

My Book about Jesus Leader Leaflet



Exploring Luther's Small Catechism

This course is recommended for Prekindergarten/Kindergarten.

INTRODUCTION

This course is designed to introduce four- and five-year-old learners to Jesus. It will help the children:

- feel included among those Jesus loves;
- become familiar with Jesus and his story;
- begin to participate in activities that define the Christian family and community.

Many of the children in the class will have already heard and learned about Jesus. Those who attend Sunday school regularly are no doubt familiar with the story of Jesus' birth as well as other events in Jesus' life. For some children, however, this course may be their first introduction to Jesus.

Throughout the course Jesus is referred to as a loving, caring shepherd. The image of Jesus the shepherd is a powerful one for children. To begin with, children may not be familiar with the ways of sheep and shepherds. But as the course progresses, they will learn more about shepherds' devotion to their sheep and concrete things shepherds do to tend their sheep. Those in your group will discover they can trust Jesus to love and care for them much as sheep trust their shepherd to love and care for them.

THE LEARNERS

Most children who are four and five years old have good verbal skills, enabling them to put their thoughts and ideas into words. They are becoming aware of and sensitive to the feelings and attitudes of others; they can play and work cooperatively with partners and in groups. Their small muscle skills are developing, too, and they enjoy cutting and gluing, coloring, drawing, and creating in many ways.

THE LEARNING SETTING

Learning environments for young children need to be colorful, functional, and designed for a variety of activities. Try to set aside a quiet corner for reading and group discussions; provide a large table or other

surface on which the children can work at arts, crafts, and food preparation; look for an open space for active games.

SESSION 1

JESUS IS A FRIEND

LEARNING FOCUS

Children discover that Jesus loves them and is their friend.

BACKGROUND

Four- and five-year-olds are becoming more aware of and interested in friends. They enjoy talking and socializing, and they often have a "best friend." In this session the children will begin to understand that Jesus is their friend too. The activities are planned to help the children understand that Jesus loves them and is a special friend who always cares about them.

Today the children will hear about a time when Jesus overruled the objections of his disciples and invited children to come to him. Jesus' words and actions made it clear that he is a special friend to children.

As you work with children, keep in mind that abilities and skills vary significantly among children this age. Some are just beginning to be able to cut, color, and complete other small muscle tasks. Give help as needed, and plan activities so all children will feel loved and secure in their friendship with Jesus.

HEART OF THE LEARNING

Find a Friend

- Greet children as they arrive and invite them by name to join the group. Encourage the children to tell about activities they like to do with their friends. Ask them if they like to play games with friends.
- Invite the children to stand and play a singing game. Sing the following song, to the tune of "London Bridge," and encourage the children to do the actions suggested:

Find a friend and smile at him,
Smile at her, smile at him.
Find a friend and smile at her,
Now clap together.
- Sing additional stanzas, substituting phrases such as "shake her hand" or "give a hug" for "smile at him." You may also want to try other actions in place of clapping, such as jumping or hopping.

My Friend, Jesus

Preparation: Have the My Book about Jesus Learner Resources (LR) and crayons or markers ready.

- Distribute the learner resources and invite the children to look through them. Read the title aloud; then print each child's name on page 1. Encourage those who know how to print their own names.
- With the children, look at and talk about the pictures of friends on pages 2 and 3. Invite the children to name their friends. Help each child trace the dashed lines of the letters at the bottom of page 3 to find out that Jesus is their friend too. Say the name "Jesus" aloud with the children.

Jesus Loves Children

- Point out the illustration on page 4 (LR) and ask the children to tell what they know about sheep and shepherds. Lead them to discover ways that shepherds protect and care for their sheep, such as helping them find food and keeping them safe from dangerous animals.
- Read page 4 aloud to the children.
- Point on page 5 to the space next to Jesus. Suggest that the children draw themselves so they are standing next to their friend Jesus.
- Close with a prayer such as this: "Dear Jesus, I'm so glad you're my friend. Thank you for loving me. Amen." Pause after each phrase, and encourage the children to repeat the words.

RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

Feelings

Preparation: Have crayons or markers available.

- Read the sentences at the top of page 6 (LR).
- Ask questions to encourage discussion about what is happening in the first picture. "What happened to the truck? How do you feel when a toy breaks? What does your face look like?"
- Have the children draw a face in the circle by the picture to show how they think that child feels.
- Talk about each situation in a similar way, and ask the children to fill in a smile or frown in the face by each picture.
- Reassure the children that Jesus is a friend who loves them all the time, whether they are happy, sad, afraid, excited, or however they are feeling.

Fun with Friends

Preparation: Set out several activity options such as playdough, blocks, paper and crayons or markers, or scissors, paper, and glue sticks.

- Encourage each child to find a partner, and then choose an activity and work together. If there is an uneven number of children, choose a child to be your partner.
- Talk with the children as they work. Comment on what each pair is doing and how the partners are playing together. Say, "It's fun to do things with a friend, isn't it?"
- Remind the children that Jesus is their friend too.

Jesus Loves Me

Preparation: Collect and cut into small pieces a variety of materials such as ribbon, lace, gift wrap, foil, and fabric. Have stickers, crayons or markers, and glue sticks available.

- Ask each child to put his or her index finger on the number 1 on page 7 (LR). Then read aloud the numbers from 1 to 10 as the children move their fingers from number to number, tracing the outline.
- Set out crayons or markers so children can trace the heart with their favorite color.
- When the hearts are completed, help the children read the rebus message: “My friend Jesus loves ME!”
- Invite the children to decorate the heart by coloring it or attaching stickers or scraps of ribbon, lace, gift wrap, foil, fabric, or other materials.
- Remind the children that Jesus is their friend. Close by singing “Jesus Loves Me, This I Know” together. The song is found in Songs for Sunday School: Music Book, Lyrics Book, and Song CD.



SESSION 2

JESUS IS A TEACHER

LEARNING FOCUS

Children find out that Jesus taught about God’s love.

BACKGROUND

Young children learn from many teachers. They learn by listening and observing, by talking and asking questions, by watching and imitating the actions of others, by doing and exploring. Everyone a child comes in contact with is a potential teacher.

Jesus was a great teacher. Throughout his ministry, Jesus taught that God loves and cares for all people—the poor as well as the rich, the sick as well as the healthy, the outcasts as well as the powerful.

Jesus taught about God’s love by telling about a shepherd’s love for his sheep, and by pointing out how well God provides for birds and flowers. But Jesus said that people are much more important to God than birds or flowers. From Jesus we learn to trust God to always love us and give us what we need.

In the last session, the children learned to look to Jesus as a friend who loves them and always cares about them. In this session, the children will find out that Jesus teaches them about God’s love.

HEART OF THE LEARNING

Show Me How

Preparation: Have 9" x 12" red construction paper, crayons, and blunt scissors ready.

- Greet the children as they arrive and let them know you’re glad to see them.
- Have the first children who come in each fold a piece of construction paper in half. Show how to start at the fold to draw half of a heart shape; then cut out the heart.
- As others arrive, help those who have already made hearts show the newcomers how to do it.
- Thank the children for teaching one another to make hearts. Say, “Hearts remind us of God’s love.”

What Can You Do?

Preparation: Have the My Book about Jesus Learner Resources (LR) available. Copy the game card sheet on page 8 of this leaflet for each child, cut into individual cards, and put each set of cards in an envelope marked with the child’s name. Provide buttons or other small objects for markers.

- Organize the children in small groups to play the game on pages 8 and 9 (LR).
- Explain how to play the game. (See game instructions on page 9 of the learner resource.)
- Encourage the children to talk about things they have learned to do and to name the people who taught them to do those things. Ask the children to tell what they have taught others too.

Jesus Teaches Us

Preparation: Have available the learner resources and chart paper and a marker or a chalkboard and chalk.

- Call the children together and help them find page 10 (LR).
- Remind the children that they played a game about things they have learned and people who taught them. Say, “Jesus is a teacher too. Jesus teaches us about God’s love.”
- Read page 10 aloud.

- Tell the children that God loves them and gives them what they need too. Encourage them to name things they need and things God gives them. Draw simple outlines on chart paper or a chalkboard of things the children mention.
- Teach the children the “God’s Love” action verse at the bottom of page 10. Repeat the verse together.
- Invite the children to join in singing a song to celebrate God’s love. You may wish to sing “God Is So Good” or “God Loves Us,” both found in the Songs for Sunday School: Music Book, Lyrics Book, and Song CD, or another song the children know.

RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

Jesus Teaches that God Loves Us

Preparation: Gather stickers or magazine cutouts of people, food, homes, clothing, and other items that show God’s love. Have crayons or markers, scissors, and glue sticks available.

- Remind the children that Jesus teaches that God loves us and gives us what we need.
- Ask the children to turn to page 11 (LR) and identify the shapes they see on the page. Explain that hearts help us remember God’s love.
- Invite the children to add stickers, glue cutouts, or draw pictures on page 11 showing things they need and things God gives them. Let the children arrange their pictures—some may attach their pictures inside the heart shapes while others may glue them on randomly, covering the hearts. They may wish to add the heart cutouts they made too.

Ants on a Log

Preparation: Check with families about food allergies the children may have before serving these or any foods. Gather the ingredients and utensils for the recipe on page 12 (LR). Have self-sealing plastic bags available.

- With the children, look at the picture recipe for “Ants on a Log” on page 12 (LR). Demonstrate how to do each step in the recipe.
- Ask the children to wash their hands, and then work with partners to prepare the celery logs. Ask each pair to make some to eat and some to share.
- Lead the children in a prayer of thanks for God’s love or a familiar table grace before eating.

- Help each child place some celery logs in a self-sealing plastic bag to take home and share. Help the children understand that when we share with others, we share God’s love.

Teach Me

Preparation: Invite a guest to visit the class. In advance, tell your guest that you would like him or her to teach the children a prayer or a song about Jesus, or to read a children’s storybook about Jesus.

- Welcome and introduce your guest to the children.
- Ask your guest to tell the children about some of the people who taught him or her about Jesus. Encourage the children to tell about people who have taught them too. Say, “We learn from people who teach us, and Jesus is a teacher too.”
- Ask your guest to read to the children or to teach them the song or prayer he or she has prepared.
- Close by repeating the guest’s song or prayer, or by singing a familiar song about Jesus.



SESSION 3

JESUS IS A HELPER

LEARNING FOCUS

Children explore ways Jesus helped people.

BACKGROUND

In the first two sessions, children learned about Jesus as a friend and a teacher. In today’s session, the children will find out that Jesus is a helper too. As the children hear about a time when Jesus fed a crowd of hungry people, they will discover that Jesus recognized and responded to people’s physical needs as well as spiritual needs.

Around the ages of four and five, children grow in their awareness of the feelings and needs of others. They become more generous and willing to share their toys and other possessions. At the same time, they develop abilities and skills that enable them to give help to those who need it.

Four- and five-year-olds can follow Jesus’ example and help those around them. They can make cards or

simple gifts for people who are sick or need cheering up, they can help collect food for a community food shelf, and they can help at home by making their beds and putting away toys. Like Jesus, they can be helpers.

HEART OF THE LEARNING

Jobs at Home

- Greet each child and ask, "How do you help at home? What jobs do you do to help your family?"
- Gather the children and sing "The Mulberry Bush" with stanzas like the following. Pantomime the ways to help that the children mentioned. For example, pretend to water flowers with a sprinkling can as you sing:

This is the way we water the flowers,
Water the flowers, water the flowers.
This is the way we water the flowers
So early in the morning.

Ways to Help

Preparation: Have the My Book about Jesus Learner Resources (LR) available.

- Distribute the learner resources and point out the small pictures on page 13. Explain that the pictures take the place of some words in each story.
- Help the children identify words that pictures replace in each story, and then read the stories aloud. Pause at each picture so the children can supply the word. Allow time for the children to suggest ways to help in each situation.

Jesus Loved and Helped

Preparation: Have crayons and the learner resources available.

- Point out the sheep at the bottom of page 14 (LR). With the children, explore ways that a shepherd might help the sheep he or she is caring for. Ideas include finding a comfortable place for the sheep to sleep, leading the sheep to water, and protecting the sheep from dangerous animals.
- Ask the children to move their index fingers along the path through the maze from the shepherd to the sheep. Then suggest that they color the path.
- Read page 14 aloud. Ask the children to suggest ways they think Jesus is a shepherd who loves and helps them.

- Read page 15 aloud as the children look at the pictures. Invite them to color the baskets at the bottom of the page.

I'm a Helper Too

Preparation: Prepare finger puppets by cutting 2" x 4" construction paper strips. Fold each strip in half to be 2" x 2" and staple together along the sides, leaving the bottom open. Have crayons or markers available.

- Read page 16 (LR) aloud. Talk with the children about things they have done for others. Ask, "Have you ever shared food with someone who was hungry? Have you ever visited someone who was sick?"
- Invite the children to draw faces on the puppets.
- Ask pairs of children to use their puppets to act out ways to help and share with others. Suggest they look at the pictures on page 16 for ideas.
- Close with a prayer thanking God for Jesus, and asking for help to do things for others.

RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

Match the Pictures

Preparation: Have available the learner resource, a crayon, and a sheet of paper for each child.

- Use a sheet of paper to show how to cover page 17 (LR) so only the pictures on the left are showing.
- Talk together about the pictures. Ask, "How could you help the baby smile instead of cry? Who needs help in this picture?" Encourage the children to think of as many ways as possible to help in each situation.
- Have the children remove the paper from their pages and draw lines between the pictures on the left and the ways to help on the right.
- Teach the words and actions for the verse on page 18. Repeat the verse, substituting other ways of helping such as setting the table or making the bed.

Place Mat Gifts

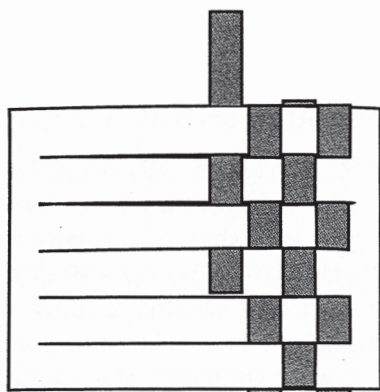
Preparation: For each child, cut 9" x 12" colored paper into 1" x 12" strips. Fold a contrasting color of 9" x 12" paper in half, and cut slits from the fold across the paper, stopping 1" from the edge. You may wish to arrange to deliver the place mats to a care facility.

- Invite the children to make place mat gifts for their families or for residents of a care facility.

- Set out the paper strips and the open sheets with slits. Demonstrate how to weave the paper strips in and out of the slits. Help the children as needed as they work on their place mats.



Place Mat



Following Jesus

Preparation: Have the learner resources available, as well as an instant-developing camera, film, and double-stick tape, if possible, or set out crayons or markers.

- Ask questions to help the children recall what Jesus said and how he helped people. Ask, “What did Jesus do when the people were hungry? How does Jesus want us to help?”
- Take an instant-developing picture of each child and tape it in the picture frame on page 19 (LR). If you don’t have an instant-developing camera, ask each child to draw a picture of herself or himself inside the picture frame.
- Read aloud the sentences on the page. Ask each child to tell about a way he or she plans to help others, and print what the child says on page 19.
- Pray a prayer of thanks for Jesus’ help and love.



SESSION 4

JESUS IS GOD’S SON, OUR SAVIOR

LEARNING FOCUS

Children begin to understand that through Jesus—his words, his actions, his life and death—we are part of God’s family forever.

BACKGROUND

Jesus is a friend, a teacher, and a helper. But he is much more than that—Jesus is God’s Son, our Savior. Today’s session presents some of the important events in Jesus’ life and helps children understand how special Jesus is.

Although children this age are too young to comprehend the significance of Jesus’ death and resurrection, they can celebrate the awesome gift of God’s Son, Jesus. They can remember Jesus and be happy because Jesus is alive and with them always.

In this session children are introduced to the First and Second Articles of the Apostles’ Creed. Children who worship regularly with their families may be used to hearing, and even saying, parts of the Apostles’ Creed. For other children, this may be their first introduction to the creed.

Children will take their learner resources home at the end of the session. Send home with each child a set of the cards for the game on pages 8 and 9 too. Encourage the children to share the books, do the activities, and read the stories at home with family members and friends.

HEART OF THE LEARNING

Remember Christmas

Preparation: Gather unbreakable Christmas ornaments and decorations to display.

- Welcome the children and point out the Christmas items. Invite the children to handle and explore them.
- Ask, “How does your family celebrate Christmas?” Tell about some of your Christmas customs too.
- Say, “Something amazing happened on Christmas. Do you know what it was?” Tell the children that God sent Jesus, God’s Son, to us on Christmas.

God’s Gift

Preparation: Cut 6" squares (one for each child, with a few extras) from red and green construction paper. Gather decorative materials such as stickers and scraps of fabric, ribbon, foil, or gift wrap. Have crayons or markers, blunt scissors, glue sticks, transparent tape, and the My Book about Jesus Learner Resources (LR) out.

- Invite each child to decorate a red or green paper square to look like the top of a gift box.

- Help the children tape one edge of their decorated paper squares just above the picture of Jesus on page 20 (LR). Read pages 20 and 21 aloud. Ask, “What else do you know about Jesus?”

Jesus Lives

Preparation: Collect stickers with flower, spring, or Easter designs. Have crayons or markers available.

- Read page 22 (LR) aloud. Ask, “How does your family celebrate Easter?”
- Talk about the cross, including the one on the cover of their books, and other symbols such as lilies or butterflies they might see during Lent and Easter. Help them understand that these symbols help them remember Jesus and Jesus’ love for them.
- Invite the children to decorate the cross on page 22 and to draw things that remind them of Jesus.

Worshiping Jesus

- Invite children to talk about the picture on page 23 (LR). Ask, “What do you see in the picture? How is this church like our church? How is it different?”
- Say that when they worship in church they may hear and say the words of the Apostles’ Creed. Read aloud the first two articles of the creed below the picture.
- Explain that the Apostles’ Creed helps us understand and tell others what we believe about God and Jesus.
- Walk around the church grounds with the children, and visit the sanctuary, if possible. Encourage the children to look for symbols, pictures, and objects that help them remember Jesus.

RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

Sing to Jesus

Preparation: Have the learner resources and crayons or markers available.

- Show the children the last page in their learner resources. Sing together familiar songs about Jesus; then lead the children in singing the song on page 24 (LR).
- Urge the children to clap and stamp their feet along with you as they sing the third line of each stanza.
- Invite the children to color the picture on page 24.

Celebrate!

Preparation: Check for children’s food allergies before serving any food. Have available graham crackers, all-fruit spread, juice or fruit punch, small plastic knives, and paper plates, cups, and napkins. Bring in crepe paper streamers, colorful pictures, and other party decorations. Set out crayons or markers, construction paper, blunt scissors, and glue sticks.

- Invite children to celebrate the awesome gift of God’s Son, Jesus. Encourage them to decorate the room with the items you have provided, and suggest that they make and put up their own decorations too.
- Ask the children for suggestions, and then play games and sing songs they suggest.
- Help the children prepare “Cracker Stacks.” Spread a graham cracker with all-fruit spread, put a second cracker on top, spread the second cracker with all-fruit spread, and then top it with a third cracker. Serve the “Cracker Stacks” with juice or fruit punch.
- Before eating, lead the children in a prayer such as this: “Dear God, thank you for this food and for this happy time together. Thank you for sending us your special Son, Jesus. Amen.”



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This Leader Leaflet has a corresponding Learner Resource.

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