

**The Holy Spirit
Leads the Apostles**

New Testament 5

DIRECTOR HANDBOOK



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3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, MO 63118-3968
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Manufactured in the United States of America

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Welcome to Cross Explorations

Cross Explorations is 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**—recorded music, music activities for each lesson, and PowerPoint slides with linked music reinforce each 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**—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 whether 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. 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 composing 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 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** 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 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.

What Works: Classroom Discipline

by Jane Fryar

How did you learn to teach Sunday School? Most of us learned by watching other teachers. We remember our third grade Sunday School teacher helping us act out Bible stories, so we find a way to have our third graders do it. We recall our youth leader bringing doughnuts every week, so we stop at the doughnut shop on our way to class.

More than Action Research

Using the methods we have seen working well has legitimacy. It even has a name: “action research.” We notice what works for us or for others and incorporate it into our teaching repertoire. Until 1970 or so, “teaching as we were taught” and using “action research” were just about the only way to go—for volunteer and professional teachers.

The decade of the 70s, though, marked the beginning of an explosion in scientific research focused on answering the question, “What works in classrooms?” The research continues today, more vigorously than ever. But the dust of the initial explosion has started to settle. By putting many similar studies side by side and noting conclusions in a process known as meta-analysis, researchers have shown that certain approaches make a real difference. We don’t have all the answers, but we do have some!

As God’s children, we see these answers as a gift from our Creator! As Martin Luther explained the First Article of the Apostles’ Creed, he noted that our Lord has given “eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses.” Eyes that see, ears that hear, and minds that reason make it possible to explore our world, to use the knowledge God has given in ways that honor Him.

What better way to do that than in teaching God’s redeemed, baptized people to know and love Him more and more?

Making Learning Possible through Discipline

It only makes good sense. Students who focus on the topic at hand learn more than those who fail to focus. Educators call this “time on task.” In some classrooms, so many disruptions occur that students spend only twenty-one percent of their time on task! In the best classrooms, researchers have shown that students spend more than seventy percent of their time on task. Guess who learns more!

Think about it. How much time does your class spend “on task”? Want to know? Have a friend sit in the back of your room with a sheet of paper and a list of numerals from one to fifty—assuming your class session is fifty minutes long. Your partner should put a *Y* (yes) or an *N* (no) next to each numeral in answer to the question: Is the class focused on learning now? Then plug the data into this formula:

Number of yeses

divided by

Total number of minutes available

$\times 100 = \% \text{ time on task}$

Would you like to increase the learning that goes on in your Sunday School class? Research points to four key “best practices” you can use.

Set Reasonable Rules and Procedures

Think first in terms of routine classroom events and the needs of your students. Ask yourself questions like these:

- How quickly do you get into the lesson? What keeps you from beginning the moment the clock strikes nine? Do you prepare materials before class? Could students help you rearrange chairs or tables before class if rearranging is necessary? How could you incentivize everyone to arrive a few minutes early?
- How could you distribute materials more efficiently? Could learners pick up Bibles, pencils, and snacks as they arrive? What other routines would help you?
- What events consistently disrupt learning? Does a bell ring midway through class? Who could help prevent that? Do specific students ask every week to use the restroom? How could you create a process for dismissing them that would keep them safe while not interrupting your train of thought?
- Now consider classroom rules. Do students know what you expect? Experts suggest these approaches:
 - **Let class members help you set rules.** Accept ideas and suggestions, but make it clear that as the adult in the room, you have final responsibility and, thus, authority.
 - **Limit rules in number.** Then make sure everyone understands both the “what” and the “why” behind each rule. Post a list. If you share a space, put the rules on a poster and bring it back week by week.
 - **Attach clear and appropriate rewards and consequences to each rule.** Remember, rules that are unenforced become unenforceable.

Stay “With-it”

“With-it-ness” is that sixth sense, the “eyes in the back of a teacher’s head.” Even while we focus on E.J.’s question, we notice Jill is fidgeting and Madeline looks sleepy. And—here’s the key—we act on what we see to prevent problems. We move to stand beside Jill. We ask Madeline a question. We propose a contest to draw everyone’s attention back to the topic at hand.

This, of course, means arranging furniture to make it possible. If you share a space, be creative! But do think about how you to enact a four-by-four approach—moving to within four feet of each learner every four minutes.

Intervene

Effective procedures combined with teacher “with-it-ness” will prevent many disruptions, and prevention is your goal. But disruptions will occur in even the best classrooms. When you notice an issue developing, address it immediately! Students who have collaborated in developing rules and who have seen you enforce them with firm, caring consistency will generally respond to a simple, quiet reminder.

Remember, most rule breaking is not intended as an insult. Usually, disruptive children have been distracted. Or they are hungry. Or they haven’t fully engaged the concept you’re communicating. Teachers who avoid personalizing disruptive behavior can deal more effectively with it. Address the underlying problem, and the disruption disappears. The other articles in this issue offer a multitude of suggestions for tackling specific discipline issues.

Develop Good Relationships with Individuals

We’ve saved the most important point for last. When, in Christ, we care about our students, they know it. They respond, in turn, by loving us in the Savior too. Care is never a “group policy.” One by one, child by child, we notice new shoes, we pray for ailing grandparents, we phone or e-mail to ask about that geometry test.

In maintaining a well-managed classroom, we make learning possible. But even more importantly, we model Jesus’ concern and His love for our students.



Tools for Classroom Management

by Lyla Glaskey

Sunday School teachers deal with the same classroom disruptions that regular classroom teachers face, but often with fewer resources. It can be frustrating when a carefully planned lesson gets derailed by the very students the teacher is trying to reach with the Gospel. A few effective tools for classroom management can make a big difference in many situations.

Greet, Touch, and Notice

The first tool seems too simple to be significant, but it is the foundation of a disciplined, effective classroom. As well-known youth minister Josh McDowell remarks, “Rules without relationships lead to rebellion.”

The first and last few minutes of class are a golden opportunity to build relationships with students. Teachers who are running late, making copies, getting organized, or going over the lesson one more time are losing precious minutes that could be spent building and strengthening student relationships. It takes mere seconds to greet, touch, and notice—and it gains valuable minutes of instruction.

A smile, a quick touch on the top of the head or shoulder, and a personal welcome to the classroom go a long way in cultivating cooperative behavior later when the students are supposed to be listening to the lesson.

Noticing new shoes, a personal success, or a family difficulty lets students know you care for them.

A hand shake, high-five, or pat on the shoulder as students leave lets the students know their teacher still loves and cares for them, even if there were problems during class.

Even a sullen and difficult child could respond to greet, touch, and notice. For children who struggle with accepting affection or trusting adults, noticing things about them is less threatening than compliments. For these kids, a compliment may make them wonder what the teacher wants from them. If they have a negative view of themselves, they may feel the compliments are not honest. Try noticing trivial things about the child—new shoes or fresh haircut. Later you might comment on things that are a bit more personal—seeing Dad in church or noting that an aunt is in the hospital. Noticing builds relationships with these withdrawn children. Be aware, though, that touch can be misconstrued and use it sensitively.

Avoid Power Struggles

When teachers get into power struggles with students, especially in front of fellow students, everyone loses. Many children and young people are unwilling to back down in front of their friends, no matter how much they might actually want to. The teacher cannot win without damaging the relationship or lose without looking weak to the class. It is best to avoid power struggles whenever possible and to handle them privately when they cannot be avoided. Often, it is a matter of knowing who has control of what actions in a given

situation. We can avoid power struggles and give students some positive control.

Make Enforceable Statements

Anyone who has every tried to get a toddler to eat something he didn't like knows that children have wills of their own. Sometimes adults invite power struggles just with the way they phrase their directions or requests. Enforceable statements are an easy way to communicate without setting the stage for trouble. Instead of telling students what to do, the teacher tells the students what he or she will do. The teacher avoids telling children to do something that the teacher cannot, in fact, make them do. It helps the teacher consider what aspects of the classroom experience are really within his or her control. She may not be able to make the kids be quiet, but she can decide who gets a treat at the end of the lesson.

"Be quiet!" vs. "I will begin when it is quiet."

"Turn to Genesis." vs. "We will be reading in Genesis."

"Stop messing around, or you won't get any candy today!" vs. "I give candy at the end to those who listen."

"Quit asking silly questions!" vs. "I will answer questions about other topics after class."

Bank Goodwill with Choices

Giving students choices is like opening a savings account. Each time students are allowed to make a choice, the teacher has made a deposit in his or her control account. Later, when it matters most, teachers can make a withdrawal.

When offering choices, give only two options and make sure you like both.

Some choices help prevent problems. "Would you like to use crayons or colored pencils today? Shall we sit in chairs or in a circle on the floor? Would you like to say memory individually or in pairs? Will we stand or sit to read Scripture?"

Some choices can be used to quickly stop a problem. Make sure both choices are realistic. Never give an unreasonable or sarcastic option. "Will you control that behavior or do we need to talk about it after class? Would you like to share that toy or shall I put it away for the day? Would you like to walk to opening or tiptoe?"

Caution! When using choices to deal with a problem, it is easy to fall into a power struggle. To avoid a power struggle, these hints can make all the difference.

Keep your voice and attitude calm and pleasant. If you show anger or frustration, you are making the problem yours instead of the student's.

Assume the child is going to choose the least severe option. Do not wait for an answer. Give the choice, assume he or she will straighten up, and keep teaching.

Remember the advice about enforceable statements. Demanding eye contact will create a power struggle.

Once when a teacher was speaking to a parent after class, the mother's three-year-old got very interested in the toys in the classroom. When the parent tried to leave, the little girl didn't want to go. A power struggle such as only a strong-willed toddler can create ensued. The teacher knelt down next to the child and gave a simple choice. "Would you like to walk to the sanctuary holding Mommy's hand or would you like to hold mine?" The little tyke got the control she was craving and Mommy got to church on time. The mother thought the teacher had worked some kind of magic spell. It wasn't magic. It was offering choices.

These helpful techniques and many others can be found in resources from Love and Logic Institute or author Kevin Leman's Reality Discipline. Sometimes kids misbehave no matter what the teacher does. These resources will also provide in-depth help with effective consequences for misbehavior.



Lesson Scope and Sequence: The Holy Spirit Leads the Apostles

These lessons focus on New Testament accounts including Philip and the Ethiopian as well as Paul's First Missionary Journey.

Lesson	Title	Text
1	God Sends the Holy Spirit	Acts 2:1–21
2	Peter and John Heal the Lame Man	Acts 3
3	God's Servant Stephen	Acts 6–7
4	Philip and the Ethiopian	Acts 8:26–40
5	The Conversion of Paul	Acts 9:1–31
6	Dorcas	Acts 9:36–43
7	Peter and Cornelius	Acts 10
8	Peter's Escape from Prison	Acts 12
9	Paul's First Missionary Journey	Acts 13–14
10	Paul and Timothy	Acts 15:1–16:5
11	Lydia	Acts 16:11–15
12	Paul and Silas in Prison	Acts 16:16–40
13	Paul Sails for Rome	Acts 27

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

God Sends the Holy Spirit

Acts 2:1–21

Date of Use

Key Point

At Pentecost, God sent the Holy Spirit to His Church. Through Word and Sacrament, God gives us His Holy Spirit to create and sustain saving faith in Jesus.

Law/Gospel

I sin when I believe that I can understand and trust in God on my own. **By the power and work of the Holy Spirit through His Word, the Spirit grants me faith in Jesus and empowers me to will and do that which is good and God pleasing.**

Context

Pentecost, which means “fiftieth,” occurred fifty days after Jesus’ glorious resurrection on Easter. Forty days after He rose again, Jesus ascended to God’s right hand, and now, ten days later, He fulfills His promise to send the Holy Spirit, who will “bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you” (John 14:26).

Commentary

In Acts 2, the Holy Spirit introduces Himself in “a mighty rushing wind” (v. 2) and “divided tongues as of fire” (v. 3). However, Acts 2:11 reveals the great miracle of Pentecost. Those who hear the apostles say, “We hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” Empowered by the Holy Spirit, Peter stands and proclaims God’s mighty works of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Peter cites Joel 2:28–32 as his sermon text, and then he proclaims that Joel’s prophecy is fulfilled on Pentecost. Peter’s sermon draws our attention to Jesus Christ and His suffering, dying, and rising. The Holy Spirit comes to us and works through the preaching of Christ and Him crucified and risen for the forgiveness of our sins.

The coming of the Holy Spirit and the preaching of the Gospel also reverse the tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1–9). In Genesis 11, the people of the world had one language, but they arrogantly sought to make a name for themselves (Genesis 11:4). As a consequence, God confused their language and dispersed them (Genesis 11:7–8).

The coming of the Holy Spirit reverses God’s judgment at Babel. While people around the world may still speak different languages, the Holy Spirit unites them in the Gospel—that is, the preaching of Christ crucified and risen.

In John 14:23–31, Jesus promises the Holy Spirit to His disciples as He gets ready to suffer, die, rise again, and then leave them. Jesus talks about demonstrating our love for Him by keeping His Word (John 14:23). He promises the Holy Spirit, “whom the Father will send in My name” (John 14:26). Father, Son, and Holy Spirit all work together as one to give comfort and peace in the message of the Gospel (John 14:27).

When Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit, He explains the Holy Spirit’s “job description” as well: “He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you” (John 14:26). Jesus also said, “[The Holy Spirit] will bear witness about Me” (John 15:26), and “[The Holy Spirit] will glorify Me, for He will take what is Mine and declare it to you” (John 16:14). The Holy Spirit comes not through uncertain dreams, visions, or feelings, but through the certain and comforting message of peace and forgiveness of sins won by Jesus Christ.

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

Peter and John Heal the Lame Man

Acts 3

Date of Use

Key Point

We are all lame beggars before God. Through the Means of Grace—God’s Word and Sacraments—God gives us faith to believe in Jesus as our Savior and grants us forgiveness, the cure for all sin.

Law/Gospel

Disability and illness are physical symptoms of sin in the world. **Through His Son, God gives me forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation—the cure for all sin.**

Context

In the days following Christ’s ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the disciples remained in Jerusalem, making daily visits to the temple for prayer and to share the message of Christ with those who were there.

Commentary

As Peter and John were going to the temple, they encountered a lame man begging for alms at the gate of the temple. Alms are money or food for the poor; more generally, however, alms are acts of mercy. The lame man, therefore, though he had in mind money or food, was asking in a general way for an act of mercy.

When Peter and John heard this man’s cry for mercy, they responded with the only mercy worth giving, the only mercy they had. They gave him the power of God unto salvation. They preached Christ and Him crucified.

Thus, just as the paralytic was healed so that we may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins (Matthew 9:1–7), likewise this lame beggar was healed, receiving from Peter and John God’s own gift: mercy.

The church is a mercy place. It inhales God’s mercy in Christ’s death and resurrection through Holy Baptism, Holy Absolution, the Lord’s Supper, and even the sermon. It exhales that selfsame mercy in love and service to one’s neighbor.

Before God, we are all lame beggars. On account of sin, our plea before God cannot be for justice, equity, or fair treatment by the Law. To ask for that is simply to ask for hell.

Our plea, like that of the lame man, is a cry for mercy. Our plea is a cry for undeserved love on account of Christ’s death and resurrection. Through the Means of Grace—through God’s Word preached and His Sacraments administered—we receive God’s mercy. Through those means, God bestows on us what Christ accomplished on the cross two thousand years ago—the forgiveness of our sin. “For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation” (Small Catechism, Sacrament of the Altar). On account of this, we are once again able to stand before God.

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 _____

God Sends the Holy Spirit

Acts 2:1–21

Key Point

At Pentecost, God sent the Holy Spirit to His Church. Through Word and Sacrament, God gives us His Holy Spirit to create and sustain saving faith in Jesus.

Law/Gospel

I sin when I believe that I can understand and trust in God on my own. **By the power and work of the Holy Spirit through His Word, the Spirit grants me faith in Jesus and empowers me to will and do that which is good and God pleasing.**

Context

Pentecost, which means “fiftieth,” occurred fifty days after Jesus’ glorious resurrection on Easter. Forty days after He rose again, Jesus ascended to God’s right hand, and now, ten days later, He fulfills His promise to send the Holy Spirit, who will “bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you” (John 14:26).

Commentary

In Acts 2, the Holy Spirit introduces Himself in “a mighty rushing wind” (v. 2) and “divided tongues as of fire” (v. 3). However, Acts 2:11 reveals the great miracle of Pentecost. Those who hear the apostles say, “We hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” Empowered by the Holy Spirit, Peter stands and proclaims God’s mighty works of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Peter cites Joel 2:28–32 as his sermon text, and then he proclaims that Joel’s prophecy is fulfilled on Pentecost. Peter’s sermon draws our attention to Jesus Christ and His suffering, dying, and rising. The Holy Spirit comes to us and works through the preaching of Christ and Him crucified and risen for the forgiveness of our sins.

The coming of the Holy Spirit and the preaching of the Gospel also reverse the tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1–9). In Genesis 11, the people of the world had one language, but they arrogantly sought to make a name for themselves (Genesis 11:4). As a consequence, God confused their language and dispersed them (Genesis 11:7–8).

The coming of the Holy Spirit reverses God’s judgment at Babel. While people around the world may still speak different languages, the Holy Spirit unites them in the Gospel—that is, the preaching of Christ crucified and risen.

In John 14:23–31, Jesus promises the Holy Spirit to His disciples as He gets ready to suffer, die, rise again, and then leave them. Jesus talks about demonstrating our love for Him by keeping His Word (John 14:23). He promises the Holy Spirit, “whom the Father will send in My name” (John 14:26). Father, Son, and Holy Spirit all work together as one to give comfort and peace in the message of the Gospel (John 14:27).

When Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit, He explains the Holy Spirit’s “job description” as well: “He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you” (John 14:26). Jesus also said, “[The Holy Spirit] will bear witness about Me” (John 15:26), and “[The Holy Spirit] will glorify Me, for He will take what is Mine and declare it to you” (John 16:14). The Holy Spirit comes not through uncertain dreams, visions, or feelings, but through the certain and comforting message of peace and forgiveness of sins won by Jesus Christ.

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



Painting by Robert Hunt © CPH

Preparing the Lesson

Date of Use _____

Peter and John Heal the Lame Man

Acts 3



Key Point

We are all lame beggars before God. Through the Means of Grace—God’s Word and Sacraments—God gives us faith to believe in Jesus as our Savior and grants us forgiveness, the cure for all sin.

Law/Gospel

Disability and illness are physical symptoms of sin in the world. **Through His Son, God gives me forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation—the cure for all sin.**

Context

In the days following Christ’s ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the disciples remained in Jerusalem, making daily visits to the temple for prayer and to share the message of Christ with those who were there.

Commentary

As Peter and John were going to the temple, they encountered a lame man begging for alms at the gate of the temple. Alms are money or food for the poor; more generally, however, alms are acts of mercy. The lame man, therefore, though he had in mind money or food, was asking in a general way for an act of mercy.

When Peter and John heard this man’s cry for mercy, they responded with the only mercy worth giving, the only mercy they had. They gave him the power of God unto salvation. They preached Christ and Him crucified.

Thus, just as the paralytic was healed so that we may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins (Matthew 9:1–7), likewise this lame beggar was healed, receiving from Peter and John God’s own gift: mercy.

The church is a mercy place. It inhales God’s mercy in Christ’s death and resurrection through Holy Baptism, Holy Absolution, the Lord’s Supper, and even the sermon. It exhales that selfsame mercy in love and service to one’s neighbor.

Before God, we are all lame beggars. On account of sin, our plea before God cannot be for justice, equity, or fair treatment by the Law. To ask for that is simply to ask for hell.

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Painting by Greg Copeland © CPH

The Holy Spirit Leads the Apostles

New Testament 5

Arch® Book Connections

Children love the rhyming patterns found in Concordia Publishing House's beloved Arch Book series. Arch Books also offer lots of 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"—sort of like a movie trailer—of the Arch Book with a narration that "plugs" the book. For 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 performed in a chapel service or the Opening in 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:

Lesson 1: <i>The Pentecost Story</i>	592267
<i>The Coming of the Holy Spirit</i>	591580
Lesson 4: <i>Philip and the Ethiopian</i>	591578
Lesson 5: <i>Saul's Conversion</i>	591601
Lesson 6: <i>Dorcas Sews for Others</i>	630155
Lesson 8: <i>Peter Set Free</i>	630255
<i>Peter Surprises Rhoda</i>	592289
Lesson 9: <i>Paul's Journeys</i>	630254
Lesson 10: <i>Timothy Joins Paul</i>	591574
Lesson 11: <i>Lydia Believes</i>	592270
Lesson 12: <i>Jailhouse Rock</i>	591532

The Holy Spirit Guides the Apostles

New Testament 5

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: cph.org/sundayschool.

Lesson 1

Today's Sunday School lesson teaches the children that at Pentecost, God sent the Holy Spirit to His Church (Acts 2:1–21). Now, through Word and Sacrament, God gives us His Holy Spirit to create and sustain saving faith in Jesus. Ask the children to tell you about what happened at Pentecost. Ask them when they received the Holy Spirit (in Baptism).

Lesson 2

In Sunday School today, the children learn how each of us is like the lame beggar as we stand before God (Acts 3). Yet through the Means of Grace, God's Word and Sacraments, God bestows on us what Christ accomplished on the cross: forgiveness of sins. In your family discussions, talk about what it means to have the forgiveness of sins.

Lesson 3

In learning the story of Stephen (Acts 6–7), the first martyr, the children in Sunday School learn how we are crushed by and enraged at the accusations of God's Law, but the Gospel comes to bring peace and quietness with the forgiveness of our sins. Talk with your children and point out that in church we hear from the pastor the same Word of God that Stephen preached: "Lord, do not hold this sin against them."

Lesson 4

In Sunday School today, the children learn that as Jesus came to the Ethiopian (Acts 8:26–40), He comes to us in our weakness, for we cannot by our own reason or strength come to Him. In your family faith talks, discuss how the Holy Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies us, keeping us with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

Lesson 5

Today in Sunday School, the children study "The Conversion of Paul" and learn that as God did with Paul, so God does with us. Through the Law, we are crushed by the weight of our sin and are helpless. As God revived Paul through Ananias (Acts 9:1–31), He revives us through our pastors with the proclamation of His Word and the administration of His Sacraments granting forgiveness, life, and salvation to all who believe. Talk to your children about how the Sacraments and God's Word revive you so that you may live as God's child.

Lesson 6

Today, the Sunday School lesson focuses on Acts 9:36–43, the story of Dorcas. Discuss how Dorcas used her gifts and talents to support the mission of the Early Church. Who would you consider a Dorcas in your congregation?

Lesson 1: God Sends the Holy Spirit

Text: Acts 2:1–21

Date Used: _____

Key Point: At Pentecost, God sent the Holy Spirit to His Church. Through Word and Sacrament, God gives us His Holy Spirit to create and sustain saving faith in Jesus.

Law/Gospel: I sin when I believe that I can understand and trust in God on my own. **By the power and work of the Holy Spirit through His Word, the Spirit grants me faith in Jesus and empowers me to will and do that which is good and God pleasing.**

To bring:

Engage

Approximate time: _____

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Suggested Songs: “Now That You Know,” Track 1; “Be a Believer,” Track 2; “The Lord’s Prayer,” Track 3; “Jesus, I Believe in You,” Track 4

Bible Challenge Question: What church holiday is called “the birthday of the Christian Church” and why? **Pentecost. This is the day God gave the Holy Spirit to believers in Jerusalem, just as Jesus promised.**

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: Holy Spirit, Light Divine, Track 9

Now That You Know, Track 15

We All Believe in One True God, Track 21

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

☐ **Skit:** God Sends the Holy Spirit

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

☐ **Craft:** Descending-Dove Mobile

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

☐ **Food Activity:** Fruit-of-the-Spirit Vine

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

☐ **Group Activity:** Tongues of Fire

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

*If applicable

Lesson 2: Peter and John Heal the Lame Man

Text: Acts 3

Date Used: _____

Key Point: We are all lame beggars before God. Through the Means of Grace—God’s Word and Sacraments—God gives us faith to believe in Jesus as our Savior and grants us forgiveness, the cure for all sin.

Law/**Gospel:** Disability and illness are physical symptoms of sin in the world. **Through His Son, God gives me forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation—the cure for all sin.**

To bring:

Engage

Approximate time: _____

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Suggested Songs: “Be a Believer,” Track 2; “It’s a New Day, Rejoice!,” Track 5; “What Can I Do for Jesus,” Track 6

Bible Challenge Question: Name three or more of Jesus’ original twelve disciples. *Simon Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot (Mathew 10:2–4).*

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: Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus (Track 11)

Here I Stand (Track 8)

My Risen and Forever Friend (Track 14)

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

☐ **Skit:** Simon Peter and John Heal the Lame Man

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

☐ **Craft:** Leaping Puppet

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

☐ **Food Activity:** The Right Medicine

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

☐ **Group Activity:** The Weak Made Strong

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

*If applicable

Pronunciation Guide—New Testament 5

The Holy Spirit Leads the Apostles

Lesson 1: God Sends the Holy Spirit, Acts 2:1–21

Cappadocia	kap uh DOKE ee uh
Cretans	KREET uns
Cyrene	sigh REE neh
Elamites	EE la mighs
Galileans	gal uh LEE uns
Judea	joo DEE uh
Medes	MEEDS
Mesopotamia	mess oh poh TAME ih uh
Pamphylia	pam FIL ih uh
Parthians	PAHR thee uns
Phrygia	FRIJ ee uh
Pontus	PONN tus

Lesson 2: Peter and John Heal the Lame Man, Acts 3

No new names from previous lessons

Lesson 3: God's Servant Stephen, Acts 6–7

Chaldeans	kal DEE unz
Cilicia	sih LIS ih uh
Cyrenians	Sigh REEN ee uns
Hamor	HAY mohr
Haran	HAIR un
Hellenists	HELL en ists
Midian	MID ee un
Moloch	MOE luk
Nicanor	nie KAY nor
Nicolaus	nick uh LAY us

Bible Words

New Testament 5: The Holy Spirit Leads the Apostles

Lesson 1

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations. Matthew 28:19

Lesson 2

There is no other name . . . by which we must be saved. Acts 4:12

Lesson 3

Level A: [Forgive] as the Lord has forgiven you. Colossians 3:13

Level B: Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. Revelation 2:10

Lesson 4

Level A: No one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:3

Level B: But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. Ephesians 2:13

Lesson 5

If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. 2 Corinthians 5:17

Lesson 6

Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Matthew 5:16

Lesson 7

Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Romans 10:13

Lesson 8

[Nothing] will be able to separate us from the love of God. Romans 8:39

Lesson 9

Turn . . . to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. Acts 14:15

Lesson 10

We believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus. Acts 15:11

Lesson 11

How are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? Romans 10:14

Lesson 12

[God] desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 1 Timothy 2:4

Lesson 13

I will wait for the LORD, . . . I will hope in Him. Isaiah 8:17

Faith Words

New Testament 5: The Holy Spirit Guides the Apostles

Lesson 1 God Sends the Holy Spirit

Pentecost: the day the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the apostles in order that the Gospel might be proclaimed in all the earth

Feast of Weeks: the Jewish harvest festival celebrated at Pentecost

Holy Spirit: the Third Person in the Holy Trinity, true God with the Father and the Son

Comforter: another name for the Holy Spirit

Lesson 2 Peter and John Heal the Lame Man

temple courts: the area surrounding the temple building

chancel: space in a church around the altar including the pulpit and lectern

sacristy: room next to the chancel used for preparing and storing the altar linens and Communion vessels and where the pastor prepares for worship

narthex: entrance area of a church outside the nave, where we transition from the world to God's house

Lesson 3 God's Servant Stephen

ordained: Placed or installed into the Office of the Holy Ministry; through this rite, a man becomes a pastor.

stiff-necked: stubborn

blasphemy: lack of respect for God, shown in language or behavior

Christian martyr: a person who dies rather than denying his or her faith in Jesus Christ

Lesson 4 Philip and the Ethiopian

eunuch: a man employed as a trusted servant in a palace

slaughter: to kill animals for sacrifice or for food

baptized: washed with water combined with God's Word, in accordance with God's command, for the forgiveness of sins

symbol: something that stands for or represents a person, idea, or thing

Lesson 5 The Conversion of Paul

Saul/Paul: A Jew and Pharisee committed to persecuting Christians; he later became an apostle and a missionary.

the Way: A name used to describe the teachings of Jesus Christ; early Christianity.

conversion: The process of changing from one thing to another; turning from spiritual blindness to sight; Paul's conversion was from Judaism to Christianity.

persecute: To seek to harm or destroy a person in body, possessions, or good name; Christians were persecuted because they would not deny their faith in the triune God.

Lesson 6 Dorcas

vocation: the position in life in which God has placed you, such as spouse, parent, child, employer, employee, and others

charity: acts of kindness done to those who are less fortunate than we are

abolish: to do away with

fulfill: to complete the requirements; to finish

New Testament 5

The Holy Spirit Leads the Apostles

Lesson	Title	Date of Use
1	God Sends the Holy Spirit	_____
2	Peter and John Heal the Lame Man	_____
3	God's Servant Stephen	_____
4	Philip and the Ethiopian	_____
5	The Conversion of Paul	_____
6	Dorcas	_____
7	Peter and Cornelius	_____
8	Peter's Escape from Prison	_____
9	Paul's First Missionary Journey	_____
10	Paul and Timothy	_____
11	Lydia	_____
12	Paul and Silas in Prison	_____
13	Paul Sails for Rome	_____