part of God’s plan is that when we believe in His Son, Jesus, and accept His forgiveness, we are given a wonderful gift—the gift of eternal life. We can be with God, and He will help us share His love forever!

God’s Plan for Me (Life Application)

Today’s Bible verse is Ephesians 5:2. Read verse aloud from Bible. **What does this verse tell us to do?** (Lead a life of love as Jesus did.) **Jesus loves us so much that He gave up His life and died for us! But Jesus didn’t stay dead. He rose again so we can become members of God’s family.**

Children complete “Colors of Love” activity on page 20 of the *Lab Journal*. Ask questions such as these:

- **What does our verse mean when it says to “lead a life of love”?** (Show God’s love to others. Be kind and caring. Think about what others need instead of just what we want. Be like Jesus.)
- **What are some of the ways Jesus showed love to others?** (Died on the cross and rose again so that we can become members of God’s family. Healed people who were sick. Taught people about God.)
- **What is a way you can show God’s love to someone today?** (Let someone else have the first turn playing games. Share toys with brothers and sisters. Help set the table for dinner. Pray for sick friends. Tell friends the good news about Jesus’ love.)

What part of God’s plan are we talking about today? Pause for children to respond, “2 LOVE Us 4-Ever!” **All week we’ve been learning about God’s awesome plan for our lives. Today we heard how people told others the good news about God’s plan. They told others about Jesus, shared the things they had and showed love to everyone.**

Hold up Session 5 Daily Plan Pennant. **The heart we see today can remind us to show God’s love to others and that God’s love goes on FOREVER!**

I hope you had a great time at SonSpark Labs, discovering God’s plan is all about Jesus—GP4U = J!