

**Jesus Teaches
about God's Kingdom**

New Testament 3

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 their Explore Teacher Leaflets and the 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 Crafts 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 included:
 - 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 & 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. 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 comprising 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 Explore 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. Those volunteers with a love for crafts, music, drama, or other ways to apply the lesson truths to kids' lives 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 multi-graded. 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** with planning materials for the Sunday School Leader.
- **Preparing the Lesson** leaflets 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 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.

Coaching the Team

Sunday School leaders—pastors, deaconesses, directors of Christian education, and lay directors—have a challenging task. Surely it rivals the work of those who coach sports teams or reality TV “tribes.” As you lead the volunteer teachers at your church, you may want to keep in mind three things that they will look to you to provide.

Vision

It is the coach's job to inspire the team. Have your vision for Sunday School clear in your own mind, and be prepared to briefly explain why your congregation invests in Sunday School. Perhaps it is related to your congregation's mission statement. Perhaps you like to think in terms of the Great Commission, Christ's words from Matthew 28:19–20 or Moses' admonition in Deuteronomy 6:4–7.

Share that vision freely. Talk about it at teacher meetings, and include it in letters to your volunteers. Publish it regularly in the church's newsletter and on your website.

Make it your goal that every teacher, every Sunday, knows the high calling that he or she fulfills in teaching God's children His Word.

Skills

The coaching staff is responsible for training the team in the basic skills of the competition and the strategies that will lead to success. How will you equip your volunteer teachers for success in their tasks? Beginning teachers will hunger for training that will help them enter the classroom with confidence each Sunday. Veteran teachers benefit when they are challenged with new insights and exposed to new ways of engaging their students in the Bible.

Consider resources like *Making a Difference* (CPH item 22-2546) or *Quick Practical Studies for the Christian Teacher*, a downloadable book (CPH item 22-3121), as part of your equipping plan.

Resources

The coaching staff is where the team will look for the other resources they need to compete. Invest wisely but fully in the curriculum your teachers will need. Spare your team the frustration of not having enough student materials for all the students or not having the full set of teaching tools the curriculum recommends.

Consider stocking each classroom with a box or shelf of basic supplies (pencils, markers, paper, tape, glue, scissors, and the like) and a few extra Bibles. Increasingly, digital resources such as video clips, recordings, and web quests are becoming common tools for Sunday School instruction. Is your congregation providing computer access for your teachers? This is something every church should be thinking about and, God willing, planning for in the future.

The coach has an important role to fulfill and also needs support. Don't neglect your own spiritual training and nourishment through hearing God's Word and receiving the benefit of His Sacraments. May God continue to bless your work.

Make Summer Plans

Ah, summer! For many, it brings a break from routines, a time of relaxing and celebrating, warmer weather, outdoor activities, and fun in the sun. We open our doors and windows, children take a break from school, and we spend more time at parks and community celebrations. Summer brings fresh opportunities for our churches to reach out to the community.

How well does your Sunday School connect with the surrounding neighborhood and its children? Consider planning a celebration at your church with your neighbors in mind. Is there an event your church does already? How could you help steer that event toward reaching children in your area?

With every event, the possibilities are endless! Of course, any event you plan will be developed based on your location, interests, and facility. Here are just a few ideas to get you started.

Block Party

If allowed in your community, host a block party near your church with lots of fun games and prizes for kids.

Parking Lot Party

Partner with business owners at a nearby strip mall to host the event in their parking lot. Encourage each business to provide some kind of family-friendly food or giveaway item for the event.

Water or Beach Party

Include water games, plastic slides, dunk tanks, fishing games, beach-themed music, and the like.

World Record Event

Go for some kind of world record—biggest pizza, largest sandwich, longest gutter ice-cream sundae, or the most of almost any kind of activity.

Christmas in July

Invite the people of your church and the surrounding community to donate back-to-school items for youngsters in need. Collect the items during a “Christmas Party” to thank everyone for their gifts to the children.

“Who’s Got Talent?”

Invite everyone to come and be part of a neighborhood talent show.

Concert

Does your church have a musical group that performs semiprofessionally? Ask them to put on a concert for an outreach event.

Outreach events may not always bear fruit right away. People respond best to personal invitations from those who already participate in your church or Sunday School. Use these existing relational connections. The event may open a door to possibilities that never existed before. The Holy Spirit can use any event—big or small—to help someone connect with a church family. Your event just might be the spark the Holy Spirit uses to make all the difference—an eternal difference—for some children and their families.

Lesson Scope and Sequence: Jesus Teaches about God's Kingdom

These lessons focus on New Testament accounts related to Jesus' teachings.

Lesson	Title	Text
1	Jesus Preaches on the Mount	Matthew 5:1–12
2	Jesus Teaches Us to Trust	Matthew 6:25–34
3	Jesus Is Anointed	Luke 7:36–50
4	Jesus Feeds Five Thousand	John 6:1–14
5	The Transfiguration	Matthew 17:1–9
6	Jesus Sends the Seventy-Two	Luke 10:1–24
7	The Good Samaritan	Luke 10:25–37
8	The Good Shepherd	John 10:1–18
9	Jesus Teaches Us to Pray	Luke 11:1–13; John 16:23–33
10	Jesus Raises Lazarus	John 11:1–45
11	Jesus Seeks the Lost	Luke 15
12	Jesus Heals Ten Lepers	Luke 17:11–19
13	Jesus Blesses the Little Children	Mark 10:13–16

Weekly Podcasts

For teachers using the Cross Explorations Sunday School material, a wonderful weekly podcast resource is available at **www.cph.org/sundayschool**. Click on “Sunday School Tools” at the top of the page and select “Seeds of Faith Podcast” from the drop-down menu. 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 Preaches on the Mount

Matthew 5:1–12

Date of Use

Key Point

Because Jesus was poor, hungry, sorrowful, hated, and rejected for our sake, God forgives our sins and blesses us with all good gifts, especially life with Him forever.

Law/Gospel

In this world, I suffer and struggle because of my sin.
Jesus offers comfort, mercy, and grace through faith in Him and gives me eternal riches and blessings.

Context

Jesus has been baptized and tempted. He has heard the news of the arrest of John the Baptist. He has called His first disciples. Now, He begins His ministry in earnest, teaching to great crowds of people. This portion of Matthew is commonly known as the Sermon on the Mount.

Commentary

Jesus has power to heal, but the greatest gift He gives suffering humanity is His Word. Those He heals of one disease will succumb to another. Those He raises from the dead will die again. But those He brings to faith will have comfort now and untold blessings in the world to come.

The Greek word *makarios* ("blessed") is a "declaration of blessedness" upon the person who is in communion with God through Jesus Christ. There are many beatitudes in the Bible, including fifteen in Luke's Gospel (1:45; 6:20–22; 7:23; 10:23; 11:27–28; 12:37–38, 43; 14:14–15; and 23:29).

In the kingdom of God, the hungry are filled, the mourning rejoice, the last become first, and God chooses the foolish to shame the wise and learned.

The Beatitudes are Christological—all of them apply to Jesus. He was poor and hungry, a man of sorrows acquainted with grief. Yet it was for the joy set before Him that He endured the cross, despising its shame. He now sits at the right hand of God. He was hated, despised, rejected, cast out, beaten, spat upon, and crucified. Yet now, risen from the dead, He has a name that is above all other names, at which every knee shall bow in heaven and on earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father.

The Beatitudes are Gospel. Do not turn them into Law. They are descriptive, not prescriptive. They show what life is like in Christ: things may be bad for you in this life, but in the life to come, you will have joy forevermore.

Finally, the Beatitudes are both spiritual and physical in their meaning. Luke says, "Blessed are the poor"; Matthew says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Both are true. Generally speaking, Christianity has advanced most rapidly among the poor, the hungry, the outcast, the hopeless of society. In the United States, where studies have shown that most people living below the official poverty line have two cars and a television, we must take a more spiritual application.

The statement "Blessed are those who hunger" is talking about those who are spiritually hungry, but it can also apply to those who are physically hungry. Jesus fed the five thousand, and they were filled. The Greek word *chortazo* ("fill") is used in both places. This vivid word derives from *chortos* ("grass") and indicates a state of being full like a cow that has eaten so much it couldn't possibly hold another bite. By grace we hunger after the things of God, and He fills us to the brim. It is likewise with those who weep.

Everyone in the world has trouble and sorrow, and God uses those troubles to draw people to Himself through Christ. In the arms of our suffering Savior, we find comfort and consolation. At the same time, our deepest grief is over our sins. Yet Jesus Christ takes our sins upon His own body on the cross and gives us the same beatitude He gave the thief: "Today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43).

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 Teaches Us to Trust

Matthew 6:25–34

Date of Use

Key Point

As we seek God's kingdom through Christ, we are freed from worry, knowing we have all we need.

Law/Gospel

I worry about my life because I depend on myself instead of on God. **Jesus, who provided for my greatest need by paying for my sins on the cross, describes the Father's care for creation to show me His love and take away my worry.**

Context

Jesus preaches to all believers, those who are "poor in spirit" and therefore possess God's kingdom by grace, through faith (Matthew 5:1–3). He has taught His followers to pray for spiritual, heavenly blessings in the Lord's Prayer (6:5–14) and to find lasting treasure in heaven, not on earth (6:19–24). Now, He assures His disciples that the Father cares for their physical needs as well.

Commentary

Being anxious or worried is sin because it demonstrates unbelief in God's providential care. Faced with the accusation of God's Law, our sinful inclination is to deny that we have a problem with worry, but making excuses will accomplish nothing before God's judgment seat. Repentance is our only option, especially as we face the one unavoidable cause of anxiety in life: death. In fact, our preoccupation with food, clothing, health, and wealth is another sign of our unbelief.

Jesus, in His incarnation, entered our stressful, anxious existence and was "tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). He endured hunger, homelessness, and hatred from others but never worried about food, clothing, shelter, or safety. He always had perfect faith in His Father, so He wasn't concerned in the slightest about proper medical care as He faced the cross for our sins. The Lily of the Field was thrown into the oven of God's wrath to be burned up for all of our sins of worry and care and faithlessness. Therefore, He has overcome our greatest anxiety by dying

to "destroy the one who has the power of death," Satan (Hebrews 2:14). He has delivered us from the slavery of the fear of death by promising us everlasting resurrected life with Him.

Now the same Jesus authoritatively tells us, "Do not be anxious, but simply trust in Me." His promises relieve our anxieties and reveal a gracious heavenly Father who just can't wait to bless us. His analogies for this are vivid. Just picture a flock of geese tilling, sowing, waiting, and harvesting or lilies picking cotton, spinning thread, and weaving garments. Both are ridiculous! The Lord cares for them! This does not mean that we are to be lazy (see 2 Thessalonians 3:10), but as we live out our vocations, we have no cause for worry at all.

Yet to remain free from worry, we must always put into practice Jesus' admonition: "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). That must be our top priority—if we can even call it a priority. What God has done and is still doing for us in Jesus Christ—the Gospel, the righteousness of God—goes beyond being a priority and actually is all in all for us. So we joyfully seek God's kingdom in Word, Sacrament, and prayer. These are far more real and enduring than the stuff of this life. Jesus bids us look to Him as the focal point of all of our life, to rest in His forgiveness, and to find in Him the secure ground of confidence for facing all of life's apparent ambiguities and anxieties.

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Jesus Preaches on the Mount

Matthew 5:1–12



Key Point

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Preparing the Lesson

Date of Use _____

Jesus Teaches Us to Trust

Matthew 6:25–34


Key Point

As we seek God's kingdom through Christ, we are freed from worry, knowing we have all we need.

Law/Gospel

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Jesus preaches to all believers, those who are "poor in spirit" and therefore possess God's kingdom by grace, through faith (Matthew 5:1–3). He has taught His followers to pray for spiritual, heavenly blessings in the Lord's Prayer (6:5–14) and to find lasting treasure in heaven, not on earth (6:19–24). Now, He assures His disciples that the Father cares for their physical needs as well.

Commentary

Being anxious or worried is sin because it demonstrates unbelief in God's providential care. Faced with the accusation of God's Law, our sinful inclination is to deny that we have a problem with worry, but making excuses will accomplish nothing before God's judgment seat. Repentance is our only option, especially as we face the one unavoidable cause of anxiety in life: death. In fact, our preoccupation with food, clothing, health, and wealth is another sign of our unbelief.

Jesus, in His incarnation, entered our stressful, anxious existence and was "tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). He endured hunger, homelessness, and hatred from others but never worried about food, clothing, shelter, or safety. He always had perfect faith in His Father, so He wasn't concerned in the slightest about proper medical care as He faced the cross for our sins. The Lily of the Field was thrown into the oven of God's wrath to be burned up for all of our sins of worry and care and faithlessness.

Therefore, He has overcome our greatest anxiety by dying to "destroy the one who has the power of death," Satan (Hebrews 2:14).

He has delivered us from the slavery of the fear of death by promising us everlasting resurrected life with Him.

Now the same Jesus authoritatively tells us, "Do not be anxious, but simply trust in Me." His promises relieve our anxieties and reveal a gracious heavenly Father who just can't wait to bless us. His analogies for this are vivid. Just picture a flock of geese tilling, sowing, waiting, and harvesting or lilies picking cotton, spinning thread, and weaving garments. Both are ridiculous! The Lord cares for them! This does not mean that we are to be lazy (see 2 Thessalonians 3:10), but as we live out our vocations, we have no cause for worry at all.

Yet to remain free from worry, we must always put into practice Jesus' admonition: "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). That must be our top priority—if we can even call it a priority. What God has done and is still doing for us in Jesus Christ—the Gospel, the righteousness of God—goes beyond being a priority and actually is all in all for us. So we joyfully seek God's kingdom in Word, Sacrament, and prayer. These are far more real and enduring than the stuff of this life. Jesus bids us look to Him as the focal point of all of our life, to rest in His forgiveness, and to find in Him the secure ground of confidence for facing all of life's apparent ambiguities and anxieties.

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



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Jesus Teaches about God's Kingdom

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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 2: *Jesus Teaches Us Not to Worry* 59-2245

Lesson 4: *What's for Lunch?* 59-1510

Lesson 5: *Jesus Shows His Glory* 59-2215

Lesson 7: *The Story of the Good Samaritan* 59-1596

Lesson 8: *Jesus, My Good Shepherd* 59-1595

Lesson 9: *The Lord's Prayer* 59-1575

Lesson 10: *Get Up, Lazarus!* 59-1568

Lesson 11: *The Parable of the Lost Sheep* 59-2218

The Parable of the Prodigal Son 59-2224

Lesson 12: *The Thankful Leper* 59-2212

Lesson 13: *Jesus Blesses the Children* 59-1500

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Jesus Teaches about God's Kingdom

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Bulletin Notes

The following summaries of this quarter's *Growing in Christ*® and *Cross Explorations* Sunday School lessons are intended to provide a Sunday School link to parents and the congregation. These paragraphs can be copied from the Director CD using a word-processing program.

Consider using these summaries:

- Print them in your congregation's weekly bulletin or newsletter.
- E-mail them as a weekly e-mail encouragement for student and parent Sunday School participation.
- E-mail them as a review e-mail follow-up to Sunday School each week.
- E-mail them as a "staying in touch" note or e-mail for students or families who are absent.

Lesson 1

"Jesus Preaches on the Mount" is today's Sunday School lesson. Jesus explains in His Word that He was poor, hungry, sorrowful, hated, and rejected for our sake so that God would grant us His gifts and blessings. *Discuss with your children, "How does our sin blinds us? What does Jesus offers us through faith in Him?"*

Lesson 2

In today's Sunday School lesson, "Jesus Teaches Us to Trust," we hear another portion of Jesus Sermon on the Mount. The theme? Do not worry! Talk with your children about how God has provided for them. List the blessings God gives your family in this life. Then talk about the eternal and spiritual blessings that God gives through His Son, Jesus. *Ask your children, "What do you worry about? How has God answered that worry?"*

Lesson 3

In today's Sunday School lesson, "Jesus Is Anointed," the children learned how in faith, a sinful woman lovingly anointed Jesus. They also learned how in faith we grasp God's free mercy, receive the forgiveness of sins, and respond with acts of love and praise. As a family, consider ways that you might respond to God's mercy. *Ask your children, "What sins will God forgive?"*

Lesson 4

Today, the Sunday School classes learned about "Jesus Feeds Five Thousand." They learned that in His love, God promises to care for all our physical and spiritual needs and gives us the greatest treasure—His Son and the gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation. *As a family discuss, "In what ways has God provided for both your physical and spiritual needs?"*

Lesson 5

Today's Sunday School, lesson is "The Transfiguration" of our Lord. At the transfiguration, Jesus' glory was unveiled before the disciples. Today, His glory is unveiled for us in the Word preached by the pastor, in the water of Baptism, and in the bread and wine of His Holy Supper. In heaven, we shall see Him in all His glory! *Discuss with your children, "How are we like the disciples who trembled at the sound of God's voice?"*

Lesson 6

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Lesson 1: Jesus Preaches on the Mount

Text: Matthew 5:1–12

Date Used: _____

Key Point: Because Jesus was poor, hungry, sorrowful, hated, and rejected for our sake, God forgives our sins and blesses us with all good gifts, especially life with Him forever.

Law/Gospel: In this world I suffer and struggle because of my sin. **Jesus offers comfort, mercy, and grace through faith in Him and gives me eternal riches and blessings.**

To bring:

Engage

Approximate time: _____

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Suggested Songs: I Shall Dwell in the House of the Lord Forever, Track 1; The King of Love My Shepherd Is, Track 2; Now That You Know, Track 4.

Bible Challenge Question: True or false? The Beatitudes are relevant to our lives today.

True.

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): _____

Notes:

To bring:

Express Options (Choose 2 or more!)

Approximate
times:

Slot 1:

Slot 2:

Slot 3*:

Slot 4*:

Slot 5*:

Slot 6*:

Music: Ephesians 1:7, Track 3

Philippians 4:19, Track 14

What a Friend We Have in Jesus, Track 24

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

☐ **Skit:** Jesus Preaches on the Mount

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

☐ **Craft:** Blessed-Are-You Flower

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

☐ **Food Activity:** Bountiful Blessings

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

☐ **Group Activity:** Kinesthetic Game

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

*If applicable

Lesson 2: Jesus Teaches Us to Trust

Text: Matthew 6:25–34

Date Used: _____

Key Point: As we seek God’s kingdom through Christ, we are freed from worry, knowing we have all we need.

Law/Gospel: I worry about my life because I depend on myself instead of on God. **Jesus, who provided for my greatest need by paying for my sins on the cross, describes the Father’s care for creation to show me His love and take away my worry.**

To bring:

Engage

Approximate time:

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Suggested Songs: Now That You Know, Track 4; I Will Rely on Him, Track 5; The Baa Baa Song, Track 6.

Bible Challenge Question: What does the word *anxious* mean, and why do we not need to be anxious? **To be afraid or nervous of something; because Jesus takes care of us**

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): _____

Notes:

To bring:

Express Options (Choose 2 or more!)

Approximate
times:

Slot 1:

Slot 2:

Slot 3*:

Slot 4*:

Slot 5*:

Slot 6*:

Music: I Will Rely on Him, Track 7

The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want, Track 19

We All Believe in One True God, Track 22

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

Skit: Jesus Teaches Us to Trust

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

☐ **Craft:** Do-Not-Be-Anxious Dish Towel

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

☐ **Food Activity:** Trusting Trail Mix

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

☐ **Group Activity:** The Providing Path

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

*If applicable

Pronunciation Guide—New Testament 3

Jesus Teaches about God's Kingdom

Lesson 2: Jesus Teaches Us to Trust Matthew 6:25-34

Solomon SAHL uh mun

Gentile JEN tile

Lesson 3: Jesus Is Anointed Luke 7:36-50

Pharisees FARE uh sees

Simon SIGH mun

Lesson 4: Jesus Feeds Five Thousand John 6:1-14

denarii de NAIR ee igh

Galilee GAL ih lee

Tiberias tie BEER ee uhs

Lesson 5: The Transfiguration Matthew 17:1-9

Moses MOE zez

Elijah ee LIE juh

Lesson 6: Jesus Sends the Seventy-Two Luke 10:1-24

Chorazin koh RAY zin

Bethsaida beth SAY ih duh

Tyre tire

Sidon SIGH dun

Capernaum kuh PURR nay uhm

Hades HAY dees

Lesson 7: The Good Samaritan Luke 10:25-37

Jerusalem jeh ROO sah lem

Jericho JEHR ih coe

Levite LEE vyte

Bible Words Level 1

New Testament 3—Jesus Teaches about God’s Kingdom

Lesson 1 Jesus Preaches on the Mount

Blessed are you . . . for yours is the kingdom of God. Luke 6:20

Lesson 2 Jesus Teaches Us to Trust

He cares for you. 1 Peter 5:7

Lesson 3 Jesus Is Anointed

[Jesus said,] “Your sins are forgiven.” Luke 7:48

Lesson 4 Jesus Feeds Five Thousand

God . . . richly provides us with everything to enjoy. 1 Timothy 6:17

Lesson 5 The Transfiguration

The Word became flesh . . . and we have seen His glory. John 1:14

Lesson 6 Jesus Sends the Seventy-Two

[Jesus said,] “As the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you.” John 20:21

Lesson 7 The Good Samaritan

The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many. Mark 10:45

Lesson 8 The Good Shepherd

“I am the good shepherd. I know My own and My own know Me.” John 10:14

Lesson 9 Jesus Teaches Us to Pray

[Jesus said,] “Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.” John 16:24

Lesson 10 Jesus Raises Lazarus

[Jesus said,] “I am the resurrection and the life.” John 11:25

Lesson 11 Jesus Seeks the Lost

The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. Luke 19:10

Lesson 12 Jesus Heals Ten Lepers

Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved. Jeremiah 17:14

Lesson 13 Jesus Blesses the Little Children

[Jesus said,] “Let the children come to Me . . . for to such belongs the kingdom of God.” Mark 10:14

Faith Words

New Testament 3—Jesus Teaches about God’s Kingdom

Lesson 1 Jesus Preaches on the Mount

Blessed—to have God’s good gifts

Lesson 2 Jesus Teaches Us to Trust

Cares—Those who love us take care of us in many ways, even some ways we don’t know about or recognize.

Lesson 3 Jesus Is Anointed

Debt—money or goods owed to another person

Lesson 4 Jesus Feeds Five Thousand

Signs—Jesus’ signs were things such as miracles that showed He was God.

Lesson 5 The Transfiguration

Transfigured—a change in appearance that reveals something about the person or thing changed

Lesson 6 Jesus Sends the Seventy-Two

Harvest—the fruits or vegetables that are ripe now in your area

Lesson 7 The Good Samaritan

Mercy—when you show love and compassion to someone in need

Lesson 8 The Good Shepherd

Shepherd—someone who leads and cares for sheep

Lesson 9 Jesus Teaches Us to Pray

Hallowed—kept holy; living according to God’s Word

Lesson 10 Jesus Raises Lazarus

Resurrection—to rise from the dead

Lesson 11 Jesus Seeks the Lost

Prodigal—reckless in spending money

Lesson 12 Jesus Heals Ten Lepers

Leper—a person suffering from the disease of leprosy

Lesson 13 Jesus Blesses the Little Children

Depend—to rely on someone else

New Testament 3

Jesus Teaches about God's Kingdom

Lesson	Title	Date of Use
1	Jesus Preaches on the Mount	_____
2	Jesus Teaches Us to Trust	_____
3	Jesus Is Anointed	_____
4	Jesus Feeds Five Thousand	_____
5	The Transfiguration	_____
6	Jesus Sends the Seventy-two	_____
7	The Good Samaritan	_____
8	The Good Shepherd	_____
9	Jesus Teaches Us to Pray	_____
10	Jesus Raises Lazarus	_____
11	Jesus Seeks the Lost	_____
12	Jesus Heals Ten Lepers	_____
13	Jesus Blesses the Little Children	_____