

My Bible Leader Leaflet



Exploring Luther's Small Catechism

This course is recommended for Grades 3-4.

INTRODUCTION

This course is designed to introduce third and fourth graders to the Bible, God's Word. The first session introduces the Bible as God's story. The second session explores the promises made in the Old Testament, while the third session shows how these promises were kept in the New Testament through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The last session reveals that Christians today are part of this story. We continue to live out our lives as witnesses to the good news of God's love. In addition, each session includes activities to help your learners grow in their skills in using their Bibles.

The goals of this course are reflected in the Learning Focus sentences for each session. The stories, Bible study, and session activities are designed to help you develop that one focus with your students.

THE LEARNERS

Third and fourth graders are anxious to practice new reading, writing, and communication skills, and they respond well to games, puzzles, role play, and other fun learning experiences. Be conscious of the varied abilities of your students. Blend reading activities with those that are more active. Students this age enjoy working with others. Make your class a model of a caring and active community of faith.

THE LEARNING SETTING

Create a positive, fun, and inviting atmosphere for learning. Arrive at the room early to make sure it is ready. Decorate walls and bulletin boards, leaving space to display projects made during this course.

The ideal class area provides flexibility for children to sit at tables and move into another area for games and other creative activities. Be creative in using the space you have. Make arrangements to occasionally move to large areas for games or noisy activities.

GETTING READY

Prepare each session carefully. Read the materials completely and select the response activities that will fit in your time and space. Make the session fit you and your learners.

In connection with giving third graders their first Bibles, some churches plan for parents and children to take this course on the Bible. The activities in this course can be done by parents and children working together. If parents will be joining your class, be sure to have a space large enough for all participants to work at tables. Plan for small working groups that include at least two families and children who attend without parents. Be sensitive to keeping a balance between adults and children in responses and discussion.

Pray before you teach. "Lord give me the wisdom to share from my heart the faith you have given to me. Amen."

SESSION 1

GOD'S STORY OF LOVE

LEARNING FOCUS

The Bible is God's inspired Word. It is a special collection of stories that reveals God's love for all people.

BACKGROUND

The Bible is a collection of books that records the mighty acts of the living God and the relationship between God, creation, and human beings. Through it, God's people are called to faith and helped to live according to God's will. The Bible testifies that God is the source of all life, including the "new life" that comes in Baptism and "eternal life" that is given through God's Son, Jesus Christ. This truth is expressed in many ways within the Bible: facts, statistics, story, parable, poetry, hymns, visions, letters, laws, and sermons. By studying the Bible, God's people discover how God continues to love, care for, and work in the lives of people today, just as in the days of long ago.

Many third and fourth graders will be familiar with some Bible stories and verses heard in their homes, Sunday School, and worship. In many churches, third graders receive their own Bibles from the congregation. Encourage them to bring their Bibles to class during this study. Create an enthusiasm and joy in your students as they each discover the richness of God's Word for their own lives of faith and discipleship.

Background information adapted from "Understanding the Bible" (Augsburg Fortress, 1990).

HEART OF THE LEARNING

These activities form the heart of the session and will take about 45 minutes to complete.

Preparation: Have available Bibles, pencils, markers and/or crayons, transparent tape, and a Learner Resource (LR) for each student.

Getting Started

Preparation: Cut several 1" by 6" strips of colored construction paper for each person.

- Match each student with a partner, preferably someone they do not know well. Have them face each other and share one unique thing about themselves (*a hobby, favorite book, personality trait*). Give the students some examples. Ask them to write their partner's name on a strip of construction paper. Tape the strips together to begin a paper chain. You will add to this each session.
- Read the story, "A Special Gift," beginning on page 2 (LR). Invite the students to name their favorite Bible stories.
- Discuss how to find a Bible reference, using page 3 (LR). Following the chart step-by-step, practice this skill as a class, using the verses listed. Read "One Book—Many Stories."

The Story Begins

- Turn to "The Story Begins" on pages 4 and 5 (LR) and have the students work as partners to fill in the missing names.
- Tell how God was present in each person's story, inviting learners to add a few details for each story.
- Have volunteers add a link to your class paper chain for each biblical person listed on the time line, commenting on how we are connected with these persons because we, too, are God's people.

Bible Explorers

- Ask volunteers to read aloud "Bible Explorers" on page 6 (LR). Have the students look at their Bibles and discover the answers to the questions. (*Answers: 2, 39, 27, 66.*) Discuss the paragraphs on the Hebrew language on page 7, then have the students complete the activity (LR). (*Answer: TNWTNLLHSDRHPHMSMDRLHT.*)

Time for Prayer

- Read the quote from Martin Luther on page 7 (LR). Remind learners that Luther was a church leader who lived about 500 years ago. He taught that it was important for Christians of all ages to know God's word in the Bible. Lutheran churches around the world take their name from Martin Luther.
- Read together the verse from Deuteronomy on page 7 (LR). Ask the students to think of how they can "put these words ... in [their] heart and soul." (*Share ideas: reading the Bible, having family devotions, worship; attending Sunday school, VBS, church choir, church camp; listening and sharing our faith by our actions.*) Close with the prayer.

RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

Choose from these activities to complete your session as time allows.

Scrolls

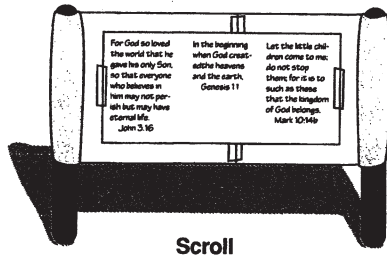
Preparation: Cut 8½" by 11" paper in half. Each student will need 2 of these 4¼" x 11" sheets. Have craft sticks, glue, scissors, ribbon, markers, and transparent tape on hand. Hand letter several familiar Bible passages (such as John 3:16; Genesis 1:1, Psalm 23:1, Mark 10:14b) and make copies for the students to cut out and tape to their scrolls. Print them in vertical

columns, illustrating how stories were written in vertical columns.

- Show the students how to tape two sheets of paper together to make one long (22") piece. Glue a craft stick at each end.

Cut out and tape several Bible passages to the scroll.

- Roll up carefully from each end. Tie together with a ribbon. Use a bow rather than a knot so you can untie your scroll and read it.



Scroll

Bible Bookmarks

Preparation: Cut clear self-adhesive plastic into 2½" x 18" strips. Keep the backing in place. Fold and crease each strip in half. Have yarn, a paper punch, scissors, and a variety of colors of construction paper available.

- Give each student one strip of the self-adhesive plastic. Tell them it is important to keep the backing paper on until you tell them when and how to remove it.
- Cut out letters for their name and other symbols or shapes from colored construction paper.
- Arrange the items on the strip to make sure they will fit on just one half of it.
- Lay the strip with the backing facing up and carefully remove the backing on half of the strip. Slowly place the items on the 9" sticky section.
- Have the students work as partners for the next step. One student should grasp the plastic strip at the crease and smooth the two pieces together as the other student removes the backing.
- Punch a hole about ½" down from the fold. Loop several lengths of yarn together. Place the loop in the hole and thread the yarn back through the loop. Tie a knot near the end to create the tassel.



Bible Bookmark

Toss and Tell

Preparation: Print nine session-review statements on sheets of construction paper, one per sheet. For example, "Name three Bible people," "Number of books in the Old Testament," "Name two girls in our class," or "Name four books of the Bible."

- Tape the sheets together, three across in three rows, making a game board. Have several bean bags ready. Tape the game board on the floor. Divide the students into two teams. Have one team member stand at a starting line and toss the bean bag. The team members work together to answer the question. Continue alternating teams until all the questions have been answered.
- Use this game throughout this course, adding review questions from each session.



SESSION 2

A PROMISE MADE

LEARNING FOCUS

The Old Testament reveals God's promises and God's faithfulness to those promises in the lives of the people of Israel.

BACKGROUND

The first five books of the Old Testament were constructed from four major writings. These sources, written from about 950 B.C. to 500 B.C., told the story of God's faithfulness to the people of Israel. The historical narratives continued the stories of God's faithfulness as the people, their kings, and their leaders struggled to remain faithful to God. When enemies finally conquered the nation, the prophets spoke on God's behalf, reminding them again of God's faithfulness and urging them to repent and once again turn to God and remember the promises God made.

More important than the details of these stories is their significance. Help your third and fourth graders see that the writers of the Old Testament sought to answer these questions, just as we seek to answer them today in our own lives: *Who is this God who loves me and calls me "special"? How does God's presence show in my daily life? What does God promise for my future? How do I live as a special child of God?*

HEART OF THE LEARNING

These activities form the heart of the session and will take about 45 minutes to complete.

Preparation: Have Bibles, pencils, markers and/or crayons, transparent tape, 1" x 6" strips of colored construction paper, and a Learner Resource (LR) for each student.

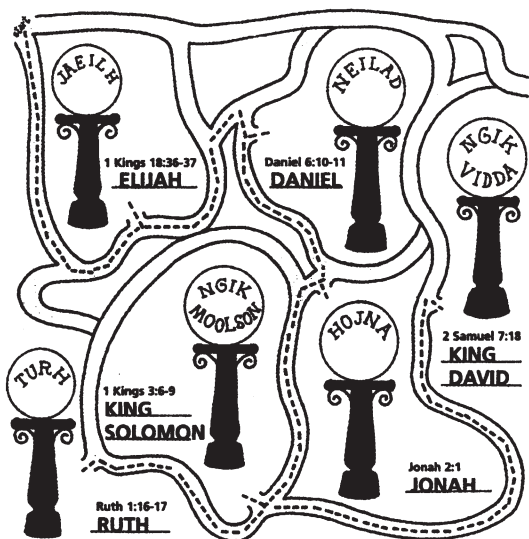
Getting Started

Preparation: Print the words to Psalm 119:105 on index cards, one word per card.

- Shuffle the index cards. Give each student one or more cards. Invite the students to discover a message about God's Word by putting the cards in the correct order. Have the students line up in the correct order, or place the cards on a table.
- Ask the students to find Psalm 119:105 in their Bibles. Discuss why light is important.
- Turn to "A Light to Guide Me" on page 8 (LR) and have the students complete the activity. Share examples of how God's Word can be a lamp or a light in our lives today.

The Story Continues ...

- Ask the students to complete "The Story Continues ..." maze on page 9 (LR).



Possible Answer for "The Story Continues ..." Maze

- Review what the students may know about each person, as time permits.
- Have students make paper links for each of the Bible persons and add them to the chain you started in Session 1.

Bible Explorers

- Turn to "Bible Explorers" on pages 10 and 11 (LR). Read the paragraphs on page 10 and then allow the students time to complete the activities on pages 10-11. Ask appropriate questions for review.

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Answers for "The Writings" on page 11

A Psalm for Everyone

- Ask several volunteers to read "A Psalm for Everyone" on page 12 (LR). Look up and read aloud the Psalms texts listed and discuss what feelings the writers may have had when writing the psalm. Allow time for students to add illustrations to their pages.
- Read the words of Martin Luther on page 13 (LR).
- Invite the students to read Psalm 23 and draw a picture reflecting the words of Psalm 23.

Time for Prayer

- Look at "Time for Prayer" on page 13 (LR). Have small groups of students write one or two additional sentences to the psalm.
- Close by praying the psalm together, asking each student in turn to add their sentences.

RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

Choose from these activities to complete your session as time allows.

Circles of Light

Preparation: Cut 6" circles of waxed paper (two for each student), using a paper plate as a pattern. Bring a variety of colored tissue paper, scissors, paper towel, an iron, a paper punch, and yarn or ribbon.

- Place one circle of paper, waxed side up, on a piece of paper toweling on the table.
- Tear or cut tissue paper into symbols of light—a sun, candle, candlestick, lantern, or flashlight.

- Lay the tissue paper symbols on top of the waxed paper circle.
- Cover with the second circle. Make sure the design is at least ¼" in from the edges. Cover with another piece of paper toweling.
- Press carefully with a warm iron until the circles are sealed together.
- Punch a hole and thread ribbon or yarn to make a hanger. Hang in a window to remember that God's Word is indeed a light.

Backward Crossword

Preparation: Bring a sheet or two of graph paper for each student. Have pencils available. Have the students create this backward crossword puzzle as a review of the books of the Old Testament.

- Ask them to print the word *Lamentations* or *Ecclesiastes* in the center of the graph paper. They may go vertically or horizontally, printing one letter in each square.
- Add names of the books of the Old Testament to the puzzle, using the table of contents in the Bibles or pages 10 and 11 in the Learner Resource (LR).
- Remind them how a crossword puzzle works by connecting mutual letters. See the example above.
- Challenge them to see how many books they can include in their puzzle.

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Example for "Backward Crossword"

Psalms 104

Preparation: Tape a long sheet of mural paper to a table top or to a wall. With a pencil, lightly mark off four sections. Have markers, crayons or pastels available.

- Divide the students into groups of two or three.
- Assign each group part of Psalm 104 to illustrate on the mural. For example: Group 1—Psalm 104:1-4; Group 2—Psalm 104:5-9; Group 3—Psalm 104:10-13; Group 4—Psalm 104:14-18.
- Add more verses from Psalm 104 if you have a large class, such as verses 19-23 and 24-26.



SESSION 3

A PROMISE KEPT

LEARNING FOCUS

The New Testament tells the story of Jesus, the Messiah, who came to fulfill God's promises of love and forgiveness to all people.

BACKGROUND

For the first Christians there was no New Testament. It had yet to be written. But Christians had new stories to tell, stories unlike any that had been told before. A wondrous event had occurred. The Messiah, so often promised in the Old Testament, had arrived.

A letter written by the apostle Paul to the church at Thessalonica is probably the oldest writing in the New Testament. As Paul and others wrote letters to these new churches, they were copied and circulated to other Christians. These letters, along with the Gospel writings, make up most of the New Testament.

Help your third and fourth graders recognize that these early Christians wanted to share their good news about Jesus with others. They can rejoice that men and women wrote down the stories and that God's people can read them today.

HEART OF THE LEARNING

These activities form the heart of the session and will take about 45 minutes to complete.

Preparation: Have available Bibles, pencils, markers and/or crayons, transparent tape, 1" x 6" strips of construction paper, and a Learner Resource (LR) for each student.

Getting Started

- Assign each student one of the following Bible passages: Matthew 2:1-11; John 2:1-11; Luke 3:21-22; Mark 14:22-28; Mark 1:14-20; Matthew 28:1-8; John 12:12-16; Luke 8:22-25.
- Explain that these Bible stories will help begin the study of the New Testament, the story of Jesus.

- Ask the students to read their passage and decide which of the symbols on page 14 (LR) best fits their story about Jesus.
- Invite each student to briefly share the story in their own words. Have the students print the Bible references in the symbol each story represents.

The Story Continues ...

- Read the opening paragraph to “The Story Continues ...” on page 15 (LR). Have the students complete the activity by matching Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah to events in Jesus’ life.

Bible Explorers

- Ask several volunteers to read “Bible Explorers” on page 16 (LR). Work together to discover the places on the map where Jesus’ followers received letters. Point out the New Testament bookshelf on page 18 as a helpful clue. (*Answers: Thessalonica, Ephesus, Galatia, Rome, Corinth, Philippi, Colossae.*) Read page 17 (LR) and then give the students time to unscramble the tangleboxes to find the names of the four Gospel writers. (*Answers: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.*)
- Read the paragraphs on page 18 (LR). Talk about the cartoon together. How does it tell the story of Jesus’ death and resurrection? Invite the students to share ways they, too, can tell the story of Jesus to family and friends.
- Review the meaning of the word *gospel*, reading aloud the Luther quote on page 19 (LR). Give the students time to read about the New Testament on page 19 (LR). Add links to the paper chain you started in Session 1, one each for the people in today’s session who became Jesus’ followers. (*Christians in Corinth, Christians in Rome, and so forth.*)

Time for Prayer

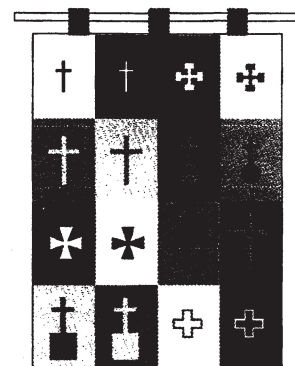
Close by praying together the Lord’s Prayer, as found in “Time for Prayer” on page 19 (LR).

RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

Choose from these activities to complete your session as time allows.

Cross Banner

Preparation: Gather a variety of colors of 9" x 12" construction paper. Have scissors, transparent tape, glue, and one 36" pencil-size dowel for each student. A book of symbols and crosses would be helpful. Check your church library.



Cross Banner

- Cut a cross from a sheet of construction paper.
- Glue to a contrasting sheet of construction paper.
- Cut a cross from the same contrasting color, and glue to a sheet of the first color.
- Continue making 16 of these “mirror images” using a variety of crosses.
- Turn the 16 sheets face down in four rows of four. Be sure the mirror images are next to each other.
- Tape the sheets together. Tape three or four narrow strips of construction paper to the top of the banner to use as a hanger. Slip the dowel in place.

Balloon Bounce 'n Pounce

Preparation: Print books of the Bible on slips of paper. Roll each slip and place it inside a balloon. Blow up the balloon and tie shut. Have at least two balloons per student. Put in a basket or cardboard box. Cut a sheet of poster board in half. Make two signs, one “Old Testament,” the other “New Testament.” Place signs in two spots in your room. Mark a starting line on the floor with masking tape. Have masking tape available.

- Ask the students to line up behind the starting line. Place the basket at the other end of the room.
- Tell the first person to run to the box, pick up a balloon and “bounce” it in the air back to the starting line without holding it or letting it touch the floor.
- Pop the balloon by pouncing or sitting on it and read the Bible book printed on the slip of paper.
- Go to the correct sign. Tape the slip to the sign and return to the end of the line.
- When the student returns to the end of the line, the next one in line repeats the same procedure.

Puppet Plays

Preparation: Gather craft sticks, construction paper, yarn, glue, and markers or crayons. Cut several three-inch circles out of light cardboard.

- Invite the students to choose one of the stories of Jesus they read about in today's session. Make puppets to tell the story.
- Cut puppet faces using a cardboard circle as a pattern.
- Draw the features using markers or crayons. Add yarn for hair. Glue each face to the end of a craft stick.
- Make a puppet for each character in the story.
- Practice telling the story to others in their class. Encourage them to share their stories with friends.



SESSION 4

LIVING THE PROMISE

LEARNING FOCUS

God's people today continue to share the good news of God's promises of love and forgiveness, just as the first followers did.

BACKGROUND

In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus gave his disciples the command to go into the world and make disciples. In the Acts of the Apostles, Jesus explained that they would become witnesses to the ends of the earth.

The followers of Jesus took on this task from the very beginning. Their first missionary activities were faithfully recorded in the book of Acts. This book and the book of Revelation conclude this brief look at the biblical canon.

The early church began with the 39 sacred writings of the Old Testament. Soon the letters of Paul and church leaders were added, as well as the four Gospels. It took several centuries and many arguments before church leaders decided which books would become part of the Bible. Even today, several major church bodies include seven other books, known as the Apocrypha.

The significance of this session for third and fourth graders is that they, too, have been called to become witnesses to Jesus. Help them discover ways in which they can share the story of Jesus that they read in their Bibles with others.

HEART OF THE LEARNING

These activities form the heart of the session and will take about 45 minutes to complete.

Preparation: Have available Bibles, pencils, markers and/or crayons, tape or pins, and a Learner Resource (LR) for each student. Bring a number of different translations of the Bible to class.

GETTING STARTED

Preparation: Cut pictures from magazines, or draw, two each of the following: dogs, cats, birds, other animals, flowers. Glue each item to a small square of paper.

- Pin or tape one square on each student's back without letting him or her see it.
- Tell learners to find out what they are by showing their backs to another student and asking "yes" and "no" questions. After learning their own identity, they should look for the person who has the matching picture—their partner.
- Explain that today they will discover how they are partners with Jesus in sharing the gospel.
- Have several volunteers read aloud "The Junior Saints Adventure, Part 1" on page 20 (LR). Give the students time to complete the activity. (*Answer: Go therefore and make disciples. Matthew 28:19*)

The Story Continues ...

- Ask several students to read "The Story Continues ..." on page 21 (LR). Role-play the story of Paul's conversion in Acts 9:1-19. Have the students complete the puzzle activity. (*Answer: witnesses*)
- Read "The Junior Saints Adventure, Part 2" on page 22 (LR). Read and discuss the passages from Acts, then discuss the questions.
- Read "The Story Continues ..." on page 23 (LR) and see why the fish is an important Christian symbol.
- Ask several volunteers to read "The Junior Saints Adventure, Part 3. Ask, "What part of the adventure do you think would have been most fun?"

Bible Explorers

- Invite several students to read "Bible Explorers" on page 24 (LR). Using the Bibles you have brought, choose a familiar verse such as John 3:16 and have students compare English translations. If you are able to read in another language, read the verse in that language as well.

Time for Prayer

- Read aloud in “Time for Prayer” on page 24 (LR). As a class, list some of the things that you each would include in a letter to a class who was just beginning to learn about God, Jesus, and the Bible. Allow a few minutes for each learner to write a short letter in the space provided.
- Gather in a circle, holding the paper chain you have created. Give thanks that we are all linked together as God’s people. Close with the prayer.

RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

Choose from these activities to complete your session as time allows.

Telling the Story

Preparation: Cut yellow, purple, red, white, and green construction paper in half, crosswise, one half-sheet of each color per student. Bring markers, several paper punches, and colored yarn.

- Give each student one half-sheet of each color. Stack the colors in this order. Yellow on top, then purple, red, white and green is last.
- Punch two holes on the left edge of the stack. Tie yarn in each hole to hold the pages together.
- Draw a crown on the yellow sheet as a symbol for the gift of eternal life.
- Draw a heart on the purple sheet to remind us that sin in our hearts separates us from God, other people, and the world God has created.
- Draw a cross on the red sheet to remember that God sent Jesus to bring us forgiveness through his blood shed on the cross.
- Draw a dove or a shell on the white sheet to remind us that in Baptism God washes away our sins and gives us the Holy Spirit to guide us in our lives.
- Draw a leaf on the green sheet to remind us of our new life as God’s people.
- Invite the students to use these booklets to tell the story of Jesus to someone.

Paper Plate Review

Preparation: Have available four heavy-weight paper plates and two colors of crayons or markers.

- Have the students form two teams by standing in a circle, numbering off by twos, and remaining in their original places in the circle. Give all the “ones”

red crayons or markers and all the “twos” blue crayons or markers.

- Send the plates, frisbee-style, from student to student. Have several going at once, if you like.
- Explain that the students must write quickly the name of one book in the New Testament on the paper plate each time they catch it, then toss it to someone else. On each plate, names of books cannot be repeated.
- Encourage teammates to help each other. Allow learners to use their Bibles for help, if they like.
- After five minutes, gather the plates and count the number of books written in red and the number in blue. Lead a group cheer for the team with the most names written.

Good News Mobile

Preparation: Bring newspapers, construction paper, scissors, yarn, stapler, staples, and wire coat hangers.

- Make stuffed fish as a reminder we are also called to be fishers of people and share the good news.
- Cut two matching fish shapes from construction paper.
- Staple the two shapes together, leaving an opening in the top.
- Tear strips of newspaper.
- Crumble the strips and stuff them into the fish.
- When the fish is stuffed, add a loop of yarn as a hanger and then staple shut.
- Make several fish of different sizes, colors, and shapes. Stuff in the same way.
- Tie varying lengths of yarn on the wire hanger. Loop each yarn through the hanger of one fish.

My Bible Leader Leaflet

This Leader Leaflet has a corresponding Learner Resource.

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