

Jesus Shows He Is True God

New Testament 2

DIRECTOR HANDBOOK



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Welcome to Cross Explorations

Cross Explorations is the Sunday School with the biblical integrity you've come to expect from Concordia Publishing House. The Bible accounts in Cross Explorations follow the same sequence as Concordia's traditional Sunday School curriculum, Growing in Christ.

Cross Explorations combines the best of large-group/small-group instruction and site rotation. Leaders will love the easy-to-use leader guides as well as the options available for each lesson. Above all, Cross Explorations puts Christ at the center of each and every lesson.

Exploring Cross Explorations

Cross Explorations at a Glance

Engage

Cross Explorations starts with Engage. During Engage, all students take part in an opening activity together, singing and preparing for the rest of their exploration.

Explore

The Explore site divides kids by two age levels. Level 1 includes kids in grades 1–3, while Level 2 covers kids in grades 4–6. During Explore, students dig into the day's Bible story, guided by the Explore Teacher Leaflets and their Explore Student Leaflets. We recommend having eight to ten kids in a group with one leader. So, depending on the number of kids you have, you may have multiple Level 1 and Level 2 groups.

Express

During Express, kids apply the Bible learning from the Explore session to their lives as they create, experiment, sing, serve, and more. Options depend on the time you have available and the talents of your volunteers. The Express leader materials provide numerous options for each week:

- **Express Craft Booklet**—thirteen pull-apart cards provide creative projects for each lesson, complete with supply lists, directions, talking points, and pictures of the completed craft.
- **Express Music CD**—includes recorded music, music activities for each lesson, and PowerPoint slides with linked music. Reinforce the lesson with new songs, old favorites, and familiar hymns.
- **Express Skit CD**—brief skits allow students to review each Bible lesson. Ideas for costumes and visual props are included.
- **Express Activities & More CD**—includes creative snack ideas and group activities for each week. Additional activity ideas, including service projects, are suggested for some weeks. Activities include the following:
 - Group activities
 - Science demonstrations
 - Service projects

Leaders have the option to access materials by week, by topic, or by type of activity.

The amount of time available determines if students will rotate through one, two, or more Express options each week. If time is limited, vary Express activities from week to week so students get a chance to experience different types of learning.

The Cross Explorations Schedule

Cross Explorations offers flexibility for a variety of settings. Here is a suggested schedule for a traditional 60-minute Sunday morning setting:

- All students at Engage for 15 minutes.
- Students break into Explore Levels 1 and 2 for 20 minutes.
- Students move through two or more Express rotations for 25 minutes.

If you are using Cross Explorations in a Midweek setting, your schedule probably offers more time. In this setting, the Engage and Explore times remain the same, but extra time may be used to include additional small-group Express options.

Flexibility

The flexible Cross Explorations materials allow you to customize the program to fit your specific needs. Here's how one congregation customized Cross Explorations to meet the specific needs in their Sunday School. They have a lot of students in grades 1–3, with smaller numbers in each of the older grades. Here's their solution:

- Everyone in grades 1–6 starts together in Engage.
- With a smaller number of students in grades 4–6, they move as one group into Explore. Following Explore, the older students split into two groups and rotate through two Express stations.
- Meanwhile, the younger students in grades 1–3 stay in single-grade groups and rotate through three stations. Explore becomes one of the three rotations, and leaders choose the other two stations from the Express materials.

Cross Explorations in a Self-Contained Classroom

Some congregations, by preference or due to limited space or number of students, use Cross Explorations in self-contained classrooms. The flexible Cross Explorations resources easily allow for use in this setting. If needed, divide students into two groups, lower grades (1–3) and upper grades (4–6), and plan on a leader for each group. If most of your students are younger, you could use just the Level 1 materials; likewise, use the Level 2 materials if most of your students are older.

Introduce the lesson to all students, using the Engage Teacher Leaflets and optional PowerPoint slide shows. (Or provide an Engage CD to each teacher to use in the classroom.)

Then, divide students into two or more groups for the Explore Bible study. Have them meet with their leader in their classroom or an assigned area of a larger space to dig into the Bible account and work through the student leaflets.

Following Explore, have students continue with Express activities in their classroom or rotate through Express activities with other classes. They can stay in the Explore groups, combine with other groups, or form new groups. Select the Express options that work best for your setting. These options can vary from week to week to keep students excited and engaged in what might happen next week.

Assembling Small Groups

Small groups form the core of Cross Explorations. Groups may be assigned by traditional grade levels or by combining students from the three grades included in each of the two levels for Explore. For instance, you could have two or more groups of students from grades 1–3. Likewise, you could have groups with a mix of students from grades 4–6. Ideally, groups will have eight to ten students in them. If you have more than ten students at either level, plan on two Explore sites for that level. Depending on the age range of your students and their level of maturity, you also might include students in third grade in your Level 2 groups.

What about Other Sunday School Levels?

Preschool

We recommend letting preschoolers learn in their own settings and groups. The Growing in Christ Early Childhood Teacher Guide has age-appropriate material for preschoolers that follows the same lesson sequence as Cross Explorations.

Keeping preschoolers separate from your elementary program is beneficial for several reasons. Sunday School is often a preschooler's first group experience. A young child needs a safe environment with predictable routines and the same caring teacher each week to feel secure. Parents and children may feel anxious, timid, or afraid in the midst of the larger Sunday School setting. If you can, give preschoolers separate learning spaces so that they can do age-appropriate activities in an environment suitable to their needs. Preschoolers can get lost among older kids, but in their own space, they can relax, play, and feel more secure. This kind of atmosphere maximizes their ability to learn and remember.

Middle School and High School

Since Cross Explorations is a complementary program to Growing in Christ, you can use Growing in Christ for middle-school and high-school levels. The two programs share a common Bible story, so the whole family is studying the same story each week.

Adults

The Cross Explorations Explore Adult Bible Study Guide provides weekly lessons for adult learners. Parents and other adults join children for the large-group Engage session, then continue learning in their own Explore group for thirty minutes. Families continue learning at home through the Explore More Cards. These talking points help families take the lesson home each week and engage kids and parents in talking about the faith.

Leading Cross Explorations

Staffing for Cross Explorations lets volunteers work from their strengths. Each Cross Explorations leader works in a role designed to let him or her be most effective. It is beneficial when groups of children have two adults present with them at all times.

Large-Group Leader

The large-group leader begins each week's Cross Explorations adventure during the Engage session. This leader needs the energy and confidence to work with a large group of children. The Engage leader should also have the ability to get kids excited about learning. Since this large-group leader sets the tone for the day, choose this leader—or leadership team—carefully. Because of the variety of ages involved, it is important to select a large-group leader who communicates well with students.

Site Leaders

Your Cross Explorations site leaders do what they do best—crafts, music, science, teaching the lesson, and more. Volunteers who feel comfortable teaching students would be ideal leaders for the Explore Level 1 and Level 2 sites. For the most effective learning environment, Explore leaders should be consistent from week to week. If teaching volunteers like to work in teams, enlist three teachers for each Explore team and encourage at least two of them to be present each week. Volunteers with a love for crafts, music, or other ways to apply the lesson truths would be excellent leaders for the Express sites you choose. Since Express sites may vary each week, volunteers may take turns serving.

Rotation Small-Group Leaders

Cross Explorations small-group leaders serve a very important role. You will need one small-group leader for every eight to ten kids. The small-group leaders may not have to teach; rather, they lead their small group of students from one site to another. Groups may be assigned by age or grade level, or they may be multigraded. Strive for groups no larger than ten students. Encourage students to select a name for their group in order to develop a sense of group identity. Small-group leaders

- are leaders and encouragers, not bosses;
- develop friendships with every child in their group;

- help and encourage kids to participate, cooperate, and try new things;
- ask questions and lead kids to discover Bible answers;
- keep kids focused on tasks and challenges;
- participate in activities;
- get to know their group members well; and
- are patient and do not yell or express anger.

Older adults and older youth often make ideal small-group leaders. In some situations, you may want to have your small-group leaders actually be the teachers for the Explore or Express sites. For the balance of the time at Cross Explorations, these teachers simply lead their small group. The choice is yours!

Cross Explorations Resources

The Cross Explorations leader materials provide all of the resources your volunteers need to effectively share God’s Word with children.

■ Engage

- **Leader Leaflet** includes opening activities and music suggestions.
- **Engage Music CD** provides selected music for use in Cross Explorations.

■ Explore

- **Level 1 Teacher Leaflets** include resources for teaching the Bible story to children in grades 1–3.
- **Level 1 Student Leaflets** include full-color Bible art and activities for children in grades 1–3.
- **Level 2 Teacher Leaflets** include resources for teaching the Bible story to children in grades 4–6.
- **Level 2 Student Leaflets** include full-color Bible art, activities, and discussion questions for children in grades 4–6.
- **Explore More Cards** provide family-centered questions and activities to extend the lesson to the home each week.
- **Explore Adult Bible Study Guide** allows parents and other adults to explore the same lesson that kids do each week.

■ Express

- **Express Craft Booklet** uses visuals to guide students as they express the lesson creatively. (Craft activity patterns, when required, are found on the Express Activities & More CD.)
- **Express Music CD** allows kids to express the lesson through song.
- **Express Skit CD** lets students express the lesson through drama and role play.
- **Express Activities & More CD** has ideas and activities that vary from week to week. These include science demonstrations, games, snacks, service projects, and more. Each one provides students with unique ways to express their learning. (This CD may also contain craft patterns.)

■ Director CD

- **Director Handbook** contains planning materials for the Sunday School Leader.
- **Preparing the Lesson** leaflets are included for each week. Provide all your volunteer leaders with copies of these devotions as they prepare for each week's lesson.
- **Planning Pages** are designed to help teachers and leaders plan the lessons each week. The planning pages outline the activities available for each section of the lesson.
- **Bulletin Notes** are designed to help connect your congregation and Sunday School by providing a brief lesson highlight and suggested questions for parents and others to discuss with students.
- **Pronunciation Guide** helps teachers and students correctly pronounce more difficult names of people and places in the Bible.
- **Arch Book List** helps teachers reinforce the Bible account by providing another method of sharing the story with students.

The Perfect Setting: Environment Matters

Stress, mess, and chaos hinder learning. Open a door to effective learning by providing a relaxed, comfortable environment.

- Make sure your facility is clean and safe. Eliminate unneeded furniture and supplies.
- Use child-size furniture so kids feel comfortable.
- Decorate to capture curiosity. Nearly 75 percent of people are visual learners who learn best with visual prompts. Thematic decorating helps them understand and remember well.
- Use words and pictures on signs for sites, restrooms, and offices.

Where to Meet

Deciding where to meet for Cross Explorations will depend on the space available in your building.

Engage requires a space large enough for all students to be seated and equipped so the leader can be heard clearly. If you plan to use the recording on the Engage CD, you will need a CD player. If you plan to use the PowerPoint presentation on the Engage CD, you will need a computer and a projector. The church sanctuary, a fellowship hall, or even a gymnasium can work for this session.

Explore requires separate spaces for the two levels. Classrooms equipped with chairs or desks or a section of a larger room that can be screened off will both work for this session. Preschool students, youth, and adults should have their own meeting locations apart from the Explore session.

Express sessions offer the greatest flexibility as far as meeting locations. You could offer multiple Express sites in one large space, provided you can screen off areas to prevent distractions. Rolling dividers, movable walls, or even

fabric panels help block the view from one area to another. In other situations, separate classrooms might offer the best setting for the Express sessions.

Decorating Ideas

Help students experience Cross Explorations by setting the scene for learning. Your decorations may be as simple as Concordia's realistic Bible Story Poster Sets. These sets contain pictures of each Bible story. Use posters to decorate Explore learning areas so teachers can refer to the appropriate picture for that week's lesson. You can view the posters in each set by searching "Bible Story Posters" at www.cph.org/sundayschool.

If you have a dedicated area for Sunday School, consider more extensive decorating to help set the stage for learning. Furnish Explore and Express areas with Bible-times decorations. Piles of brightly striped pillows can double as seating for storytelling time. Use baskets and ceramic vessels to hold craft supplies and student materials for each Express location. You might even set up a Bible-times marketplace to keep students engaged in the learning process.

Christology in Sunday School

by Tim Pauls

I can't recall a time when I didn't have a basic understanding of Christology. Not a perfect understanding, mind you, but a more-or-less correct one. As long as I can remember, it's been a given that Jesus is the Son of God, born of Mary, who died for my sins and rose again. I don't say that to boast, but to give thanks to God. He blessed me through pastors, parents, creeds, and most definitely my Sunday School teachers. Week after week, they taught me stories of Jesus from the Bible. They let Scripture speak. They did what evangelists do.

The Study of Christ

Christology is a fifty-cent word for "the study of Christ." If you're going to get Jesus right, you have to get His person and His work right: you have to know who He is and what He does.

As far as His person, Jesus is both God and man, "conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary." He's fully God and fully man, not a fifty-fifty split. These two natures are united, inseparable though distinct. In Christ, God is man and man is God. This is a mystery—beyond our comprehending. When Mary gives birth to Jesus, she holds her Creator in her arms. God's Son is crucified; Mary's Son sits enthroned in heaven. God's Son is swaddled in a manger; Mary's Son is present in, with, and under bread and wine in the Lord's Supper. Beware a great temptation: we want to *solve* mysteries, not *believe* them. History is littered with those who wanted to explain the incarnation beyond what Scripture says. Some said Jesus was simply a man adopted by God. Others maintained Jesus was God only pretending to be man—or His divine nature absorbed His human nature (sort of a Superman). Some had Him operating only as God *or* man, saying only the "human Jesus" died or only the "divine Jesus" rose again. These errors have consequences that stretch throughout one's faith. It's far better to say what Scripture says: Jesus was born. He worked miracles. He hungered. He walked on water. He died. He rose. He did all of these as

God *and* man. Beware of trying to solve an insolvable mystery. Instead, rejoice in it. I'm quite happy with a Savior who exceeds comprehension.

The Only-Begotten Son of God

As far as the work of Jesus, He's been around from eternity as the only-begotten Son of God. He is present at creation, with all things made through Him. He is present with His people throughout the Old Testament—He is not separate from Yahweh, who dwells in Solomon's temple. Most important, though, we speak of His work of redemption. He's always at work to save you. Born of Mary, He lives a sinless life, keeping the Law and resisting temptation. He does this for you so that He can be the perfect, unblemished sacrifice for your sin and so that He can credit you with His perfect life. He teaches His Law and Gospel. He performs miracles to verify He is the Savior as well as to prove He has the power to work a greater miracle—the forgiveness of sins. He dies on the cross as that perfect sacrifice: He's damned by God so that God won't damn you. He descends into hell to preach to the spirits in prison. (This is for you too; you see, Christ is so victorious that Satan can't keep Him out—or keep Him in!) He rises on the third day, body and all, because He's redeemed you, body and all. Adam and Eve were created to have eternal bodies and souls, and Jesus has come to restore all that was lost to sin. He ascends into heaven bodily, paving the way for you, and He sits at God's right hand to work all things for your good.

The Creeds

That's a quick look at the person and work of Jesus. This is what makes the creeds of the Church so valuable as teaching aids: the Second Article of both the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds summarizes the person and work of Jesus. (I love the Nicene's "*who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man*"; emphasis added.) It's why the Athanasian Creed is so valuable as it painstakingly ("tediously," I mistakenly thought as a child) articulates the two natures of Jesus and His place in the Trinity. You can do a lot worse than challenge young students to recite those "grown-up" creeds as part of class. (They love grown-up stuff!) Well, maybe not the Athanasian; your mileage may vary.

I've been studying and teaching the Book of Acts for a few months now, and I'm struck how this Christology is the basis for the apostles' sermons time and time again. Peter's sermon in Acts 10:34–43 is a great example. (Don't forget Peter was one who struggled with Christology. In Matthew 16:16, he's the first disciple to get Jesus' *person* right, and Jesus called him "blessed." Six—only six!—verses later, he gets Jesus' *work* so wrong that Jesus called him "Satan!") In Acts 10, Peter preaches of the person of Jesus: "He is Lord of all" (v. 36), then speaks of His work (vv. 37–43), including His Baptism, miracles, victory over Satan, crucifixion, resurrection, final judgment, and commission to preach the Gospel.

Savior of All

Peter bookends this sermon: At the beginning, he says that Jesus is the Savior of all, without partiality. At the end, he declares that all the prophets

bear witness to Jesus. Christology isn't just a doctrine of Scripture; *all of Scripture* points to Christ.

This defines your work as a Sunday School teacher. You tell your students about Jesus: who He is and what He does. Even the Old Testament lessons point to Jesus. (Thankfully, Concordia Publishing House is mindful of this.) And as Peter declares that Jesus is the Savior of all, you tell students that Jesus is their Savior. His life, death, and resurrection are for them.

This also gives comfort to Sunday School teachers, especially in times when you may feel you're accomplishing little more than babysitting and telling stories. But when you are telling of Jesus, you're doing exactly what the apostles did: they simply told what they'd seen and heard (Acts 4:20). The Holy Spirit did the saving. Telling of Jesus is what you've been given to do for those students. The Son of God, who concealed His glory in human flesh, is hiddenly present in the words you say to give your students grace and salvation.

Teaching Hymns in Sunday School

by Carl Schalk

In today's American culture, children seem to sing less and less. At home, mothers rarely sing to their children; too many fathers tend to think of singing as somehow unmanly. This is also true in schools, public and private, where singing in the classroom is less and less frequently encountered and where musical activities of any kind are usually among the first to go when finances are tight.

As a result, many children never learn—or are never taught—to sing even the basic patriotic songs, American folk songs, and carols that every child once knew and could sing from memory. *The Golden Book of Favorite Songs* that once graced every piano in most homes a half-century ago is no longer seen. Songs that were once the common musical property of each new generation of children have, in many places, faded from memory.

The situation is hardly different in Lutheran Sunday Schools, where the teaching of hymns, if they are taught at all, occupies a place of little importance. Much evidence suggests that children sing very little in Sunday Schools, in some instances not at all. When they do sing, it is most likely in preparation for some special program. Certainly, regular, ongoing, and organized teaching and learning of *hymns* in Sunday School, which ought to be a priority, seems to be the exception rather than the rule.

The result is that children are no longer learning the common repertoire of hymns that were once learned by all. Sunday School teachers, often with little musical knowledge or ability, are drafted into service with little or no understanding as to the important place that teaching hymns should occupy in their work. Teachers once sang to their classes or, at the least, could accompany them on the piano. Today, most Sunday School teachers won't sing and can't play. Instead, they play recordings, an activity that teaches children not how to sing, but how to listen to recordings.

What can be done?

Why Teach Hymns?

Teaching hymns is not an activity to “keep children busy” for a few minutes or to simply give them a change of pace from other, more important activities. Rather, it is an important part of the Church’s “handing over” to each new generation the rich treasury of the Church’s song. When we teach hymns, children begin to learn to sing *the Church’s song*.

Such handing over, if it is to be successful, must be intentional. It does not just happen. It takes preparation, intentional teaching, and persistent use until these “new” hymns are as familiar as those the children already know. Of course, there is room for an occasional fun song that teaches something of the Christian faith. But by teaching a basic repertoire of hymns that have sustained and built the faith of countless Christians over the centuries, we bequeath to our children a precious gift of song that will last them a lifetime.

By teaching hymns, we are also equipping and preparing children for direct participation in worship in which singing hymns plays a major role. This has significant implications for those who teach children hymns and for those who plan for worship. Teaching children hymns that are never sung in worship is self-defeating. But when children learn a hymn that is subsequently sung in worship, they are able to participate with the entire community of the church.

We can no longer assume that children will just “pick up” hymns as they hear them sung in church or elsewhere. Teaching and learning hymns needs to be intentional if it is to be successful.

A Time and a Place

If the Sunday School is serious about teaching hymns to children, then an appropriate time and a proper place need to be provided. Where possible, it may be best for each teacher to teach hymns to his or her own class. Small groups are easier to teach, and less time needs to be spent establishing order and discipline. Where this is not practical, an experienced music teacher, the choir director, an organist, or the cantor of the congregation might teach the entire group of students at the beginning of Sunday School.

It may be that ten or fifteen minutes each week could be devoted to learning a new hymn, reinforcing hymns that are in the process of being learned, or reviewing those that have already been learned. It would be helpful to repeat the hymn(s) being learned at the close of the Sunday School session, whether in individual classes or whether the entire Sunday School comes together for a closing devotional exercise. Such regular and ongoing reinforcement will bear rich dividends.

It is crucial that, regardless of who does the teaching, each teacher knows the songs to be taught and is able to sing them. Part of the Sunday School teachers’ preparation should be to learn the hymns to be taught so that they can sing them, talk about them, and engage the children in discussion as to each hymn’s meaning. Teachers could even sing them with the children as part of their teaching of the lesson for the day. This can hardly be accomplished if the hymns to be taught are announced only a week or two beforehand.

It is imperative, therefore, that a schedule of which hymns are to be taught needs to be established far enough in advance. Depending on the circumstances, one hymn a month may be the optimum, giving sufficient time for learning and reinforcing the learning over four weeks. A schedule is also important so that the hymn currently being learned can be scheduled for a Sunday morning service as appropriate. Singing the hymn they are learning with the congregation during the regular worship service gives children a sense of ownership, both of the hymn itself and of their participation in worship.

Which Hymns Should Be Taught?

The place to begin is the congregational hymnal. The hymnal ought to be the basic congregational resource from which songs are taken for teaching and learning. It is there that one finds countless examples of the rich treasury of the Church's song. Teaching hymns in Sunday School is not the place for teachers to foist their personal hymn preferences on children, nor is it the place to experiment with every passing musical fad. It is the opportunity to begin handing over to each new generation the rich treasury of the Church's song. Teach the traditional hymns. One place to begin is the listing of the Topical Index of Hymns and Songs (*LSB*, pp. 993–97). These hymns occupy a particularly important place in Lutheran worship.

How Can They Be Used in Worship?

Let me make two simple suggestions. First, as children learn new hymns in Sunday School, they need to be able to sing them with the entire congregation in the regular services of worship with songs they are making their own. Make certain that the hymns they are learning are scheduled for worship, not just once, but with enough repetition to ensure they are really integrated into the congregation's repertoire. Singing hymns they are learning together with parents, family, and the entire congregation is a wonderful way for children to participate.

Second, if the hymn being learned is a seasonal hymn, children of the Sunday School could sing several stanzas in unison, alternating with the congregation. Have the children sing from the choir loft. Above all, avoid parading the children into the chancel and having them sing facing the congregation. Nothing turns worship into entertainment as readily as this all-too-common practice. It sends the wrong signal to children as to what worship is all about. They are not there to amuse, but to help the congregation worship.

All this will take careful planning and coordination with the pastor and the musicians. But in the long run, it will bear rich fruit. Not only will children learn a repertoire of good hymns that will last their entire life, but also they will better understand their role in worship. It is a legacy worth handing over to each new generation.

Lesson Scope and Sequence: Jesus Shows He Is True God

These lessons focus on New Testament accounts where Jesus reveals His divine nature.

Lesson	Title	Text
1	Jesus Changes Water into Wine	John 2:1–11
2	Jesus Clears the Temple	John 2:13–22
3	Jesus Teaches Nicodemus	John 3:1–21
4	Jesus and the Samaritan Woman	John 4:1–42
5	Jesus Is Rejected at Nazareth	Luke 4:16–30
6	Jesus Calls Disciples	Matthew 4:12–25
7	Jesus Heals Many	Luke 4:31–44
8	Jesus Heals a Man Who Is Paralyzed	Mark 2:1–12
9	Jesus Calls Matthew	Mark 2:13–17
10	Jesus Calms a Storm	Mark 4:35–41
11	Jesus Heals Jairus’s Daughter	Mark 5:21–24, 35–43
12	Jesus Walks on Water	Matthew 14:22–33
13	Jesus Heals a Blind Man	John 9

Weekly Podcasts

For teachers using the Cross Explorations Sunday School material, there is a wonderful weekly podcast resource available at www.cph.org/sundayschool. Click on “Seeds of Faith Podcast” in the Sunday School tools. This weekly interview unpacks the richness of the Bible text. Teachers will gain practical, relevant, biblical information to inform their teaching of the lesson.

Preparing the Lesson

Jesus Changes Water into Wine

John 2:1–11

Date of Use

Key Point

In His first miracle at Cana in Galilee, Jesus showed that He is God. Through God's Word and physical means—water, bread, and wine—God shows us that Jesus is our Savior.

Law/Gospel

Like the disciples, I am unsure of who Jesus is. **Through His Word and Sacraments, Jesus shows He is my Savior and God.**

Context

This event occurs at the beginning of Jesus' Galilean ministry. It shows His glory as God through His first miracle.

Commentary

In ancient Jewish wedding custom, betrothal was the marriage contract and could not be broken except by divorce. After a period of time, the groom and his friends would go to the home of the bride and bring her and her friends to his home. There, they would have a feast, and the couple would begin living together without further ceremony. The feast would often last for days or even a week.

Christ, our Bridegroom, is betrothed to His Bride, the Church. Nothing can break His holy vow to take us as His own. Now we are in the waiting time as the Bridegroom prepares a home for us to live in forever (John 14:1–4).

Meanwhile, we are inviting guests by the work of evangelism. At the Last Day, Jesus will appear with all the company of heaven and take us to Himself, and the wedding feast will commence. We will have table fellowship with our Lord in the everlasting banquet (Revelation 19:6–10).

In this text, we see that Mary was there. She was possibly a friend of the bridal couple, since she seems to have had some involvement in the banquet and so was aware of the problem with the wine running low. Jesus is an invited guest, along with His six disciples. This event takes place early in His ministry—the full complement of the Twelve had not yet been chosen.

The lack of wine was a serious problem and shows a lack of preparation on the part of the steward of the wedding feast or of the groom. It would have caused acute embarrassment. This theme of unpreparedness is similar to the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25. Note also the anxiety connected with wedding feasts in other parables of Jesus, such as Matthew 22 and Luke 14. Similarly, we sin by our lack of faith and readiness to receive our Lord. We, too, need to repent, for if Christ were to return this instant, none of us on our own would be ready. Only by grace are we made acceptable in His sight.

Learning about the lack of wine, Mary turns to Jesus for help. And Jesus gives it. There were six large stoneware jars that were meant to hold water for the Jews' many ceremonial washings. Jesus commanded the servants to fill the jars with water, and then He turned that water into about 110 gallons (estimates vary) of premium wine, astonishing the steward, the groom, and all present.

The text concludes by saying that there were two results of this miracle, or sign. One is that it revealed the glory of the Lord and demonstrated the divinity of Jesus. That is the function of all miracles—to confirm the truth of the words of the prophet. The second result is that the disciples believed in Jesus. So, too, when we learn of the signs that Jesus did, we find that God strengthens our faith by the power of His Word.

To hear an in-depth discussion of this Bible account, visit cph.org/podcast and listen to our Seeds of Faith podcast each week.

Preparing the Lesson

Jesus Clears the Temple

John 2:13–22

Date of Use

Key Point

Jesus' cleansing of the temple carries a twofold message: He is the Lord of the temple in the flesh, and even more important, He is the true temple, through whom our sins are paid for and we are made heirs of eternal life.

Law/Gospel

I sin when I do not honor God's house or when I disturb the worship of others. **Jesus is my holy temple who, by His sacrifice on the altar of the cross, cleansed me from sin and made me a member of His Body, the Church.**

Context

John recounts this cleansing at the forefront of his Gospel in order to highlight it. Other evangelists place a similar cleansing later, during Holy Week (e.g., Matthew 21:12–17). When worshipers arrived at the temple, usually from far away, they exchanged their "unclean" Greek currency for Jewish coinage. They used this cash to purchase animals for sacrifice rather than leading a lamb or ox all the way from their often-distant homes.

Commentary

There are no figurines of Jesus brandishing a whip. That wouldn't fit well with our modern-day sentimentality about the Savior. But there's the real Jesus, lashing here and there to drive out the livestock and their owners. Over go the tables, "sacred" coins littering the ground. They have turned His "Father's house" into "a house of trade" (John 2:16). So Jesus brings them down like a house of cards.

None too happy with Jesus, the Jews demand a sign to verify that this troublemaker has the right to cause such a mess. To them, His reply was preposterous: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (v. 19). The Jews

can't believe their ears. How can Jesus possibly think that He can raise from the rubble an edifice that took nearly half a century to construct? But they miss the point, for "He was speaking about the temple of His body," John says (v. 21), which He would "reconstruct" within seventy-two hours after the Romans tore it down with hammer, spike, and spear.

The cleansing of the temple carries a twofold message. First, the true Lord of the temple was there, in the flesh. He came to purify what others had dirtied with their devotion to the god of currency. But second, and more important, He came as the true temple as well.

All the victims for sacrifice, all the blood and flesh burned upon the altar—indeed, the altar and temple themselves—would very soon reach their expiration date, as happened when Jesus expired on the cross, breathing out His Spirit. For the temple was no longer a place of wood and stone, but of flesh and bone. He was the temple, priest, and sacrifice—the fulfillment of all that Leviticus had foreshadowed.

Unlike every other sacrifice in the past, this Lamb would emerge from the altar ashes and rise from the tomb, the temple of His body flawless, save for the scars. But those wounds are the tokens of our healing, sacred tattoos etched into His hands, feet, and side to testify to the world that this once-destroyed temple has been rebuilt to house our own wounded bodies, perfect them, and raise them up to be like His.

To hear an in-depth discussion of this Bible account, visit cph.org/podcast and listen to our Seeds of Faith podcast each week.

Preparing the Lesson

Date of Use _____

Jesus Changes Water into Wine

John 2:1–11



Key Point

In His first miracle at Cana in Galilee, Jesus showed that He is God. Through God's Word and physical means—water, bread, and wine—God shows us that Jesus is our Savior.

Law/Gospel

Like the disciples, I am unsure of who Jesus is. **Through His Word and Sacraments, Jesus shows He is my Savior and God.**

Context

This event occurs at the beginning of Jesus' Galilean ministry. It shows His glory as God through His first miracle.

Commentary

In ancient Jewish wedding custom, betrothal was the marriage contract and could not be broken except by divorce. After a period of time, the groom and his friends would go to the home of the bride and bring her and her friends to his home. There, they would have a feast, and the couple would begin living together without further ceremony. The feast would often last for days or even a week.

Christ, our Bridegroom, is betrothed to His Bride, the Church. Nothing can break His holy vow to take us as His own. Now we are in the waiting time as the Bridegroom prepares a home for us to live in forever (John 14:1–4).

Meanwhile, we are inviting guests by the work of evangelism. At the Last Day, Jesus will appear with all the company of heaven and take us to Himself, and the wedding feast will commence. We will have table fellowship with our Lord in the everlasting banquet (Revelation 19:6–10).

In this text, we see that Mary was there. She was possibly a friend of the bridal couple, since she seems to have had some involvement in the banquet and so was aware of the problem with the wine running low. Jesus is an invited guest, along with His six disciples. This event takes place early in His ministry—the full complement of the Twelve had not yet been chosen.

The lack of wine was a serious problem and shows a lack of preparation on the part of the steward of the wed-

ding feast or of the groom. It would have caused acute embarrassment. This theme of unpreparedness is similar to the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25. Note also the anxiety connected with wedding feasts in other parables of Jesus, such as Matthew 22 and Luke 14. Similarly, we sin by our lack of faith and readiness to receive our Lord. We, too, need to repent, for if Christ were to return this instant, none of us on our own would be ready. Only by grace are we made acceptable in His sight.

Learning about the lack of wine, Mary turns to Jesus for help. And Jesus gives it. There were six large stoneware jars that were meant to hold water for the Jews' many ceremonial washings. Jesus commanded the servants to fill the jars with water, and then He turned that water into about 110 gallons (estimates vary) of premium wine, astonishing the steward, the groom, and all present.

The text concludes by saying that there were two results of this miracle, or sign. One is that it revealed the glory of the Lord and demonstrated the divinity of Jesus. That is the function of all miracles—to confirm the truth of the words of the prophet. The second result is that the disciples believed in Jesus. So, too, when we learn of the signs that Jesus did, we find that God strengthens our faith by the power of His Word.

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Greg Copeland © CPH

Preparing the Lesson

Date of Use _____

Jesus Clears the Temple

John 2:13–22



Key Point

Jesus' cleansing of the temple carries a twofold message: He is the Lord of the temple in the flesh, and even more important, He is the true temple, through whom our sins are paid for and we are made heirs of eternal life.

Law/Gospel

I sin when I do not honor God's house or when I disturb the worship of others. **Jesus is my holy temple who, by His sacrifice on the altar of the cross, cleansed me from sin and made me a member of His Body, the Church.**

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Commentary

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Jesus Shows He Is True God

New Testament 2

Arch® Book Connections

Children love the rhyming patterns found in Concordia Publishing House's beloved Arch Book series. Arch Books also offer many options for expanding and enriching your Cross Explorations lessons:

Read the Arch Book as a sort of readers theater. Have students take turns reading stanzas, pages, or even the whole book. This would make a great Opening activity or lesson review.

Make a "book trailer"—something like a movie trailer—of the Arch Book with a narration that "plugs" the book. Here's an example: He was small—his adversary, a giant! He had only five smooth stones, while his enemy had a spear as long as a weaver's beam. Thrill to the challenge! "Ha, ha, ha! Come out and fight, pip-squeak!" Tremble with fear! "King Saul, what shall we do?!" Read it for yourself and find out who comes out victorious! Available now at your Sunday School library! The story of David and . . . (bum, bum, baaa!) Goliath!

Do a dramatic presentation of an Arch Book, and share it with another class. If the upper-grade students do one story as a drama or trailer, make sure the lower grades see the final results. Let the younger children perform for the upper grades as well.

Have students create their own rhyming book with illustrations. Take digital pictures of the illustrations, and make them into a PowerPoint slide "book." These could be presented in a chapel service or in the Opening of Sunday School.

If your church provides "worship bags" to help keep young children focused during the worship service, consider inserting the Arch Books for the quarter in those bags. With each new quarter, change out the Arch Books to include the applicable stories.

The Arch Books that correspond to the lessons for this quarter include the following:

Lesson 1: *Jesus' First Miracle* 59-1598

The Wedding at Cana 59-2280

Lesson 3: *Nicodemus and Jesus* 59-2269

Lesson 4: *Jesus and the Woman at the Well* 59-1589

Lesson 6: *The Twelve Ordinary Men* 59-2222

Lesson 8: *Down through the Roof* 59-1531

Lesson 10: *Jesus Calms the Storm* 59-1581

Lesson 11: *Jesus Wakes the Little Girl* 59-2226

Lesson 12: *Jesus Walks on the Water* 59-1597

Jesus Shows He Is True God

New Testament 2

Weekly Bulletin Notes

Help parents and others stay connected to your Sunday School with these weekly bulletin summaries of the Bible lesson for the week. An electronic version for placement in your church bulletin is also available online at www.cph.org/sundayschool.

Lesson 1

Today in Sunday School, the children learn the story of “Jesus Changes Water into Wine” at the wedding in Cana. Through His first miracle, Jesus revealed Himself to be true God. God uses His Word and physical means—water, bread, and wine—to reveal to us that Jesus is our Savior. Discuss the story with your children: *“How we are like the disciples, not sure just who Jesus is? How do we sometimes doubt Him and His Word?”*

Lesson 2

Students in Sunday School today explore the story “Jesus Clears the Temple.” Jesus’ cleansing of the temple carries a twofold message for the Jews and for us: first, that the true Lord of the temple was here in the flesh, and second and more important, that Jesus is the true temple, who houses and perfects us, raising our bodies to be like His. Parents could ask, *“Why did Jesus clear the temple? How is Jesus our temple?”*

Lesson 3

Today in Sunday School, we learn about Jesus teaching the Pharisee Nicodemus under the cover of night. Since the fall into sin, all are born spiritually blind, sinful, and unclean. We are like Nicodemus and cannot see our sin or understand who Jesus truly is for us. As children of God, born of water and the Spirit, we can see our sinfulness and the salvation that is ours in Jesus Christ. Discuss with your children, *“How did Baptism change you? What does Baptism do?”*

Lesson 4

Today’s Sunday School lesson is the account of Jesus and the Samaritan woman. In this lesson, we learn that Jesus gives the Spirit, who cleanses us from sin and unrighteousness in the living water of Holy Baptism. Talk with your children about how sin causes us to have guilt and shame before God. Emphasize that through the water and Word of Holy Baptism all guilt and shame are removed. Discuss, *“Jesus comes for all people, no matter what race or color they are. Ordinary water leaves us thirsting for more, but the living water of Jesus, which flows from His Word and the font of Baptism, quenches our spiritual thirst forever.”*

Lesson 5

“Jesus Is Rejected at Nazareth” is the Sunday School lesson today. In Nazareth, throughout His ministry, and even today, Jesus is rejected by people who do not have faith in Him. God’s Word clearly shows that Jesus is God’s Son, and in faith, we believe. With your family, discuss, *“How does sin blind our eyes to the Savior and cause us to suffer from sin’s effects with sickness, trouble, and even physical death?”*

Lesson 6

Today in Sunday School, the lesson is, “Jesus Calls Disciples.” Jesus preached, taught, and healed, and He called His first disciples to do the same. The children learn that Jesus chose ordinary, sinful men to follow Him and be His disciples. In Baptism, Jesus chooses us to be His children. Underscore that in Jesus’ forgiveness we find peace and favor with God, whose Word testifies repeatedly and consistently that Jesus is His Son and our Savior. Ask your children, *“Through whom does Jesus continue His saving work where His Word is preached and His Sacraments are administered today?”*

Lesson 7

Lesson 1: Jesus Changes Water into Wine

Text: John 2:1–11

Date Used: _____

Key Point: In His first miracle at Cana in Galilee, Jesus showed that He is God. Through God’s Word and physical means—water, bread, and wine—God shows us that Jesus is our Savior.

Law/Gospel: Like the disciples, I am unsure of who Jesus is. **Through His Word and Sacraments, Jesus shows He is my Savior and God.**

To bring:

Engage

Approximate time: _____

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Suggested Songs: “Big, Bold, Powerful God,” Track 1; “For God So Loved the World,” Track 2; “Jesus, I Believe In You,” Track 4.

Bible Challenge Question: True or false: Baptism “works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.” **True. These words come from the Baptism section of Luther’s Small Catechism.**

Notes: _____

To bring:

Explore

Approximate time: _____

Level 1 (Grades 1–3)

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes: _____

Level 2 (Grades 4–6)

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes: _____

Adult Bible Study

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

To bring:

Express Options (Choose 2 or more!)

Approximate
times:

Slot 1:

Slot 2:

Slot 3*:

Slot 4*:

Slot 5*:

Slot 6*:

- ☐ **Music:** 1 John 5:20, Track 1

Songs of Thankfulness and Praise, Track 24

The Lord's Prayer, Track 26

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

- ☐ **Skit:** Jesus Changes Water into Wine

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

- ☐ **Craft:** Given-and-Shed-for-You Flip Stick

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

- ☐ **Food Activity:** Physical Signs

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

- ☐ **Group Activity:** Jesus In, With, and Under

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

- ☐ **Science Activity:** Milk Swirls

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Pronunciation Guide—New Testament 2

Jesus Shows He Is True God

Lesson 1: Jesus Changes Water into Wine, John 2:1–11

Cana	KAY nuh
Galilee	GAL ih lee

Lesson 2: Jesus Clears the Temple, John 2:13–22

No new names from previous lessons

Lesson 3: Jesus Teaches Nicodemus, John 3:1–21

Israel	IS ray ell
Moses	MOE zez
Nicodemus	nick oh DEE mus
Pharisees	FARE uh sees
Rabbi	RAB igh

Lesson 4: Jesus and the Samaritan Woman, John 4:1–42

Judea	joo DEE uh
Messiah	meh SIGH uh
Samaria	suh MAR ee uh
Samaritan	suh MAR ih tuhn
Sychar	SIGH kar

Lesson 5: Jesus Is Rejected at Nazareth, Luke 4:16–30

Capernaum	kuh PURR nay uhm
Elijah	ee LIE juh
Elisha	ee LIE shah
Isaiah	eye ZAY uh
Naaman	NAY a man
Nazareth	NAZ ah reth
Sidon	SIGH dun

Bible Words Levels 1 & 2

New Testament 2—Jesus Shows He Is True God

Lesson 1 Jesus Changes Water into Wine

Jesus Christ . . . is the true God and eternal life. 1 John 5:20

Lesson 2 Jesus Clears the Temple

If we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9

Lesson 3 Jesus Teaches Nicodemus

God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son. John 3:16

Lesson 4 Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

[Jesus said,] “Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty.” John 4:14

Lesson 5 Jesus Is Rejected at Nazareth

[Jesus said,] “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me . . . to proclaim good news.” Luke 4:18

Lesson 6 Jesus Calls Disciples

“Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Matthew 4:19

Lesson 7 Jesus Heals Many

Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Ephesians 6:10

Lesson 8 Jesus Heals a Man Who Is Paralyzed

Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.” Matthew 28:18

Lesson 9 Jesus Calls Matthew

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 1 John 1:8

Lesson 10 Jesus Calms a Storm

You, O Lord, are my hope, my trust, O LORD, from my youth. Psalm 71:5

Lesson 11 Jesus Heals Jairus’s Daughter

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23

Lesson 12 Jesus Walks on Water

Do not fear, only believe. Mark 5:36

Lesson 13 Jesus Heals a Blind Man

[Jesus said,] “I am the light of the world.” John 9:5

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Faith Words

New Testament 2—Jesus Shows He Is True God

Lesson 1 Jesus Changes Water into Wine

eternal: lasting forever, having no end

Lesson 2 Jesus Clears the Temple

cleanse: to clean and wash away dirt and spots

Lesson 3 Jesus Teaches Nicodemus

Baptism: to wash with water combined with God’s Word, in accordance with God’s command, for the forgiveness of sins

Lesson 4 Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

Messiah: the Hebrew word for the Greek word *Christ*; both mean “anointed”

Lesson 5 Jesus Is Rejected at Nazareth

reject: an unwillingness to accept something or someone

Lesson 6 Jesus Calls Disciples

disciple: one who follows another person to learn his teachings and then spreads them

Lesson 7 Jesus Heals Many

miracle: an extraordinary event that only God can do, showing God at work in human affairs; a sign that points to Jesus and tells who He is and what He does

Lesson 8 Jesus Heals a Man Who Is Paralyzed

authority: power over something or the right to do something

Lesson 9 Jesus Calls Matthew

sinner: someone who breaks God’s Law

Lesson 10 Jesus Calms a Storm

hope: to trust or depend on something without doubting

Lesson 11 Jesus Heals Jairus’s Daughter

eternal life: life without end in heaven through faith in Jesus

Lesson 12 Jesus Walks on Water

trust: to totally, really, unmistakably, sincerely, and truly believe that God can do what He says

Lesson 13 Jesus Heals a Blind Man

blind: (spiritual blindness) not believing in Jesus or understanding the truths of God’s Word as a result of sin

New Testament 2

Jesus Shows He Is True God

Lesson	Title	Date of Use
1	Jesus Changes Water into Wine	_____
2	Jesus Clears the Temple	_____
3	Jesus Teaches Nicodemus	_____
4	Jesus and the Samaritan Woman	_____
5	Jesus Is Rejected at Nazareth	_____
6	Jesus Calls Disciples	_____
7	Jesus Heals Many	_____
8	Jesus Heals a Man Who Is Paralyzed	_____
9	Jesus Calls Matthew	_____
10	Jesus Calms a Storm	_____
11	Jesus Heals Jairus's Daughter	_____
12	Jesus Walks on Water	_____
13	Jesus Heals a Blind Man	_____

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