

Growing Together in Faith (GIFT) Around the Family Table

Adapted from: An At Home/Social Distancing VBS curriculum, written by Dani Voge, Director of Faith Formation at St. Luke's Lutheran Church, an ELCA congregation in SC.

All activities in the curriculum use common items you may have around your home or can pick up from a dollar or grocery store, Target, Amazon, etc. Social Distance is encouraged in the curriculum, though outdoor elements can be used in various activities. Each Lesson also includes a technology element that can be skipped if your family is going tech free for the day. Feel free to use this resource however you'd like – spread each lesson over the course of a week, or do a lesson in a day – whatever works for you. A separate coloring page file will be included that has two sheets for each lesson, also.

An LCC GIFT bag would be an excellent resource for your family at this time. Feel free to use the scriptures for each day/lesson as you practice your family faith at home. If you don't have a GIFT bag, please stop by and pick one up in the church entryway. It contains items with which you can practice faith daily or weekly in your home, along with guided instruction. I will also post an instructional video on how to use the bag on our Facebook pages.

And a reminder that I am posting support materials and resources on our Kids of the Cross Facebook page, as well – if you don't currently follow our page, please do so now. Twice weekly Facebook Live Children's Messages will be starting next week as well and will be broadcast at 9:30am on Wednesdays and Sundays.

My prayers are with you during this time. Please reach out if you need anything.

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Supplies are listed in order of use

Supplies: Bible (Spark Story Bible, and/or www.biblegateway.com – in Sunday School, we usually use the Easy to Read Version, which is included with each day's lesson in this document. If you'd like to pick up a Spark Story Bible, I will put some in the church entryway – feel free to drive up and run in and pick one up. GIFT bags for At Home Worship will be in the same spot.)

Lesson One

White Paper

Crayons (including white)

Dark Markers

Sidewalk Chalk

- *Extended Craft-* Make your own glow in the dark sidewalk chalk
Plaster of Paris, Water, food coloring gel, glow in the dark paint, petroleum jelly, silicone ice cube tray, old bucket or jar you no longer need, paint stirrer or old stick.

Lesson Two

Paper

Tape

Glue

Glitter, gems or other decorations

Lesson Three

Brown Paper Bags

Markers

Picnic Lunch supplies

Picnic Blanket, towels, lawn chairs

Card making materials

Lesson Four

Paper

Markers or crayons

Blanket fort supplies

****Extended Activity:***

Make Mountain Cookies

Supplies:

1 cup butter

1 cup powdered sugar

2 teaspoons vanilla

2 cups all-purpose flour

½ tsp salt

Filling:

3 ounces cream cheese

1 cup powdered sugar

2 tablespoons cornstarch, almond, or coconut flour

1 teaspoon vanilla

½ cup finely chopped pecans OR ½ cup mini chocolate chips

½ cup sweetened shredded coconut

Topping: ½ cup semisweet chocolate chips

2 tablespoons butter

2 tablespoons hot water

½ cup powdered sugar

Lesson Five

Paper, post cards, blank cards

Stamps, envelopes

Crayons or markers

Lesson Six

Paper, Crayons, Glue

Craft Sticks, Pipe Cleaners, craft foam, Old picture frames

Additional Resources:

Bible Themed File Folder Games – fun to make and play with!:

<https://christianpreschoolprintables.com/bible-file-folder-games/>

<https://biblestoryprintables.com/bible-games/>

<https://www.lessons4sundayschool.com/file-folder-games>

Lesson 1:

A Forever Promise

- **Bible Story:** Genesis 15: 1-12, 17-18 – Spark Story Bible, pp. 30-33.

Biblegateway Easy to Read Version:

After all these things happened, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision. God said, “Abram, don’t be afraid. I will defend you and give you a great reward.”

² But Abram said, “Lord GOD, there is nothing you can give me that will make me happy, because I have no son. My slave Eliezer from Damascus will get everything I own after I die.”

³ Abram said, “You have given me no son, so a slave born in my house will get everything I have.”

⁴ Then the LORD spoke to Abram and said, “That slave will not be the one to get what you have. You will have a son who will get everything you own.”

⁵ Then God led Abram outside and said, “Look at the sky. See the many stars. There are so many you cannot count them. Your family will be like that.”

⁶ Abram believed the LORD, and because of this faith the Lord accepted him as one who has done what is right. ⁷ He said to Abram, “I am the LORD who led you from Ur of Babylonia. ^[a] I did this so that I could give you this land. You will own this land.”

⁸ But Abram said, “Lord GOD, how can I be sure that I will get this land?”

⁹ God said to Abram, “We will make an agreement. Bring me a three-year-old cow, a three-year-old goat, a three-year-old ram, a dove, and a young pigeon.”

¹⁰ Abram brought all these to God. Abram killed these animals and cut each of them into two pieces. Then he laid each half across from the other half. He did not cut the birds into two pieces. ¹¹ Later, large birds flew down to eat the animals, but Abram chased them away.

¹² The sun began to go down and Abram got very sleepy. While he was asleep, a very terrible darkness came over him. ¹⁷ After the sun went down, it got very dark. The dead animals were still on the ground, each animal cut into two pieces. Then a smoking firepot ^[a] and a flaming torch passed between the halves of the dead animals. ^[b]

¹⁸ So on that day the LORD made a promise and an agreement with Abram. He said, “I will give this land to your descendants. I will give them the land between the River of Egypt ^[c] and the great river Euphrates.

Read the scripture aloud.

Discussion questions:

- What did God promise to Abram and Sarai?
- Do you think it’s hard to wait for something when you don’t know when you will receive it?
- How many stars do you think will be in the sky?
- How high can you count?
- Do you think Sarah and Abraham would have imagined how many people are living on Earth today?
- How many people do you think live on Earth right now? – after you guess, Google it to find out!

- **Craft**

Color stars on a white piece of paper with crayon –use the color white along with other pastel colors. Draw as many as you think you can fit on the page. When you are finished drawing stars, use a dark colored washable marker (black, dark blue, or a dark purple) to color over the whole page. (Lay down a larger sheet of paper first or be sure to use washable markers on a washable surface.) Count your stars as they appear. How many were you able to fit into your night sky?

Extended Craft: *Make your own Glow in the dark sidewalk chalk*

Take 1 cup of plaster of Paris, ½ cup of water, 3 tablespoons food coloring gel of choice, 4 tablespoons of your glow in the dark paint, and mix to combine. Grease your silicone mold with the petroleum jelly, and spoon in your chalk mix. Let dry in an oven set to 200 degrees for at least 3 hours, turning mold every 30 minutes. Let cool until nighttime, and charge in sunlight.

- **Active Play**

Head outside to your yard or sidewalk. What things can you see in the sky during daylight? Using regular sidewalk chalk, make a list on a sidewalk or your driveway of what you can see in the sky. At twilight or nighttime, head back outside. What things can you see once the sky turns dark? Use your glow chalk to make a glow list of what you can see in the sky at night! Bonus points for drawing pictures of your family in the glow chalk as some of Abraham and Sarah’s descendants.

- **Research This**

Head to NASA’s website and research stars! What kinds of names do some stars have? What stars are closest to us? What stars can we see that are the farthest away? What kinds of satellites and things does NASA use to study stars? If you have a telescope, use it to get a closer look at the night sky.

- **Watch That**

Check out the following YouTube videos:

God’s Promises by Saddleback <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NYrtWy5OYis>

Sarah Laughs by Saddleback Kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VrGkO8TOFck>

- **Prayers**

Write a prayer that includes the people who you are related to and the folks on our LCC Prayer Request list – the list is available in the bulletin, posted on our website under “This Week at LCC”. Place your prayer on your bedside table and use it for your nighttime prayer.

- **Community Care**

Make some extra glow sidewalk chalk and drop a package off to some neighborhood friends. Remember to maintain your social distance!

Invite your neighbors to have a campfire at the same time as you and enjoy the night sky and some s’mores together – and remember our words from Sunday School on Camp Sunday and Wednesday in January: “Like marshmallows roasted over a fire, the warmth of your faith will soften hearts, and the gospel will be delicious to you.” NOTE: this activity is definitely a weather-permitting one!

Lesson 2

Brave Queen Esther

Note: *yes, this is a long story about an amazing woman...*

- **Bible Story:** Esther 2: 5-18; 3: 1-6; 8: 1-17 Spark Story Bible, pp. 152-157.

Here's links to online versions of Esther's story for children:

<https://www.friendsandheroes.com/us/characters/Esther>

<http://www.dltk-bible.com/\estherstory.htm>

Biblegateway Easy to Read Version:

⁵ Now there was a Jew from the tribe of Benjamin named Mordecai. Mordecai was the son of Jair, and Jair was the son of Shimei, and Shimei was the son of Kish. Mordecai was in the capital city, Susa. ⁶ Mordecai had been carried into captivity from Jerusalem by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. He was with the group that was taken into captivity with King Jehoiachin of Judah. ⁷ Mordecai had a cousin named Hadassah. She didn't have a father or a mother, so Mordecai took care of her. Mordecai had adopted her as his own daughter when her father and mother died. Hadassah was also called Esther. She had a very pretty face and a good figure.

⁸ When the king's command had been heard, many young women were brought to the capital city of Susa. They were put under the care of Hegai. Esther was one of these women. She was taken to the king's palace and put into Hegai's care. Hegai was in charge of the king's women. ⁹ He liked Esther. She became his favorite, so he quickly gave Esther beauty treatments and special food. He chose seven slave women from the king's palace and gave them to Esther. Then he moved Esther and her seven women servants into the best place where the king's women lived. ¹⁰ Esther didn't tell anyone she was a Jew. She didn't tell anyone about her family background, because Mordecai had told her not to. ¹¹ Every day Mordecai walked back and forth near the area where the king's women lived. He did this because he wanted to find out how Esther was, and what was happening to her.

¹² Before a young woman could take her turn to go in before King Xerxes, she had to complete twelve months of beauty treatments—six months with oil of myrrh and six months with perfumes and cosmetics. ¹³ When her time came to go in to the king, she could choose to wear or take whatever she wanted from the women's living area. ¹⁴ In the evening the young woman would go to the king's palace. And in the morning she would return to another area where the king's women lived. Then she would be placed under the care of a man named Shaashgaz. He was the king's eunuch in charge of the slave women. She would not go back to the king again unless he was pleased with her. Then he would call her by name to come back to him.

¹⁵ The time came for Esther to go to the king. She was the one Mordecai had adopted, the daughter of his uncle Abihail. All she wanted to take with her was what Hegai, the king's officer in charge of the women, suggested. Everyone who saw Esther liked her. ¹⁶ So Esther was taken to King Xerxes in the palace. This happened in the tenth month, the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his rule.

¹⁷ The king loved Esther more than any of the other young women, and she became his favorite. He approved of her more than any of the others. So King Xerxes put a crown on Esther's head and made her the new queen in place of Vashti. ¹⁸ And the king gave a big

party for Esther. It was for all his important people and leaders. He announced a festival in all the provinces and sent out gifts to people, because he was a generous king.

³ After these things happened, King Xerxes honored Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite. The king promoted Haman and gave him a place of honor more important than any of the other leaders. ² All the king's leaders at the king's gate would bow down and give honor to Haman. This is what the king commanded them to do. But Mordecai refused to bow down or give honor to Haman. ³ Then the king's leaders at the gate asked Mordecai, "Why don't you obey the king's command to bow down to Haman?"

⁴ Day after day, the king's leaders spoke to Mordecai, but he refused to obey the command to bow down to Haman. So they told Haman about it. They wanted to see what Haman would do about Mordecai. Mordecai had told them that he was a Jew. ⁵ When Haman saw that Mordecai refused to bow down to him or give him honor, he was very angry. ⁶ Haman had learned that Mordecai was a Jew. But he was not satisfied to kill only Mordecai. He also wanted to find a way to destroy all of Mordecai's people, the Jews, in all of Xerxes' kingdom.

⁸ That same day King Xerxes gave Queen Esther everything that belonged to Haman, the enemy of the Jews. Esther told the king that Mordecai was her cousin. Then Mordecai came to see the king. ² The king had gotten his ring back from Haman. The king took the ring off his finger and gave it to Mordecai. Then Esther put Mordecai in charge of everything that belonged to Haman.

³ Then Esther spoke to the king again. She fell at the king's feet and began crying. She begged the king to cancel the evil plan of Haman the Agagite. Haman had thought up the plan to hurt the Jews.

⁴ Then the king held out the gold scepter to Esther. Esther got up and stood in front of the king. ⁵ Then she said, "King, if you like me and if it pleases you, please do this for me. Please do this if you think it is a good idea. If the king is happy with me, please write a command that would stop the command Haman sent out. Haman the Agagite thought of a plan to destroy the Jews in all the king's provinces, and he sent out commands for this to happen. ⁶ I am begging the king because I could not bear to see these terrible things happen to my people. I could not bear to see my family killed."

⁷ King Xerxes answered Queen Esther and Mordecai the Jew, "Because Haman was against the Jews, I have given his property to Esther. And my soldiers have hanged him on the hanging post. ⁸ Now write another command by the authority of the king. Write it to help the Jews in a way that seems best to you. Then seal the order with the king's special ring. No official letter written by the authority of the king and sealed with the king's ring can be canceled."

⁹ Very quickly the king's secretaries were called. This was done on the 23rd day of the third month, the month of Sivan. They wrote out all of Mordecai's commands to the Jews, and to the satraps, the governors, and officials of the 127 provinces. These provinces reached from India to Ethiopia. The commands were written in the language of each province and translated into the language of each group of people. The commands were written to the Jews in their own language and alphabet. ¹⁰ Mordecai wrote commands by the authority of King Xerxes. Then he sealed the letters with the king's ring and sent them by messengers on horses. The messengers rode fast horses, which were raised especially for the king.

¹¹ The king's commands in the letters said this: The Jews in every city have the right to gather together to protect themselves. They have the right to ruin, kill, and completely destroy any army from any group who might attack them and their women and children. And the Jews have the right to take and destroy the property of their enemies.

¹² The day set for the Jews to do this was the 13th day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar. They were permitted to do this in all King Xerxes' provinces. ¹³ A copy of the letter with the king's command was to be sent out. It became a law in every province. They announced it to all the people of every nation living in the kingdom. They did this so that the Jews would be ready for that special day. They would be allowed to pay their enemies back. ¹⁴ The messengers hurried out, riding on the king's horses. The king commanded them to hurry. And the command was also put in the capital city of Susa.

¹⁵ Mordecai left the king. He was wearing special clothes from the king. His clothes were blue and white, and he had on a large gold crown. He also had a purple robe made of the best linen. There was a special celebration in Susa. The people were very happy. ¹⁶ It was an especially happy day for the Jews, a day of great joy and happiness.

¹⁷ Wherever the king's command went in every province and every city, there was joy and gladness among the Jews. They were having parties and celebrating. Many of the common people from other groups became Jews. They did this because they were very afraid of the Jews.

Read the scripture aloud.

Discussion questions:

- How are Esther and her people bullied?
- Why was Haman mean to others?
- Where are places that you see bullies today?
- What does Esther do to keep her people safe from the bully?
- How is Esther brave?

● **Craft**

Make crowns like the crowns that you think Queen Esther and King Ahasuerus would have worn. Wear them around as you do a chore or eat lunch today. Is it hard to keep a crown balanced on your head? How would it be hard to be a leader?

● **Active Play**

Play *Haman Says*. Designate someone to be Haman, and order other people around. But if Haman doesn't say Haman, the people don't have to do it.

If you have a large family, add a second leader named Queen Esther. The people can choose to follow Esther's directions, as she cares for them. They don't have to fear what she will do.

● **Research This**

Find out who some of your community leaders are. Check out pages hosted by firefighters, police, city halls, and public utilities. Who are your leaders, and how do they help you?

● **Watch That**

Check out the following YouTube videos:

The Story of Esther by Kids on the Move - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SaS_ePAjCvk

Esther Song by Saddleback Kids - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qXv1ImfILOs>

- **Prayers**

Take time to think about leaders in your community. Do the Five Finger Prayer today, remembering those leaders as they work and lead through difficult situations.

- **Community Care**

Write a thank you note to a community leader or community helper, thanking them for what they do! Send it out in the mail.

The 5 Finger Prayer

Thumb: Those closest to you, your family.

Pointer: Those that point you in the right direction (teachers, doctors, priests) ask for wisdom & support.

Index: (tallest) Those that lead us, (Government) ask for guidance & wisdom.

Ring: (weakest) Those that are weak, in trouble, or in pain. We cannot pray too much for them.

Pinkie: (smallest) Our prayers for ourselves & our own needs.



Lesson 3

Five Were Ready, Five Were Not

- **Bible Story:** Matthew 25: 1-13 Spark Story Bible, pp. 314-315.

Biblegateway Easy to Read Version:

25 “At that time God’s kingdom will be like ten girls who went to wait for the bridegroom. They took their lamps with them. ² Five of the girls were foolish, and five were wise. ³ The foolish girls took their lamps with them, but they did not take extra oil for the lamps. ⁴ The wise girls took their lamps and more oil in jars. ⁵ When the bridegroom was very late, the girls could not keep their eyes open, and they all fell asleep.

⁶ “At midnight someone announced, ‘The bridegroom is coming! Come and meet him!’

⁷ “Then all the girls woke up. They made their lamps ready. ⁸ But the foolish girls said to the wise girls, ‘Give us some of your oil. The oil in our lamps is all gone.’

⁹ “The wise girls answered, ‘No! The oil we have might not be enough for all of us. But go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’

¹⁰ “So the foolish girls went to buy oil. While they were gone, the bridegroom came. The girls who were ready went in with the bridegroom to the wedding feast. Then the door was closed and locked.

¹¹ “Later, the other girls came. They said, ‘Sir, sir! Open the door to let us in.’

¹² “But the bridegroom answered, ‘Certainly not! I don’t even know you.’

¹³ “So always be ready. You don’t know the day or the time when the Son of Man will come.

Read the scripture aloud.

Discussion questions:

- What are some things it is easy to prepare for?
- What are some things that it is hard to prepare for?
- What happens to you when you must wait for something for a long time – how does waiting make you feel and act?
- What are some things it is easy to stay awake for?
- What is something that always wakes you up?

OPTIONAL: FIELD TRIP DAY - for when it gets warmer☺

(Remember social distance!)

Give your family members 5 minutes to pack a lunch using items you have assembled. They can only bring what they remember to pack. Grab your family’s GIFT bag, and head to a local park or a state park and make sure to find a place to picnic that is away from others. After you enjoy some outdoor time and your lunch, take out your GIFT bag and go through it together as a family.

- **Active Play**

If you can’t venture from home or the weather isn’t great, have a picnic lunch at home – inside or outside. Turn on a nature soundtrack and listen to different sounds if you are inside.

- **Research This**

What are your school or work punishments if you are late? What things do you need to have prepared to be ready at school or work?

- **Watch That**

Check out the following YouTube videos:

Parable 2019 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2EcOEsWSyDk>

The Ten Bridesmaids (Holy Tales) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJiM3qKGzoY&t=35s>

- **Prayers:**

Pray for the people who are delayed or waiting for things right now because of recommendations from our government and health care leaders. Pray for those who need to stay awake late (and stay healthy) to help care for others.

- **Community Care:**

We've had a request from Good Samaritan Home Care in Nisswa. Their chaplain explained that their clients in home hospice care aren't allowed visitors at this time and they could use our help. Let's practice Community Care by making some greeting cards for them. Let them know that you are praying for them and be sure to include some hopeful bible verses and messages along with pictures – be creative! Bring the cards to church and leave in the basket in the entryway – we will be sure they get to the people who need them.

Lesson 4

Mountain Top Visitors

- **Bible Story:** Luke 9:28-36 Spark Story Bible, pp. 358 -359.

Biblegateway Easy to Read Version:

²⁸ About eight days after Jesus said these things, he took Peter, John, and James and went up on a mountain to pray. ²⁹ While Jesus was praying, his face began to change. His clothes became shining white. ³⁰ Then two men were there, talking with him. They were Moses and Elijah. ³¹ They also looked bright and glorious. They were talking with Jesus about his death that would happen in Jerusalem. ³² Peter and the others were asleep. But they woke up and saw the glory of Jesus. They also saw the two men who were standing with him. ³³ When Moses and Elijah were leaving, Peter said, “Master, it is good that we are here. We will put three tents here—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” (He did not know what he was saying.)

³⁴ While Peter was saying these things, a cloud came all around them. Peter, John, and James were afraid when the cloud covered them. ³⁵ A voice came from the cloud and said, “This is my Son. He is the one I have chosen. Obey him.”

³⁶ When the voice stopped, only Jesus was there. Peter, John, and James said nothing. And for a long time after that, they told no one about what they had seen.

Read the scripture aloud.

Discussion questions:

- Think of someone whom you would be excited to suddenly see...who is it?
- List some things that are important to pay attention to. Explain why they are important.
- How would you have reacted to seeing Jesus transfigured, and to see Moses and Elijah as well?
- Why do you think the disciples wanted to build houses for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah?
- What would you want inside a house on a mountain?

- **Craft:**

Build your own mountain house out of boxes, chairs, tables, laundry baskets, blankets – things you can find around the house *and have permission to use*. Create a name plate for your mountain house. Bonus points if you read a book (perhaps your bible??), or work on schoolwork inside of it.

- **Active Play:**

Google *Mountain climbing exercises* and do some! You must be in top shape to be able to summit a mountain. If you still have piles of snow in your yard like I do, practice climbing them.

- **Research This**

Draw a chart with five rows and two columns – like this:

Earth	
US	
MN	
Holy Land	
Planet	

Record the heights of: the tallest mountain on Earth, the highest mountain or place in the United States, the tallest mountain or place in Minnesota, the tallest mountain or place where Jesus lived (the Holy Land), and the tallest mountain on a different planet. What is the height difference between the tallest mountain you found in your state and the tallest you found anywhere?

- **Watch This**

Watch the following videos on YouTube:

The Transfiguration of Jesus // Bible Story <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dC081rBhFsE>

The Transfiguration, PursueGOD Kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MH9YoRrVp4Q>

As a family, watch a classic movie together that features mountains – *Mountain Family*, *Robinson*, *Adventures of the Wilderness Family*, or *My Side of the Mountain*. Imagine your family living in the mountains – if you have taken a family trip to the mountains, reminisce about your experiences and sights from the trip after the movie.

- **Prayers:**

Pray for park rangers, mountain rescue teams, and those who live and work on mountains. Most of the mountain ski resorts have closed during social distancing, so also pray for the staff who are unable to work right now.

- **Community Care:**

Make Mountain Cookies to Share with a neighbor.

Mountain Cookie Instructions (ingredients on supply page)

In a large bowl, mix together the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Combine the flour and salt and gradually add to the mixture and mix until combined.

Shape into 1-inch balls and place 2 inches apart on an ungreased pan lined with parchment paper. Make a deep indentation in each cookie with the back of a teaspoon.

Bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit until the edges just turn brown. Remove from sheet and cool completely.

For the Filling:

Mix cream cheese, sugar, cornstarch or alternate flour and vanilla until smooth. Add pecans or chocolate chips and coconut and stir to combine. Spoon a ½ teaspoon of filling into center of each cookie.

Drizzle: Mix chocolate chips, water and butter into a microwave safe bowl, and microwave at 30 second intervals until half melted. Stir to complete melting. Stir in powdered sugar. Drizzle over cookies.

Lesson 5

Never Alone

Bible Story: John 14: 23-29 (this story is not available in the Spark Storybible – share the Children’s Message below instead of reading the story)

Biblegateway Easy-To-Read Version:

²³ Jesus answered, “All who love me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them. My Father and I will come to them and live with them. ²⁴ But anyone who does not love me does not obey my teaching. This teaching that you hear is not really mine. It is from my Father who sent me.

²⁵ “I have told you all these things while I am with you. ²⁶ But the Helper will teach you everything and cause you to remember all that I told you. This Helper is the Holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name.

²⁷ “I leave you peace. It is my own peace I give you. I give you peace in a different way than the world does. So don’t be troubled. Don’t be afraid. ²⁸ You heard me say to you, ‘I am leaving, but I will come back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be happy that I am going back to the Father, because the Father is greater than I am. ²⁹ I have told you this now, before it happens. Then when it happens, you will believe.

Children’s Message:

The good news from John's gospel today, is about a very special friend who is here with us today.

But first, how many of you have friends? *(children respond)*

Does anybody have a best friend? *(children respond)*

Are you a true friend to someone? *(children respond)*

Why is a true friend important to you? *(children respond)*

Today, we read from the Bible that Jesus announces that he is going away.

The disciple's faces fall when Jesus tells them he is leaving. Their shoulders slump. They get very sad.

Show me how your face and body looks when you are sad. How can you tell if someone else is sad?

They feel lost, lonely, and friendless. Jesus, their best friend and savior, is leaving!

But then Jesus says, *“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.”*

“A friend will come to you, disciples. That friend will walk beside you, above you and within you. That friend, the Holy Spirit, will defend you and remind you of all that I, Jesus, have taught you.”

Have you ever been afraid? Scared? *(children respond)*

Have you ever been sad or lonely at some time in your life? *(children respond)*

Have you ever been forgetful of the way you should live? *(children respond)*

Well, you and I have a friend; a very, very special friend; our best friend — the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will guide us, defend us, protect us and remind us that Jesus lived and taught that “God is love.” Now isn't that the best good news ever?

Read the scripture aloud.

Discussion questions:

- Who do you have a hard time saying goodbye to when they have to leave?
- Who are the people you miss when you must stay home and not see anyone?
- How do you think the disciples felt when Jesus told them he wouldn't be able to be with them much longer?
- Why do you think the disciples had so many questions for Jesus about why he was leaving?
- How do you tell or show someone you love them when you have to say goodbye?
- **Craft:** Make a card or picture for someone that lives far away or that you can't see right now due to recommendations to stay at home. Tell the person or persons how much you love or appreciate them in a note. Mail it to them.
- **Active Play:** Play a game of *We Love*.

Player who is it yells LOVE with their eyes closed. Other players yell ME until they are caught.

- **Alternate:** Play hide and seek.
- **Research This**

Look up different words for love (or synonyms for love on/in a thesaurus). Look up words for love in different languages. Make a poster using all the new words you learned. Post a picture of your poster on the Kids of the Cross Facebook Page.

- **Watch That**

Watch the following videos on YouTube:

Sharefaith Kids' "I Am the Way" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmZ8qqNjfwY>

VBS I am the way (song with motions) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ueMQV2Ax-MM>

- **Prayers:** Pray for those who are lonely right now, and who don't have company while they eat their meals. Also pray for those who are having a hard time finding enough food.
- **Community Care:**

When you prepare lunch or dinner today, make a few extra portions to deliver to an elderly friend or neighbor. Remember social distance is important.

- *Extended Activity option:*

Set your table with all your fancy dishes and things and celebrate a meal together. Have everyone dress up for a fancy meal- maybe even use cloth napkins! Say grace as a family before you begin the meal. Even if you're having dinosaur nuggets, celebrate like you are at the fanciest restaurant you've ever eaten at!

Lesson Six

Patience is a Virtue

- **Bible Story:** Genesis 18:1-15; 21:1-7 (not available in the Spark Story Bible – see Children’s Message below.)

Bible Gateway Easy-To-Read-Version:

Later, the LORD again appeared to Abraham near the oak trees of Mamre. It was the hottest part of the day, and Abraham was sitting at the door of his tent. ² He looked up and saw three men standing in front of him. When he saw the men, he ran to them and bowed before them. ³ Abraham said, “Sirs, ^[a] please stay a while with me, your servant. ⁴ I will bring some water to wash your feet. You can rest under the trees. ⁵ I will get some food for you, and you can eat as much as you want. Then you can continue your journey.”

The three men said, “Do as you wish.”

⁶ Abraham hurried to the tent. He said to Sarah, “Quickly, prepare enough flour for three loaves of bread.” ⁷ Then Abraham ran to his cattle. He took his best young calf and gave it to the servant there. He told the servant to quickly kill the calf and prepare it for food. ⁸ Abraham brought the meat and some milk and cheese and set them down in front of the three men. Then he stood near the men, ready to serve them while they sat under the tree and ate.

⁹ Then the men said to Abraham, “Where is your wife Sarah?”

Abraham said, “She is there, in the tent.”

¹⁰ Then one of them said, “I will come again in the spring. At that time your wife Sarah will have a son.”

Sarah was listening in the tent and heard these things. ¹¹ Abraham and Sarah were very old. Sarah was past the right age for women to have children. ¹² So she laughed to herself and said, “I am old, and my husband is old. I am too old to have a baby.”

¹³ Then the LORD said to Abraham, “Sarah laughed and said she was too old to have a baby.

¹⁴ But is anything too hard for the LORD? I will come again in the spring, just as I said I would, and your wife Sarah will have a son.”

¹⁵ Sarah said, “I didn’t laugh!” (She said this because she was afraid.)

Then the Lord said, “No, I know that is not true. You did laugh!”

The LORD came back to visit Sarah as he said he would, and he kept his promise to her. ² At exactly the time God said it would happen, Sarah became pregnant and gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age. ³ Abraham named his son Isaac. ^[a] ⁴ Abraham did what God commanded and circumcised Isaac when he was eight days old.

⁵ Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born. ⁶ Sarah said, “God has made me happy, and everyone who hears about this will be happy with me. ⁷ No one thought that I, Sarah, would be able to have Abraham’s child. But I have given Abraham a son, even though he is old.”

Read the bible passages.

Children’s Message:

Ask the children what movies they have seen that have SEQUELS – talk about how sequels sometimes have a number in the title (like *Cars*, and *Cars 2*.) See how many movies with sequels kids can think of. Ask them if *the first movie* would make any sense if they hadn’t seen *the original movie*?

OK, well today's bible story is a sequel to our story from Day/Lesson One.

*When the Apostle Paul talks about this story he says that it is about more than God keeping a promise. Paul talks about Abraham and Sarah keeping their faith in God, even though the promise seemed impossible. I don't know for sure, but I also think that **how** God kept the promise might not have been exactly what Abraham and Sarah expected. Maybe they thought that God would give them many, many children right then, not countless descendants from one son.*

Sometimes we hear God's promise to us and we might have ideas about how that promise should be fulfilled, but that might not always be the same as God's idea. We, like Abraham and Sarah, need faith and trust in God, and we, like Abraham and Sarah, need to keep doing the good things that God asks us to do, even when we can't see how the promise will be fulfilled in the end.

Discussion questions:

- Abraham and Sarah had to wait a very long time for what they wanted. Abraham was 100 yrs old and Sarah was 90 years old when they finally received what they had wanted. When have you had to wait for something?
- What is the longest that you have waited for something that you really, really wanted?
- Was it hard to wait? What's the hardest part of waiting?
- Can you explain patience? It hard or easy to have patience?
- Tell about times or situations where you need patience.

- **Craft**

Make Abraham and Sarah's 3D tent – template is available at

<file:///C:/Users/LCC%20Staff/Downloads/08%20-%20Isaac%20birth%20-%20Preschool%20Bible%20Lesson.pdf>

Next, create a picture of your home and family members.

- **Active Play**

When the three men appeared at Abraham's tent, he and Sarah immediately began preparations for a celebratory (special) meal for them to share together. Think of your favorite meal and use the template in the document (link above) to draw the meal. Younger children could also do the matching activity that is also provided. Prepare for a special meal for guests (your family). Plan the menu, make a grocery list, and gather the items you will need. Prepare the special meal together as a family.

- **Research This**

Choose four countries around the world and research what a typical meal for a family in those countries would look like. Compare the meals with each other and with the meal you planned and prepared with your family. Make a list of the foods from these meals that you would be willing to try and the foods you would hesitate to try!

- **Watch That**

Watch the following music videos on You Tube:

Father Abraham https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5o_J30x6E6s

God Always Keeps His Promises

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WzrFkvn1LGg&feature=youtu.be>

- **Prayer**

Faithful God, we thank you for the amazing stories of faith in the Bible, especially when we have a difficult time being faithful. Help us to be faithful to our promises to you and to each other, and to work for good in all that we do. *Amen*

- **Community Care**

Call, Skype, or FaceTime someone who lives far away from you and have a conversation. Invite them to video chat over a meal. What kinds of questions do you have for each other?

If you have a neighbor or friend who is unable or hesitant to go out to the grocery store, offer to do their shopping for them (if you are able) the next time you go out to the store.

- ❖ This would be a great time to drop off a donation for **Operation Sandwich** in the church entryway.

We are collecting jars of peanut butter and jelly, as well as individual packs of Goldfish crackers & trail mix, and also individual fruit snack packs and fruit cups.

In addition, Operation Sandwich will be offering weekly supplemental food packages during these days of Social Distancing and closings.

Here are the food items needed:

- canned fruit
- canned veggies
- mac n cheese
- canned soup
- canned pasta
- boxed dinner
- breakfast cereal
- granola bars
- fresh fruit (apples, oranges, & clementines ONLY)

Items may be dropped off just inside the main doors during church hours.

- ❖ We are also receiving donations for the **Lakes Area Food Shelf** this month – and while dollar donations go the farthest, we will gladly take bags of groceries for our PACK THE PEWS drive.