

Snake on the Pole

Numbers 21:4-10



Saved

A. Fill in the blanks with the words from Numbers 21:4-10.

1. The people went around the Land of _____ $\frac{6}{6}$ _____.
2. The people spoke against God and _____ $\frac{4}{4}$ _____ $\frac{12}{12}$ _____.
3. "There is no _____ $\frac{7}{7}$ _____ or water."
4. "We loathe this _____ $\frac{9}{9}$ _____ food."
5. The Lord sent fiery _____ $\frac{13}{13}$ _____ among the people.
6. Many people of Israel _____ $\frac{11}{11}$ _____.
7. The people _____ $\frac{1}{1}$ _____ to Moses.
8. "We have _____ $\frac{5}{5}$ _____ against the Lord."
9. "_____ $\frac{2}{2}$ _____ to the Lord for us."
10. Moses made a _____ $\frac{10}{10}$ _____ serpent.
11. He set it on a _____ $\frac{3}{3}$ _____.
12. The people set out and _____ $\frac{8}{8}$ _____ in Oboth.

B. Write the letter that appears over each number in the correct space at the bottom.

What Saves Us?

The $\frac{1}{1}$ $\frac{2}{2}$ $\frac{3}{3}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{5}{5}$ $\frac{6}{6}$ $\frac{7}{7}$ $\frac{8}{8}$ $\frac{9}{9}$ $\frac{10}{10}$ $\frac{11}{11}$ $\frac{12}{12}$ $\frac{13}{13}$

REVIEW

Match each word on the left with its definition on the right.

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| _____ 1. Rely | a. to trust, depend, or count on someone keeping a promise |
| _____ 2. Reject | b. to save or deliver from harm and danger |
| _____ 3. Rescue | c. to turn away, to say no more, to cancel a promise |

Our Daily Bread

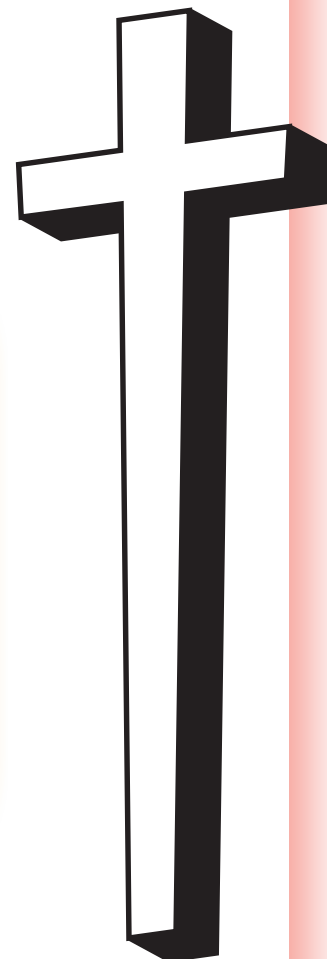
The Fourth Petition

Give us this day our daily bread.

What does this mean? God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body. Draw a line through each of the following that does not fit with the others.

worry health goods drink
a devout husband or wife house self-control shoes
pain good friends enemies home money grumbling
devout and faithful rulers land
faithful neighbors sin devout workers food
clothing good reputation peace animals
devout children good weather good government



Let's Review

1. How are we often like the children of Israel in this story?

2. What is meant by daily bread?

3. What are some of the "fiery serpents" in your life?

REMEMBER

The eyes of all look to You, and You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand; You satisfy the desire of every living thing. (Psalm 145:15–16)

Snake on the Pole

Numbers 21:4–10

Background

In today's lesson, we find the children of Israel on the road again to the Promised Land. They must travel around Edom, the land of Esau's descendants, where they are not welcome. This means they must turn south, toward the Red Sea.

The Israelites soon confront Moses. "How can we get to the Promised Land, which is north, if we are now headed south?" This was a likely question, perhaps accompanied by something like "And while we're at it, we are sick of this food!" Israel continues its travels on the east side of the Sinai Peninsula along the Gulf of Aqaba, a region well known for its copper mining. (Copper is used in making bronze.)

God is faithful to the people and provides for their daily bread, but

they still rebel, citing a lack of water and variety of food. God sends venomous serpents (most likely sand, carpet, or horned vipers, which are found in the area) to bite the people. Snakes are the symbol for sin dating back to the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3). God reminds the exodus people that He—not their own foolish desires—is still in charge.

His message is clear: God alone saves through faith, and God hears our prayers. In this lesson, we focus on the three Rs of Rely, Reject, and Rescue. God's people rely on Him to take care of them on their journey to the Promised Land. But soon—again—they reject God, failing to trust in Him. Then God in His mercy rescues them from their sin and reestablishes the covenant.

Classroom Devotion

"Can you believe it? I got the same useless presents for my birthday yesterday that I got last year! I can't believe my parents! 'Well, we'll see what we can do,' they say. Why do they bother? Every year, they get my hopes up with dreams of the promised gifts, and then—bang!—their plan falls apart for one bogus reason or another. This year, the water heater quit and they used my gift money to buy a new one. What did I get? What do I always get? Socks, underwear, new pajamas, and some idiotic book!"

Sometimes all of us feel disappointed in the things we receive. We get our hopes up about something we really want, and what we get is something altogether different. But as He did with the children of Israel in the desert, God remains with us. He blesses us in many amazing ways. His most important blessing

came to us when He sent His Son to earth to live, die, and rise again from the dead to forgive and save us. His forgiveness and salvation are gifts to enjoy and appreciate, today and every day!

PRAY: Dear Father in heaven, we thank You for the many good things You so lovingly provide. We thank You that we can rely on You to keep Your promises to us. We ask forgiveness for the times we have rejected Your grace, and we thank You in the name of Jesus Christ, Your Son, for rescuing us from our lives of sin. Be with us always for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Sing: "We Give You But Your Own" (*LSB* 781; *AGPS* 255).

Central Truth

God is faithful to His covenant people and hears their prayers.

Objectives

- Recognize our failure to trust in God for our daily bread.
- Rejoice that God invites us to pray and has promised to hear us.
- Dedicate our lives in service to God, who loves us unconditionally.

Materials

- The Basics
- Reproducible 26
- Web Resource 26a

Bible Prep

Post in advance so students can bookmark references before class time.

- Numbers 21:4–10
- Exodus 16:4–16
- John 3:14–15

INTO the lesson

Hold a discussion about the food that is expected in various situations. Ask, **What foods might you want your parents to have for your friends when you invite them over to your house? How do these compare with the food served in your school cafeteria? Why don't you expect to find "junk food" to be served there?**

In today's lesson, God will lead the children of Israel to appreciate the blessing God provides in the food He gives them. Say, **The means of rescue God provided through a serpent on a pole points us to the ultimate rescue He provides for all of us through His Son on another "pole."**

INTO the Word

Saved

Read the Bible narrative found in Numbers 21:4–10. Allow time for students to complete this activity in the Student Book or accessed via Web Resource 26a. If you choose to do so, use **Reproducible 26** to reinforce facts and concepts from this story, or include elements from the questions in your discussions with the class. Then review responses as a whole class. Ask, **How do the people rely on God?** (They follow in the direction He leads, even when they seem to be going the wrong way, and they depend on Him to give them food and water.) Have a volunteer read Exodus 16:4–16 for a clearer picture of God providing "daily bread."

Then ask, **How do the people reject God?** (They become impatient and speak against God. They are no longer satisfied with manna and quail. They want a new menu and a quick trip north to the Promised Land.)

Then ask, **How does God react to this rejection?** (He sends venomous snakes to bite them.) Snakes here represent all that is evil in the world. Sin has crept in and once again caused God's people to break the covenant. They are in need of a savior here in the desert just as they were in Egypt and earlier, in the Garden of Eden.

Next, ask, **How do the people show repentance?** (They confess their sin and ask Moses to pray on their behalf, and Moses does.)

Then ask, **How does God rescue His people from the fiery serpents?** (Moses is directed to make a bronze serpent and place it on a pole so that the people can look at it and be saved.)

Next, examine Jesus' reference to this event in

LESSON
26

Snake on the Pole

Numbers 21:4–10



Saved

A. Fill in the blanks with the words from Numbers 21:4–10.

- The people went around the Land of E D O M .
6
- The people spoke against God and M O S E S .
4 12
- "There is no F O O D or water."
7
- "We loathe this W O R T H L E S S food."
9
- The Lord sent fiery S E R P E N T S among the people.
13
- Many people of Israel D I E D .
11
- The people C A M E to Moses.
1
- "We have S I N N E D against the Lord."
5
- "P R A Y to the Lord for us."
2
- Moses made a B R O N Z E serpent.
10
- He set it on a P O L E .
3
- The people set out and C A M P E D in Oboth.
8

B. Write the letter that appears over each number in the correct space at the bottom.

What Saves Us?

The C R O S S O F C H R I S T
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

REVIEW

Match each word on the left with its definition on the right.

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| <u>a</u> 1. Rely | a. to trust, depend, or count on someone keeping a promise |
| <u>c</u> 2. Reject | b. to save or deliver from harm and danger |
| <u>b</u> 3. Rescue | c. to turn away, to say no more, to cancel a promise |

58

John 3:14–15. Ask, **Who is the "snake on the pole" who saves us?** (Jesus) How is this event like the snake on the pole? (**By "looking at Jesus"—believing in Him as our Savior—we are saved from eternal death and instead receive eternal life.**)

Review

Work through the definitions of rely, reject, and rescue found in this section of the Student Book.

What Saves Us?

Meet with your small group. Take turns reading Numbers 21:4–10. Then discuss the following questions.

- How do the people rely on God?
They follow the cloud around the land of Edom (instead of taking a direct route to the Promised Land).
- How do the people reject God?
They speak against God and against Moses.
- How does God react to this rejection?
He sends poisonous snakes, and they bite the people.
- How do the people show repentance?
They confess their sin and ask Moses to pray for them.
- How does God rescue His people from the fiery serpents?
He tells Moses to make a bronze snake and put it on a pole. Anyone who looks at the bronze snake would live.
- Read John 3:14–15. To what event does Jesus compare the snake on the pole?
To His own suffering and death on the cross.
- How is the outcome of that event similar to the outcome of the snake on the pole?
Anyone who "looks at Jesus on the cross" (believes in Him as his/her Savior) will live forever in heaven.

Our Daily Bread The Fourth Petition

Give us this day our daily bread.

What does this mean? God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

What is meant by daily bread? Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body. Draw a line through each of the following that does not fit with the others.

~~worry~~ health goods drink
 a devout husband or wife house self-control shoes
~~pain~~ good friends ~~enemies~~ home money ~~grumbling~~
 devout and faithful rulers devout workers land
 faithful neighbors ~~sin~~ peace food
 clothing good reputation animals
 devout children good weather good government

Let's Review

1. How are we often like the children of Israel in this story?

We often grumble and fail to appreciate God's gifts to us, just as the children of Israel did.

2. What is meant by daily bread?

The many blessings we receive from God every day, those things we need and many, many other blessings as well

3. What are some of the "fiery serpents" in your life?

Answers will vary.

REMEMBER

The eyes of all look to You, and You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand; You satisfy the desire of every living thing. (Psalm 145:15-16)

59



included in this category.

Ask, **How does your life today show that you rely on God for your daily bread?** (It is by faith that we live each day, knowing that our parents and teachers will provide all that we need to support this body and life. We often take for granted the daily bread and the fact that God provides it for us.)

Say, **In many ways each day, I reject God. How do I know that He loves and forgives me?** (It is by grace alone that God accepts our words of repentance and love and forgives us unconditionally through the redemptive act of Jesus Christ. Responding to God's grace, we are given the power and desire to model grace in our actions and reactions to one another in school, at home, and in the community.)

How and where can I find proof that God loves me and has rescued me? (It is in Holy Scripture alone that God tells us of His redeeming love.)

Let's Review

As you lead students in a review of lesson concepts by discussing the questions, comment that today's lesson reminds us that God is always faithful and hears our prayers. We can rely on Him for all of our daily bread, knowing that even though we reject Him by thought, word, and deed, He still loves us and rescues us through Jesus Christ, His Son.

Remember

If you choose to do so, have students highlight the memory verse in their Bible. Learn this verse by using it as your mealtime verse throughout the week.

Conclude the lesson with prayer: **Heavenly Father, thank You for giving us every day air to breathe, food to eat, and a home with people to love and care for us. You daily and richly give us so many things. Thanks especially for giving us Jesus to be our Savior and Friend. We pray in His name. Amen.**

Sing: "O God My Faithful God" (LSB 696).

INTO our lives

Our Daily Bread

In this section, we tackle two important questions: what is daily bread, and how does God provide it? It is important for the students to grasp an understanding of these two catechetical teachings to help them understand the "Snake on a Pole" story.

Martin Luther's explanation of the Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer as found in his Small Catechism—specifically, questions 219 and 220—tells us why we pray for daily bread and how God provides it. Stress that the children of Israel took this for granted. Therefore, instead of thanking God for it, they complained to God.

Ask, **Why does Jesus teach us to pray for our daily bread?** (To realize that we depend on God for everything, to be thankful for the blessings received from God, and to understand that God provides for our physical as well as our spiritual needs) Ask, **How does God provide for our daily bread?** (He makes the earth fruitful and gives us the ability to work for the things we need.) The children of Israel still had to work to pick up the manna and prepare and roast the quail in order to eat it. Allow time for students to read and reflect on the items included in the category of "daily bread" and to cross out those things that are not



Curriculum Connection

A fun connection for this topic might be section 4.2.3.3, *Dramatizing Historical Events*, found in the *Performing Arts* volume of the *Concordia Curriculum Guide* series. Lead your students in creating a script, costumes, and props for a drama re-creating the story of Israel's encounter with the snakes and how God rescued them through a bronze snake.

Don't be afraid to ham it up a little—for example, some of your students can pretend to be the snakes and “bite” people (perhaps by sticking little red sticky notes on their clothes). A banner stand or flagpole and a rubber snake might stand in for the bronze serpent. After your production, compare your play with the actual events. What was different?



Technology

Research the events of the exodus journey. Plot locations and events on your map or prepare a slide show for the class.



HANDS TO SERVE

Remember our military personnel working in the deserts of Iraq and Afghanistan. Write a letter to one of them, thanking him or her for his/her service to you and to your country. Include several verses from Scripture that provide spiritual “daily bread.”



Faith in Action

Volunteer in a local food pantry or soup kitchen to get a better understanding of what it means to provide “daily bread” to others in your community.



Working in Groups

Create a map showing the exodus journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. Include possible locations of major events as the journey unfolds. Add to it as you complete other lessons in this unit, or add information from previous related lessons.



Critical thinking

Compile a list of every item (“daily bread”) that you used today. Analyze how that “daily bread” was provided to you. Where does God fit in your analysis?



Check it Out

Plan a day in your classroom when you all bring bread for lunch. Everyone can eat as much as he/she wants, but that's all there is for lunch. Now imagine eating just bread three times a day for six days each week. Write down your thoughts and share with the class. Would you complain about your “daily bread”?

What Saves Us?

Meet with your small group. Take turns reading Numbers 21:4–10. Then discuss the following questions.

1. How do the people rely on God?

2. How do the people reject God?

3. How does God react to this rejection?

4. How do the people show repentance?

5. How does God rescue His people from the fiery serpents?

6. Read John 3:14–15. To what event does Jesus compare the snake on the pole?

7. How is the outcome of that event similar to the outcome of the snake on the pole?



Jonathan Warns David

1 Samuel 20

The Friendship of David and Jonathan



David, a shepherd, and Jonathan, King Saul's son, were close friends. Their friendship began soon after David killed Goliath. Their faith in God guided their lives. Although Jonathan was the king's son and heir to the throne, the people of Israel considered David to be a hero and wanted him to be their next king. When King Saul became jealous of David's popularity with the people, he threatened to kill David. Jonathan courageously defended his friend, even though it meant opposing his father, endangering his own life, and losing the crown. First Samuel 20 tells their story. To review the account, match each of the following questions with the letter of its answer from the column on the right. Note: you will not use all of the items found in the right-hand column.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>_____ 1. What did King Saul expect David to attend (1 Samuel 20:24–27)?</p> <p>_____ 2. How did King Saul show anger to Jonathan when he defended David (1 Samuel 20:28–33)?</p> <p>_____ 3. How did Jonathan send a warning message to his friend (1 Samuel 20:18–23; 34–40)?</p> <p>_____ 4. What did David and Jonathan promise each other in their farewell (1 Samuel 20:41–42)?</p> | <p>a. He shot arrows according to a prearranged signal.</p> <p>b. To never give up on Saul.</p> <p>c. To remain friends and care for each other's families.</p> <p>d. He tied a red ribbon to the shade of his window.</p> <p>e. Jonathan's birthday party.</p> <p>f. He threatened to disown him.</p> <p>g. He threw a spear at him.</p> <p>h. The new moon festival.</p> |
|---|--|

REVIEW

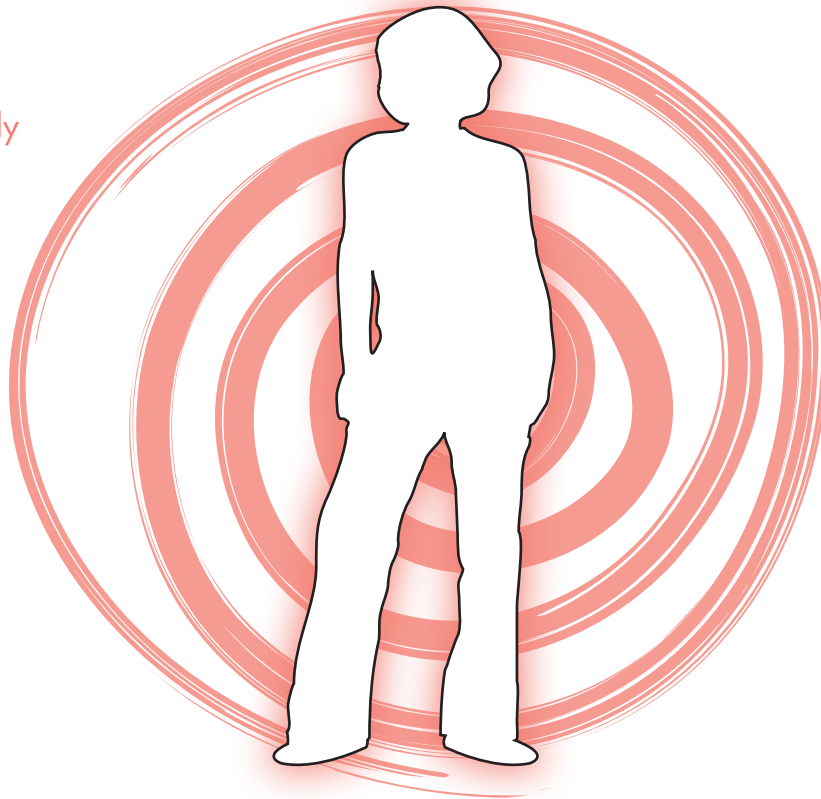
Friend _____

Friendship _____

What Are My Qualities as a Friend?

What kind of a friend are you? What gifts has God given you to be a person who cares about your classmates? To find out, ask your classmates to write the gifts you show in the body shape. You will need to exchange your books with classmates to complete this activity.

friendly
caring
musical
smiley
happy
good student



athletic
creative
writer
singer
artist
funny

How Can I Be a Friend to Others?

Name people you know who need a friend. Fill in each box with the name of a new friend and an idea about how to begin being a friend.

REMEMBER

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. (1 John 4:7-8)

Jonathan Warns David

1 Samuel 20

Background

The friendship of David and Jonathan began at the time that David killed Goliath. First Samuel 18:1–4 gives the account of Jonathan stripping himself of his armor and clothes and giving them to David. This ritual was a sign that Jonathan recognized that David would be the next king and not himself. The fact that David accepted the clothes showed his acceptance of his future calling as king. The two men had a very strong friendship. Both men were successful military leaders. Soon the people noticed David’s leadership and battle successes over those of Saul. “And the women sang to one another as they celebrated, ‘Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands’” (1 Samuel 18:7). As a result, a great jealousy and resentment toward David grew in Saul’s heart, which led to his attempts to kill David. First Samuel 18 and 19

tell of Saul’s efforts to kill David. First Samuel 20 gives the account of David failing to appear as expected at the first-of-the-month feast at the palace. When Jonathan offered an excuse for David’s absence, Saul became angry and threw his lance at his own son. By shooting arrows in a field, Jonathan communicated to David that he needed to flee and hide. When David came out of hiding, the two men said good-bye. Jonathan reminded David that they had sworn an oath to God to care for each other and their descendants for the rest of their lives (1 Samuel 20:42). Years later, after Jonathan died, David befriended Jonathan’s crippled son Mephibosheth and invited him to live in the palace as well as receive the possessions of King Saul (2 Samuel 9). In their love for each other, David and Jonathan reflected the enduring love that God, in Christ Jesus, has for us.

Classroom Devotion

Scripture reading: “Beloved, let us love one another” (1 John 4:7).

At the beginning of the school year it was obvious to Miss Cantrell that Mike was the least popular student in her fourth-grade class. He spent every recess alone. One day he came in early from recess crying.

“Miss Cantrell,” Mike said, “no matter how hard I try to be nice, no one talks or plays with me at school. Since school began this year, I have really been trying to show my classmates that I’ve changed, but no one cares.”

Miss Cantrell told Mike that she had noticed how kind he had been to his classmates and encouraged him to continue being kind to them. Several days later, Mike was absent, and Miss Cantrell had a meeting with the class. She told the students

about Mike’s conversation with her and asked them to give Mike another chance to be their friend. The class began to list all the mean things that Mike had done to them since kindergarten. Miss Cantrell reminded them, “As classmates, you are special friends to one another, and that includes Mike. God tells us in 1 John 4 to love one another. That includes all of us in our class. Remember Jesus’ love for us. Even though we all sin, Jesus loved us so much that He suffered and died on the cross so our sins could be forgiven. Then He rose from the dead, showing that He had defeated sin and the devil. His love for us is the power we have to give Mike another chance.”

When Mike returned to school the next day, Miss Cantrell noticed that students were friendlier toward him.

Central Truth

Our triune God gives us good friends to bring joy, guidance, and protection to our lives.

Objectives

- Recognize good friends as blessings from God.
- Confess failure to be good friends to others, expressing trust in the forgiveness earned for us by Jesus, our best and truest friend.
- Demonstrate reliance upon God’s power to help us love, forgive, and serve our friends.

Materials

- The Basics
- Reproducible 37
- Web Resource 37a
- Large teacher-made paper heart

Bible Prep

Post in advance so students can bookmark references before class time.

- 1 Samuel 20

Adam, the most popular boy in the class, asked Mike to join the recess soccer game. Within days, Mike was smiling and was a part of all the class fun. Mike and his classmates had learned about Jesus’ love and how it opens opportunities for new friendships that can continue throughout their class years together. May Jesus’ love encourage you to make new friends and to be forgiving toward your friends when you run into rough times together.

PRAY: Lord, thank You for giving us the gift of friendship with our classmates and others. Help us to find ways to care for them and serve them out of our love for Your Son, our Savior. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Sing: “Beloved” (AGPS 72).

INTO the lesson

Before class, prepare a large paper heart shape and post it on the board in front of the class. Label it “What Is a Friend?” Allow three minutes for the students individually to write words that describe a friend. Take several minutes for the class to share their words; write them on the large heart shape in the front of the room. Encourage the students to add more words to their heart lists during this time.

INTO the Word

The Friendship of David and Jonathan

Choose one of the following ways to study 1 Samuel 20 with the class.

- Read the entire chapter to the class or select several good readers to read it aloud.
- Tell the story to the class in your own words, followed by a search of the Scripture for the answers to the questions.
- Read a condensed version of the story from a Bible storybook.

After reading and discussing the story, encourage students to complete the matching activity. Review responses. Follow up by discussing the following with the class:

- **Why was Jonathan willing and able to warn David that his life was in danger?** (He believed that God’s plan was for David to be the next king.)
- Say, **At one time, David was a hero in Saul’s eyes. Then jealousy entered his heart, and he grew to dislike David. Ask, What things do we do to others that are not acts of friendship?** Point out that gossip, bullying, teasing, and not allowing others to be a part of the group are hurtful actions. Ask, **What causes us to do these things?** Point out that our sinful nature leads us into these actions. Ask, **What do we need to do daily?** We need to ask Jesus for forgiveness. Remembering that we are God’s children through **Jesus’ sacrifice for us on the cross** and through our Baptism, we can love others, even if they seem unlovable at times. State, **God has given each of us the blessings of friends. He has given us the blessings of one another as members of this class. Sometimes we fail to appreciate the unique gifts we each have as classmates. It is then that remembering Jesus’ love for us helps us renew our friendship and our care for one another.**

The Friendship of David and Jonathan



David, a shepherd, and Jonathan, King Saul’s son, were close friends. Their friendship began soon after David killed Goliath. Their faith in God guided their lives. Although Jonathan was the king’s son and heir to the throne, the people of Israel considered David to be a hero and wanted him to be their next king. When King Saul became jealous of David’s popularity with the people, he threatened to kill David. Jonathan courageously defended his friend, even though it meant opposing his father, endangering his own life, and losing the crown. First Samuel 20 tells their story. To review the account, match each of the following questions with the letter of its answer from the column on the right. Note: you will not use all of the items found in the right-hand column.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>h 1. What did King Saul expect David to attend (1 Samuel 20:24–27)?</p> <p>g 2. How did King Saul show anger to Jonathan when he defended David (1 Samuel 20:28–33)?</p> <p>a 3. How did Jonathan send a warning message to his friend (1 Samuel 20:18–23; 34–40)?</p> <p>c 4. What did David and Jonathan promise each other in their farewell (1 Samuel 20:41–42)?</p> | <p>a. He shot arrows according to a prearranged signal.</p> <p>b. To never give up on Saul.</p> <p>c. To remain friends and care for each other’s families.</p> <p>d. He tied a red ribbon to the shade of his window.</p> <p>e. Jonathan’s birthday party.</p> <p>f. He threatened to disown him.</p> <p>g. He threw a spear at him.</p> <p>h. The new moon festival.</p> |
|---|--|

REVIEW

Friend a person who cares for another person

Friendship the close relationship one person has with another

Review

Ask, **What do each of you think is the meaning of each of the vocabulary words?** After a brief discussion, have students take time to copy the definitions for each word from the glossary in the back of the book.

Friend—a person who cares for someone else

Friendship—a close, loving relationship between people

Friendship Poem

_____ (name)

_____ (2 interests)

_____ (3 interests)

_____ (5 shared interests)

_____ (3 interests)

_____ (2 interests)

_____ (name)

What Are My Qualities as a Friend?

What kind of a friend are you? What gifts has God given you to be a person who cares about your classmates? To find out, ask your classmates to write the gifts you show in the body shape. You will need to exchange your books with classmates to complete this activity.



How Can I Be a Friend to Others?

Name people you know who need a friend. Fill in each box with the name of a new friend and an idea about how to begin being a friend.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

REMEMBER

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. (1 John 4:7-8)

81

meet and complete the diamond-shaped form with words describing each person individually. On the first line, write one partner's name; on the seventh line, write the other partner's name. The second and third lines are for the special interests of the student on the first line, and the fifth and sixth lines are for the special interests of the student whose name is written on the bottom line. The fourth line is for five interests both students share. Refer the students back to the heart shape listing description words of friends; let them know they may use these words as well. When the writing is finished, cut out the diamonds and mount them on a larger diamond-shaped piece of construction paper. Students may add a border to the writings on construction paper. Hang the projects in the hallway or classroom. Extend the lesson by having students write a prayer for their activity partner.

How Can I Be a Friend to Others?

Say, **In our devotion this morning, we read about a class that had to change their thinking about a classmate in order to improve their friendships with him. Think of three individuals outside of school with whom you could develop a better friendship. Write these names in the boxes at the bottom of the page in the section titled "How Can I Be a Friend to Others?"** Allow a minute for the students to think and write. Then say, **Look at the list of your personal qualities that your classmates wrote in your book. Now, write a sentence in each box describing how you will use a specific quality to help develop a new friendship.** Encourage your students to work at developing and strengthening their friendships, and assure them of God's blessing on their relationships.

Remember

Direct student attention to the memory verse. If you choose to do so, have students highlight the verse in their Bible. Help them learn it by writing the verse on the board and erasing words as the class continues to speak it together.

End the class with Web Resource 37a. Lead the students in the following prayer: **Lord, we thank You for the opportunities to be friends with others. Help us as we reach out in Christlike love to make new friends. In Jesus' name. Amen.**

INTO our lives

What Are My Qualities as a Friend?

Say, God has made each of us a unique person in His image. We each have qualities and abilities that we can use to share the love of Jesus in our friendships with others. Read out loud with me the qualities we listed on the heart shape in front of the room. We are now going to have an opportunity to tell one another what special qualities we see in one another. You may use the ideas listed on the heart shape. Exchange your book with as many students as possible in the class and ask them

to write in the empty body shape a special quality that you have. You will write in their books special friendship qualities you see in them. Think seriously of the good qualities you see in one another. Encourage your students to write small and neatly in one another's books. Allow ten minutes for this activity. This activity will be used in the culminating activities of the lesson.

If you choose to do so, distribute copies of the Friendship Poem, **Reproducible 37**, to help students learn more about one another. Pair together for this project students who are not best friends. Have the teams



Curriculum Connection

For additional ideas to help students support one another in living their Christian faith and developing Christian friendships, see the Concordia Curriculum Guide, Social Studies volume, sections 4.3.1.3 and 4.3.2.1.

Consider using section 4.1.4, Addition and Subtraction Algorithms (Multidigit), as a connection for this lesson. You will find it in the Math volume of the Concordia Curriculum Guide. Algorithms allow us to handle mathematical situations accurately in order to achieve the right result. What “algorithm” did Jonathan and David follow in order to subtract David safely from a perilous situation? What “algorithms” do students employ in order to keep their friendships happy and blessed?



HANDS TO SERVE

Students need to have opportunities to serve others while developing friendships. Many times, students in a Lutheran school have little contact with students with physical disabilities. Contact a neighboring public school and ask for the special needs teacher who works with physically disabled students. Check if there is a time that you could bring students from your room to visit his or her classroom. Explain that you would

like your students to socialize with the class on a regular schedule—perhaps once every two weeks. Ask if there would be activities that could be done together. Limit the visits to the discretion of the special needs teacher. After each visit, lead a discussion in your classroom about what occurred during the visit. Have your students write in their journals about their experiences. Between visits, have your class make and send cards to their new friends.

Another way to serve is with monthly visits to a nearby retirement home. Contact the activities director of the home and ask if your class could make a monthly hour-long visit to residents. Work with the activities director to plan mutually agreeable activities with the residents. Students can make and bring seasonal cards and gifts when they visit. Have the class lead a sing-along with songs the students know from their worship and devotions. Students can play games and do puzzles with

the residents. Before each visit, discuss what the students will be doing on the visit. Explain game rules. Pray for God’s presence in the visit. If parents drive and help chaperone this experience, encourage them to take an active part in the activities too, rather than just observe. These will be special friendships for both the residents and your class. After each visit, discuss it with the class. Pray a prayer of thanksgiving for the good things that happened. End with a journal-writing activity.



DIGGING DEEPER

Talk with students about the difficult situation in which Jonathan found himself. He was forced to choose between whether to obey the

Fourth Commandment or the Fifth Commandment. What principles do you think guided Jonathan? See Acts 5:29.

Friendship Poem

(name)

(2 interests)

(3 interests)

(5 shared interests)

(3 interests)

(2 interests)

(name)

David and Bathsheba

2 Samuel 11-12

Choices, Choices

People have to make many choices each day. Some are easy to make; some are hard: what to wear? to accept one friend's invitation or another's? to get home on time or stay out a little longer with friends? If you care to, tell about a tough choice you know someone had to make.

After you have discussed some tough choices, read the tragic story of King David—the King David who was a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14)—who had to make some tough choices and made all sinful ones. The story of this sad part of his life is in 2 Samuel 11. As you read the story, list the sinful choices David made on the notebook paper below.



2 Samuel 11:2
2 Samuel 11:4
2 Samuel 11:8-12
2 Samuel 11:14-16

REVIEW

Look up each word in the glossary. Then write the definition of the word. Next, write an antonym (opposite) for each word.

Content _____

Sin _____

Kill _____

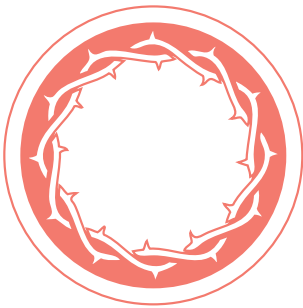
Adultery _____

Guidance for Choices

Directions. Look up the Bible passage listed near each symbol below. Then write about the help God gives us to make wise choices when we have to make decisions.



Hebrews 4:13



John 19:1-3



Romans 3:20



Hebrews 6:19

REMEMBER

Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. (Matthew 15:19)

David and Bathsheba

2 Samuel 11–12

Background

For many students, situations involving unfaithfulness and sex outside of marriage have become all too real. They have experienced what the evils of adultery can do to a family. For others, the concept of adultery is still abstract and hard to understand. It is essential to help students in both situations to understand that the results of making choices that conflict with God’s Law frequently lead to loss of faith and bring pain in this life and eternal damnation in the next. But it is even more important to help them know from God’s Word that through the working of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel, they have the power to make choices that honor God and others. Only through the blood of Jesus can forgiveness relieve the pain for the individual and bring

hope for a life in heaven. The great message of the Gospel reminds us of the immeasurable depth of God’s love for us. It shows us His desire to forgive our sins for Jesus’ sake, to heal the wounds of sin, and to have us be members of His family.

The story of David and Bathsheba shows us that even though we sin, God has given us a path to healing and restoration through His Son, Jesus. Many students in your class may already be at the point of thinking they or people they know have done something that is “unforgivable.” Keeping Jesus’ death and resurrection as the focus in this story will help you to share the forgiveness and restoration Jesus gives with your students so they, too, may know His unending forgiveness and love.

Classroom Devotion

Read Ephesians 2:8–9.

Mark was visiting his friend Bill, who had a great Playstation Portable (PSP) with 30–40 games. Mark had no PSP at his house. Mark had asked his parents for one, but they always said no. Mark thought it would be okay to “borrow” Bill’s PSP without asking. When Bill came home and saw that his PSP was missing, his parents called the police. The police quickly found that Mark had Bill’s PSP. Mark got in a lot of trouble. He thought since he and Bill were friends, he could just borrow it. But Mark took something that wasn’t his. Because he didn’t ask permission, Mark broke his trust with Bill and caused bad things to happen. He had violated God’s Law.

That’s the way the devil works. He tells us things such as, “Take it if you want it.” “You’re not hurting anybody by doing this.” The devil will try to convince us that an ac-

tivity isn’t so bad or that something isn’t a sin when it is against God’s Law. He doesn’t want us to remember that all sin is against God. David fell into this trap of the devil. He took what he wanted.

This story of David and Bathsheba also shows God’s merciful nature. As we study it we will hear how God was merciful to David when he confessed and repented of his sin. God invites all who struggle under the burden of sin to confess and repent. God has promised that He will forgive us on account of the suffering and death of His Son, Jesus Christ.

PRAY: Thank You for the story of David and Bathsheba and the warning it gives us concerning sin. I confess my sins right now and repent of them. I ask for Your forgiveness for my sins, for Jesus’ sake. Please

Central Truth

Even as God confronts us in our sin through the Law, He provides us with forgiveness through Christ Jesus, His Son and our Lord.

Objectives

- Tell how David needed a Savior, just as we do.
- Confess our sins and trust in God’s forgiveness for Jesus’ sake.
- Demonstrate reliance upon the power of the Spirit to help us to lead a chaste and decent life.

Materials

- The Basics
- Reproducible 41
- Web Resource 41a

Bible Prep

Post in advance so students can bookmark references before class time.

- 2 Samuel 11–12
- Hebrews 4:13
- Romans 3:20
- John 19:1–3
- Hebrews 6:9

strengthen me to walk in purity and in truth. Lord, please help anyone who has been hurt by my sins. Give them the love of Jesus to forgive me, as Jesus has forgiven all of us. Thank You, Father! In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Sing “My Faith Looks Up to Thee” (LSB 702).

INTO the Word

Provide all students with a basic knowledge of the life of David. As any human, David was a sinful person, but he had also been quite faithful up until this event in his life (1 Samuel 16:13; 1 Samuel 17:37; 1 Samuel 18:1; 2 Samuel 7:18).

INTO the Lesson

Choices, Choices

In 2 Samuel 11, we read that David saw a beautiful woman named Bathsheba bathing. Immediately, he sought to have a sexual relationship with her, even though he knew she was someone else's wife. This illicit relationship brought great sadness into his life and the lives of many others.

In this situation, David had to make many choices. Have students read the account of David and Bathsheba's affair. While they read, have them list the various times when David had to choose between satisfying his own desires and honoring God. Review student responses.

During your discussion you might ask questions such as **What choice did David make when he saw Bathsheba?** (He chose to act sinfully with her.) **What would have been a better choice for David to make?** (Ignore what he saw. Don't act sinfully.) As Christians, we have been given the Law of God to help guide our lives. Teach your students that God's Law functions as a **curb**, to keep us on the "straight and narrow path." It also is a **mirror**, to help us see our sins; and it is a **guide** to help us follow God's path. The Law condemns and exposes our sinfulness so we can be prepared for the wonderful grace of Jesus.

Some students may have the idea that some bad choices they have made are unforgivable. It is important for the students to hear of the grace of God. Ask the students, **If you make a bad choice, how can you know that you are forgiven?** **We know, through the wonderful love of Jesus, that when we confess our sins, we have full forgiveness; our sins are fully erased and gone. Tell the students that when we erase with a pencil, the writing can still be seen, but when Jesus erases our sins, there is no mark left at all. Jesus took our sins with Him when He died on the cross.** An example that may hit home with your students is the action of deleting text on a keyboard. Once you delete it, you cannot see it anymore, and once the document is closed, the deleted text will never return.

You might use some of these questions to further discuss making choices that honor God and respect His Law. Ask: **When have you been put in a situation where you had to make a choice?** Help the children



Choices, Choices

People have to make many choices each day. Some are easy to make; some are hard: what to wear? to accept one friend's invitation or another's? to get home on time or stay out a little longer with friends? If you care to, tell about a tough choice you know someone had to make.

After you have discussed some tough choices, read the tragic story of King David—the King David who was a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14)—who had to make some tough choices and made all sinful ones. The story of this sad part of his life is in 2 Samuel 11. As you read the story, list the sinful choices David made on the notebook paper below.

2 Samuel 11:2	lust
2 Samuel 11:4	adultery
2 Samuel 11:8–12	deceit
2 Samuel 11:14–16	murder

REVIEW

Look up each word in the glossary. Then write the definition of the word. Next, write an antonym (opposite) for each word.

Content: **To be satisfied with what you have; Antonym: unhappy**

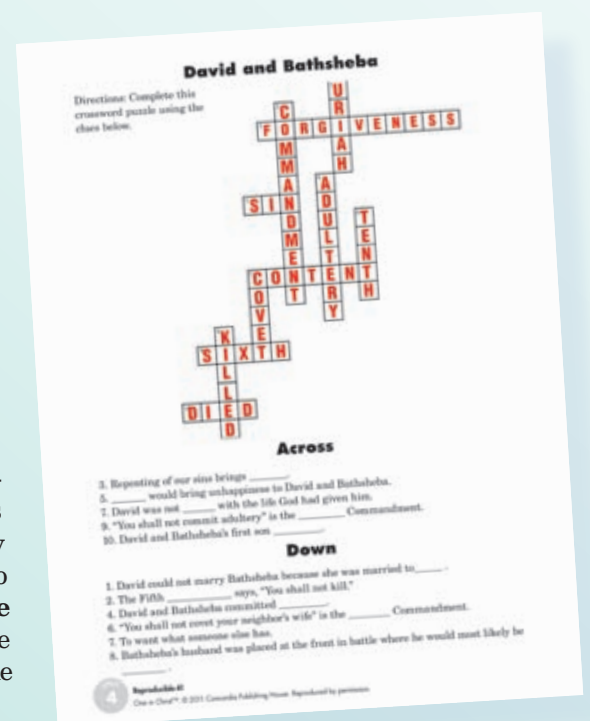
Sin: **Every thought, word, and deed contrary to God's Law; Antonym: virtue**

Kill: **To take the life of another person; Antonym: protect**

Adultery: **To make something impure; the term usually refers to having a sexual relationship outside of marriage; Antonym: purity**

88

understand that they have to make many choices every day. Discuss the difference between God-pleasing choices and Satan-pleasing choices. Help the children understand that there are consequences to every choice, and often they will not see the consequences, good or bad. **What were the consequences of David's sin?** Both David and Bathsheba sinned. Uriah was killed. David's officers must have lost respect for him; they became accomplices in the plot to kill Uriah. God punished David and Bathsheba by taking their baby from them. Many years later, trouble continued in David's family because of David's sin. You may choose to use Web Resource 41a or **Reproducible 41**, a crossword puzzle, to help reinforce some of the information in this part of the lesson.



Guidance for Choices

Directions. Look up the Bible passage listed near each symbol below. Then write about the help God gives us to make wise choices when we have to make decisions.



Hebrews 4:13

The fact that God sees and knows all things is a reminder that God knows our sins; we cannot hide them. This should help us follow His commands. The symbol also is a comfort because God knows when we need help.



John 19:1-3

Jesus suffered under Pontius Pilate to be punished for our sins and assure our forgiveness.



Romans 3:20

We have a faithful guide in the Commandments to help us make decisions that honor God and help us in our relationships with others.



Hebrews 6:19

Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection provide a sure anchor for our faith. Knowing His love for us is an anchor when we must make decisions involving obedience to God's Law. Joseph summarized the idea well: "How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9).

REMEMBER

Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. (Matthew 15:19)

89

does not empower us to make wise choices.

A way to help your students understand the concepts of choices and consequences is to role-play the following situations.

1. Have students role-play a student going into a store to buy a soda. The student does not have enough money, so he has to put the soda back. But then the student puts the soda in his pocket and tries to walk out of the store. A police officer catches the student and tells him the consequences of stealing the soda. At the completion of the role play, discuss with students the consequences of stealing. Your student police officer might talk to the students about making good choices rather than bad choices. The teacher can then lead into a discussion on confession and forgiveness; explain that in life there are consequences to actions. The greatest consequence of our confession is the forgiveness we have because Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins.
2. Have students role-play a student taking a test and not knowing the answer to a question. The teacher steps out of the room to take a phone call. The student tries to ask a friend for the answer to the question. The teacher comes back in as the student is asking, and the student gets caught. In this scenario, it is difficult for students to understand the consequences. Students often think that no one was hurt, so it doesn't matter. It is important for the students to see that their reputation as an honest person is lost, and this is a consequence of their behavior. They have stolen an answer; that is a sin against God's Law. It is also important for the students to hear again that even though they may have made many bad choices in their lives, Jesus died on the cross to wipe away all their sins.

For some students, understanding the Gospel in the story of David is difficult. Stress to the students that even though David made choices that made God angry, and there were consequences, he was forgiven and restored to God's family. Further discussion of the restoration of David occurs in the next lesson.

Remember

Discuss with students the application of the memory verse with the lesson for the day. David's sins grew out of the desires of his heart, just as our sins do. Comment that this realization prompted a repentant David to pray, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10). If you choose to do so, have students highlight both the memory verse and Psalm 51:10 in their Bibles.

INTO our lives

Encourage your students to identify people in the news who have made choices that conflict with God's Law. Be alert to accounts of athletes, politicians, film stars, and others who make news because they have not only offended the public's sense of right and wrong, but also have sinned against God's Law. As part of this discussion, refer to the Fifth through Tenth Commandments in *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*. Review the choices God forbids and the activities Luther says are choices in keeping with God's commands.

Review

In conjunction with your discussion of the Commandments and their explanations, use the "Review" word study to define several terms. Students are also to supply antonyms for each term.

Guidance for Choices

Have students summarize the help God gives us to make God-pleasing choices, as suggested in the passages. Emphasize that the power to make choices that reflect God's love for us comes from the Gospel, the Good News that Jesus has paid the penalty for our sin and given us a new life. The Law, as symbolized by the all-seeing eye of God,



Technology

Google can be an awesome resource for Christians. Learning to use Google safely and correctly is a great skill for students to master. Before allowing students to do an “open search” on Google, make sure your school has an Internet filter in place. Google itself can also be set for “strict” filtering, which will not allow any undesirable Web sites to pop up.

Have students google “Christian decision-making for kids” and have them look for five to ten important points about decision-making. Share these with the class, combine them into one document listing the ten that the class thinks are the most important, and post these for all to see.

Critical thinking

Encourage students to search several current news articles about people who have some type of problem. Have the students decide what would have been a better choice for the person in the article. What are some other choices the person could have made? What choices led to the person getting into this situation in the first place?



Faith in Action

This lesson would be an excellent time to give each student a “WWJD” (What Would Jesus Do?) bracelet. The bracelet would be an excellent reminder to help the students think about what choice Jesus would make. Ask, **Why might a WDJD (What Did Jesus Do?) bracelet be better?** As time, money, and acquisition of the bracelets may be an issue, another option is to have students create some “art” on the computer. Then display the art in the classroom or at home to help focus attention on what choice Jesus would make in various situations.



HANDS TO SERVE

Once the students have a grasp of Christian decision-making, guide them to create a skit to share with other classes about what they have learned about Christian decision-making.



DIGGING DEEPER

Lead students in a discussion about the choices they make in an hour. Have them record their responses. Discuss the consequences of their actions the next day. In the discussion, reinforce the idea that



Working in Groups

If the role playing does not work for the personality of your class, place your students in groups. Assign them a “choice making” scenario, and direct them to brainstorm and list ideas about possible choices that could be made in each situation. Have each group enact one or two of the choices they suggest. Encourage your students to provide a Christian witness in each situation.



Check it Out

The book *The Behavior Survival Guide for Kids: How to Make Good Choices and Stay Out of Trouble* is a good resource for “choice” activities. This book is not based on Christian principles per se, but many of the principles espoused in this book are Christian. It should stimulate thinking about how Gospel-inspired choices can be encouraged.



Curriculum Connection

This story provides an opportunity to teach cause and effect. See section 4.1.3.3, Comprehend (Using Structure Patterns), in the Language Arts volume of the Concordia Curriculum Guide.

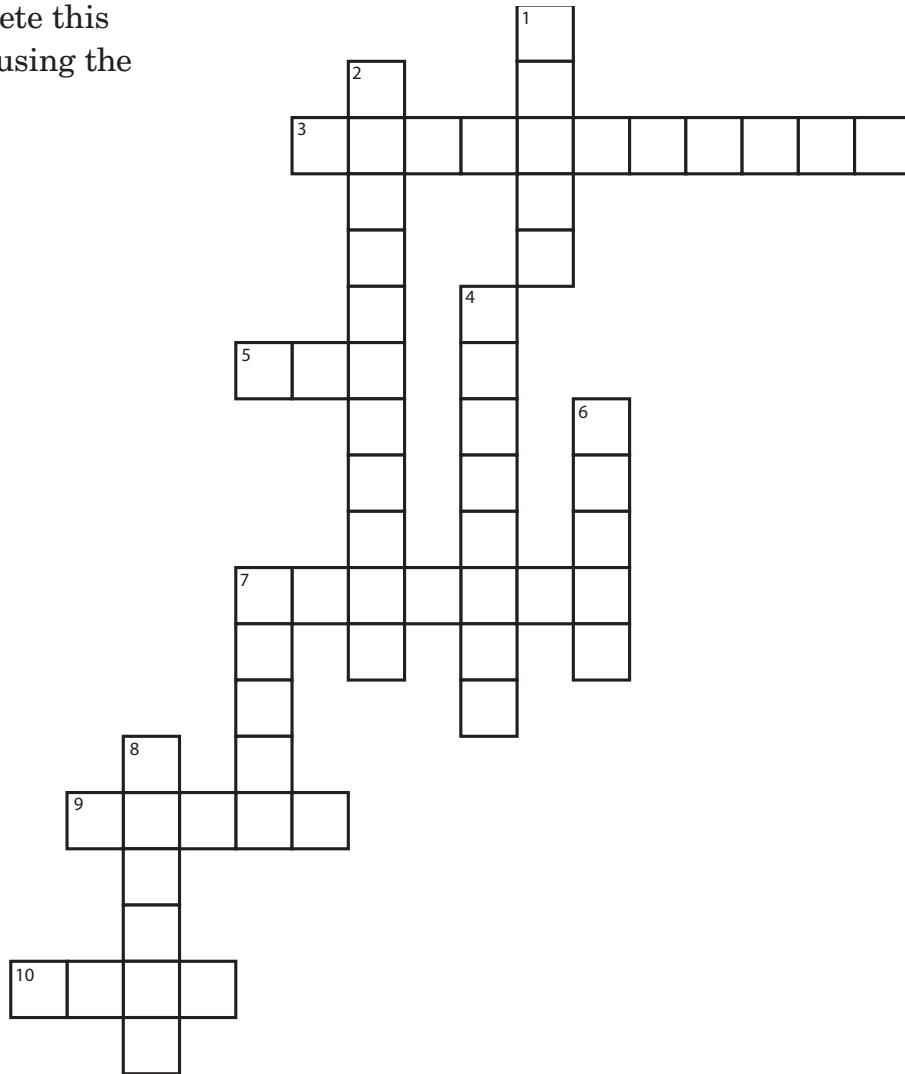
Consider using section 4.4.1.12, Explain or Clarify (Using Details, Examples, Visuals, Anecdotes, or Experiences), found in the Language Arts volume of the Concordia Curriculum Guide. Humanly speaking, one of the reasons Nathan made such a powerful impact on David’s conscience was because he used an easily visualized,

Have students follow the trail of events from a first cause to effects, which become causes of subsequent effects. Such an activity will reinforce the concept that choices have consequences.

heart-touching anecdote to sneak past David’s defenses. Discuss the role of anecdotes, visuals, and examples in persuasion. Then ask students to imagine they are trying to persuade a friend to avoid a particular evil (say, shoplifting or gossiping). What details, stories, and examples might they use in their speech or writing?

David and Bathsheba

Directions: Complete this crossword puzzle using the clues below.



Across

3. Repenting of our sins brings _____.
5. _____ would bring unhappiness to David and Bathsheba.
7. David was not _____ with the life God had given him.
9. "You shall not commit adultery" is the _____ Commandment.
10. David and Bathsheba's first son _____.

Down

1. David could not marry Bathsheba because she was married to _____.
2. The Fifth _____ says, "You shall not kill."
4. David and Bathsheba committed _____.
6. "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife" is the _____ Commandment.
7. To want what someone else has.
8. Bathsheba's husband was placed at the front in battle where he would most likely be _____.

The Parable of the Sower

(Matthew 13:1–30)

Sowing the Seed

Jesus shared parables to teach biblical truths. Many times, the objects in the parables were symbolic for something else. Read Matthew 13:18–23 to discover what each type of soil symbolized in the parable:



Soil	Meaning
The Path	
Rocky Soil	
Thorny Soil	
Good Soil	

REVIEW

Define the following two words:

sower: _____

parable: _____

A Chance to Sprout and Grow

God wants us all to be like the seeds that fell in the good soil. He wants us to learn more and more about God and share Him with others. But often we fail. We may even act as if we are rocky or thorny soil to look cool around our friends.

God sent Jesus to be our Savior. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, God offers us full forgiveness. We cannot earn that forgiveness; it is a free gift to be shared. God sends us His Holy Spirit to nurture and grow us strong in the faith. That's great news—the kind God would have us share with others.

Whom will you share it with? _____

Lifestyle Choice

Lifestyle Choice	



Living Your Life

Each of these seeds is symbolic of a lifestyle choice we may or may not make. Match the choice with the correct seed and soil combination. Put the correct letter in the column at the left:

- Receive Jesus' Word and share it with others
- Do not believe in God and refuse to learn about Him
- Think things are more important than God
- Fear what others will think of us if we admit we believe in Jesus



REMEMBER

Fill in the missing vowels. Use the symbols below the lines to find the correct vowel.

A=△ E=□ O=♥ U=☆

B☆t bl□ss□d △r□ y♥☆r □y□s, f♥r th□y s□□,
 △nd y♥☆r □△rs, f♥r th□y h□△r. M△tth□w 13:16

The Parable of the Sower

MATTHEW 13:1–30

Background

Jesus' parables often utilized images that His listeners would have found familiar. So it is with this parable. Jesus' original listeners knew well the farming methods of their day. However, these methods may not be familiar to your students.

In Bible times, a farmer's field consisted of thin strips of land set between walking paths. Once the soil had been prepared, the farmer would go out into the field with a sack under his arm and fling the seed all around him, letting the seed fall where it would.

Sometimes the wind would blow the seed onto the walking path, ground that had been packed hard by countless travelers. Unable to penetrate the surface, the seed made great food for the birds.

Rocky soil was another problem. This wasn't soil with a few rocks in it. Instead, this was a part of the field where the bedrock rested close to the surface, covered by only a thin layer of soil. Seeds that landed here wouldn't

be able to send their roots deep into the ground and so wouldn't survive for long.

The seed with the weeds in it looked harmless enough, but lurking within were the root systems and seeds of countless weeds that were waiting to spring up with the good seed and choke it.

Given that these three fates could await the sown seed, it's a wonder that the farmers tried at all. But they continued to sow the seed because they knew that while they might lose some or even most of the seed, some would land in good soil and yield a great return.

In your classroom you most likely will have students who compare with each of the types of soil. It's hard to tell which kids are what soil when we're teaching them. But creating receptive "good soil" is the work of the Holy Spirit. God desires us only to spread the seed of God's Word, trusting Him to make it grow (see 1 Corinthians 3:6–7).

Classroom Devotion

When Jill was in third grade, she was given a tree seedling to plant at home in honor of Arbor Day. She rushed home, proudly cradling that seedling, hoping to find the perfect spot to plant it.

We are like that tree. We need constant care and encouragement to continue to grow. Because this tree was planted in the right location, it received enough sunlight to grow and thrive. When we came to know and believe in Jesus as our Savior, God planted us. As we read and learn God's Word, His Spirit gives us all we need to grow

and thrive. God also provides us with people in our lives to help us grow as they teach us God's Word. (List people who teach you about God.)

PRAY: Dear Jesus, thank You for helping us to grow and thrive in Your Word. Keep our faith healthy and strong so that it does not become choked out by the cares and distractions of life. Help us to sow the seed of faith as we tell others about you. We pray in Your name. Amen.

Sing "Pass It On" (AGPS 196).

Central Truth

Our loving God in Christ welcomes us into His kingdom and empowers us to grow in faith through His Word.

Objectives

- Acknowledge that at times we resemble each of the four types of hearers described in the parable.
- Repent of indifference to God's Word, trusting in Jesus for forgiveness.
- Demonstrate a desire to grow in faith and godly living.

Materials

- The Basics
- Reproducible 73
- Web Resource 73a

Bible Prep

Post in advance so students can bookmark references before class time.

- Matthew 13:1–30
- 1 Corinthians 3:6–7

INTO the lesson

Take a moment to look at a topographical map of a farming community. Ask, **What colors do you see?** (Lots of green, signifying farmland) Compare this map to a map of the Middle East, namely Israel. Ask, **What do you notice about this land?** (A lot more brown for mountains, desert, and a small amount of green) Talk about how fertile Israel is especially because of the rivers flowing through the land. Say, **Israel was not all desert; the people could provide food for themselves through farming.** Refer to the *Background* section to learn more about farming during biblical times. Say, **Today we are going to discuss a parable about a farmer. It is called the parable of the sower. Sower is a name for a type of farmer.**

Sowing the Seed

Let's begin by looking at parables. As a class, you can read aloud Matthew 13:10–17 which helps to define the purpose of parables. Ask, **What is a parable?** (A parable is a story used to teach a spiritual truth.) Some students will be able to list familiar parables from the Bible. Make sure students understand that parables have a particular meaning. Jesus used parables as an education tool for those who could not read or write.

You could even discuss how oral stories helped to pass down traditions for years before we had access to the printed word. It was easier to remember a story than a list of facts. A possible activity: Make a list of unrelated items: bowling ball, window shade, acorn, and so on. Send half the class out to the hall or have them plug their ears. Orally share the list with half the class. Have them write down what they remember in two minutes and collect their papers. Now, retell the list in story form: **I was walking down the street when I noticed a bowling ball in the gutter. When I picked it up, there was a message attached to it, but the message was written on a piece of window shade . . .** Make the story as silly as you want, emphasizing the list of words. Now, have these students record the words in two minutes. You will probably discover that the students who heard the story will remember more words. It is easier to remember and, sometimes, understand things when you can form pictures in your mind.

Back to Matthew 13:10–17. Ask, **Who questions Jesus about His teaching?** (The disciples) Remind students, **The disciples spent a large part of Jesus' ministry following Him and listening to His lessons. They were able to interact with Him and ask Him questions. Why would that be important?** (They could learn from Him, hear the lessons again and again, ask Him to explain when they did not understand.) Say, **The disciples had an advantage. Look at Matthew 13:16–17. Jesus knew that they**

Sowing the Seed

Jesus shared parables to teach biblical truths. Many times, the objects in the parables were symbolic for something else. Read Matthew 13:18–23 to discover what each type of soil symbolized in the parable:



Soil	Meaning
The Path	Hears the word, does not understand it, and the evil one snatches it away
Rocky Soil	Hears the word, receives it with joy, but falls away under persecution
Thorny Soil	Hears the word but is choked by the cares of the world
Good Soil	Hears the word, understands it, and produces a lot of fruit

REVIEW

Define the following two words:

sower: **Someone who scatters seeds to produce a crop** _____

parable: **A simple story told to teach a spiritual lesson** _____

152

understood and believed that He was God. They took what Jesus said as the truth. Jesus points out to the disciples that many will long to be in their place to be able to follow, see, and hear what Jesus has to say. Look at Matthew 13:13–15. In these verses, Jesus explains why He needs to speak in parables. Ask, **In Matthew 13:13–15, what was wrong with the people?** (They could not hear, see, or understand Jesus' role in life. Some may have believed Him, but they could not understand His teachings.) So, as a good teacher, Jesus uses storytelling to illustrate His point.

Say, **Now that we understand the time period, let's look at the parable of the sower as if we were there when Jesus first shared this parable with the crowd. We may not know who Jesus is and definitely do not**

know that He will die on the cross to forgive and save us. We want to learn more about Him, but we may have a limited understanding of the Word of God.

If you choose, distribute copies of **Reproducible 73**, which contains a readers theater review of the parable of the sower. Continue by reading the readers theater as a class. You can read it simply as it is written or use props to signify the different characters (i.e., a feather for the birds, flashlight for the sun, tree branches for the thorns, smiley face for the successful seeds, and so on).

Review

Direct students to write definitions for *sower* and *parable* as they find them in the glossary at the back of the book.

A Chance to Sprout and Grow

God wants us all to be like the seeds that fell in the good soil. He wants us to learn more and more about God and share Him with others. But often we fail. We may even act as if we are rocky or thorny soil to look cool around our friends.

God sent Jesus to be our Savior. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, God offers us full forgiveness. We cannot earn that forgiveness; it is a free gift to be shared. God sends us His Holy Spirit to nurture and grow us strong in the faith. That's great news—the kind God would have us share with others.

Whom will you share it with? _____

Lifestyle Choice	
B	
D	
C	
A	

Living Your Life

Each of these seeds is symbolic of a lifestyle choice we may or may not make. Match the choice with the correct seed and soil combination. Put the correct letter in the column at the left:

- Receive Jesus' Word and share it with others
- Do not believe in God and refuse to learn about Him
- Think things are more important than God
- Fear what others will think of us if we admit we believe in Jesus

REMEMBER

Fill in the missing vowels. Use the symbols below the lines to find the correct vowel.

A=△ E=□ O=♥ U=☆

BUt bLEssEd ARrE yOUr EyEs, fOr thEy sEE,
 And yOUr EARs, fOr thEy hEAR. MATthEW 13:16

153

INTO our lives

A Chance to Sprout and Grow

Remind students that though we try to do our best, we continually fail to keep God's Word perfectly. We receive full forgiveness through Christ's death and resurrection. Keeping this great news in mind, encourage students to list three names of people who may not know about Jesus (a friend, neighbor, family member, or the like). Encourage students to keep those people in their prayers as they share Christ with them. The culmination of the parable of the sower is that faith grows thirty, sixty, or even a hundredfold.

With this in mind, review the parable. If you choose, make use of Web Resource 73a at this time. Notice that the sower spreads the seed and tends to it. He expects some of the seeds will not grow and flourish. The students should remember to tell others about Jesus and continue to pray for and share God's love with them. Remind students that it is only through the Holy Spirit that others will come to faith. There are no special words or actions we can say or do that will cause unbelievers to become believers. Together read 1 Corinthians 3:6–7. These verses remind us that through the Church, the Word is planted and nurtured by God's people, but only God can make it grow.

Living Your Life

As you look at the four given choices, students should be able to identify the correct answers. Add the correct letter to the lifestyles column. As you discuss the answers, brainstorm possible ways to minister to each type of person.

Remember

Allow time for students to fill in the vowels to complete the Bible memory verse and to commit it to memory. Stress that God's people are blessed because they come to know (see and hear) Jesus as their Savior. If you choose to do so, have students highlight the verse in their Bibles.

INTO the Word

Matthew 13:18–23 explains the meaning of the parable. Students can fill in the second column of the chart with the meaning of each type of seed and soil. Take a few minutes to review what is written and the meaning of each part of the parable before moving on.





Faith in Action

This is a game to help review the parable of the sower. You will need the following:

- * A short story or fable (Aesop's Fables would work)
- * Stepping stones or pieces of paper
- * Individual strips of paper to draw groups labeled: good soil (20% of your class), rocky (20%), thorny (20%), path (20%), birds (10%), and thorns (10%)

In a class of twenty students, the breakdown would be four students each in good, rocky, thorny, and path and two students each in birds and thorns.

How to play:

Before class, the teacher should read the fable and write ten questions about it. These questions should be kept secret and come from all parts of the story. Group students according to their roles and read their directions.

Good, rocky, thorny, and path seeds: You are to read this story to yourself in your small group. As a group, you will answer questions according to what you have read. For each correct answer, you will move one pathway step closer to heaven. (The students do not know it, but not everyone will receive the full story. Give the full story only to the good soil, so

they will successfully reach heaven. The other soil types will receive only a portion of the story, so they will not be able to answer all the questions.)

Birds and thorns: Hinder your team's chances to get to heaven. Remove paper stepping stones from the floor or distract soil students by making noise but not touching them.

All four teams will line up with paperstepping stones in front of them. There is one stepping stone for each question, ending with the final question being heaven. The students can work together to answer the questions; for each correct answer they can move ahead one space. There will be distractions and unfair questions since everyone did not get the full story. Finally, the good soil people will "win" by making it to heaven. Those team members can go and help the other teams make it to heaven by sharing answers. This is a good demonstration of evangelism so that everyone, except the birds and thorns, will eventually make it to heaven. This shows that the crop will produce thirty, sixty, or even a hundredfold.

Discuss how everyone felt at the end of the exercise. How can we help others be successful in life?



Bringing it home

Discuss what a seed needs to grow and possible things that could harm the seed (bad soil, animals, lack of water or sun). Groups or individuals could plant seeds to share at home or with neighbors. Students could create Bible verse signs (Matthew 13:23) with wooden craft sticks to include with their plants. Or students could just decorate seed packets with a church schedule to share with neighbors.



Curriculum Connection

Take a look at 4.2.2.4, Examples of Interdependence between Plants and Animals, found in the Science volume of the Concordia Curriculum Guide. Learn about soil—where does it come from? How can we improve it for planting? What kinds of living things help improve soil? What human actions harm the soil, making it unfruitful or causing it to erode?



Searching Further

The parable of the weeds, which ties into the parable of the sower, can be found in Matthew 13:24–30. Read Matthew 13:24–26. Say, **These seeds will be successful, because they landed on good soil. But what also landed on the soil?** (The enemy's seeds) Ask, **Why might it be a problem if the enemy's seeds landed on the soil as well?** (There might not be enough space for all the plants to grow. The enemy's plants may take up the good plant's soil or may choke the good plants.)

Read Matthew 13:27–30. **What is the master's response when the servants want to pull the weeds?** (No) Ask, **Why do you think the master will allow the weeds to continue to grow in the garden?** (So that the good plants are not pulled up as well) Ask, **According to the master, when will the weeds be separated from the**

wheat? (At harvest time) **What will happen to the weeds?** (They will be destroyed.)

What does this mean? Read Matthew 13:36–43 for the explanation. Then do the following activity.

First, establish the characters: master, field, good seeds, weeds, enemy, harvest, and reapers.

This parable is about judgment. Create a chart with three columns (characters/setting, my prediction, actual character). In small groups have students predict who the characters are and then read Matthew 13:26–43. They can add to the chart who the characters actually are in the parable. The groups can finish the chart by writing a lesson to be learned from this parable on the worksheet. Groups can share and come up with a consensus as to what the parable is about.

Sowing the Seed

Narrator: Out of the house to be free,
Jesus sat beside the sea
On a boat, so crowds could see.
This parable was shared with me.

Farmer: These seeds I plan to go and
sow
Across my land both high and low.

All: The farmer went out the seeds to sow.
Will the seeds fail or will the seeds
grow?

Seed #1: On the path and underfoot
We landed without taking root.
The hungry birds landed near.
As they ate and ate, we disappeared.

Narrator: The first seeds were gone
when the birds flew.
Now what will happen to seed number
2?

All: The farmer went out the seeds to sow.
Will the seeds fail or will the seeds
grow?

Seed #2: The land was rocky without
much soil.
The plants sprang up but began to
boil.
The sun was bright and hot that day.
The plants became scorched and died
away.

Narrator: Although they had roots, they
withered away.
C'mon seed 3, we hope you stay.

All: The farmer went out the seeds to sow.
Will the seeds fail or will the seeds
grow?

Seed #3: Success seems certain as these
seeds grow
But one could predict the upcoming
woe.

Thorns: We grew amongst seed number
3.

As they grew up, so did we.
What happened next was truly no
joke:
The sprouting plants began to choke.
We did not want to share the land.
As thorns, we had the upper hand.

Narrator: At first the third seeds
flourished and grew,
But the thorns among them gave them
their due.

Our final seeds we hope will grow
On good soil the farmer will sow.

All: The farmer went out the seeds to sow.
Will the seeds fail or will the seeds
grow?

Seed #4: As fourth seeds, we landed on
the richest of soil.
The negative elements we managed to
foil.

The sun, soil, and plenty of rain
Helped us to produce an abundance of
grain.
Thirty, sixty, a hundredfold
Were produced by us, or so we've been
told.

Farmer: Patience and persistence are
valuable traits.
I sowed the seed but then had to wait.
Some crops died while others lived.
It's a sacrifice I had to give.
I learned my lesson here today.
I'll share what I've learned along the
way.

Jesus: Tell others about Me and My life.
Some will listen, even as they face
strife.
But share your faith and be bold.
God may produce thirty, sixty, or a
hundredfold.