

Hezekiah’s Prayer

2 KINGS 20; ISAIAH 38

Background

Hezekiah, whose name means “Yahweh is my strength,” was the son of wicked King Ahaz. He took the throne at age 25 and reigned for twenty-nine years. He abolished idolatry and was instrumental in religious reform throughout Judah. He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. During Hezekiah’s reign, Sennacherib of the Assyrians attacked Judah and captured the fortified cities. Hezekiah gave the Assyrians gold and silver to try to get them to leave Jerusalem alone. The Assyrians tried to drive a wedge between Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem and to break the resistance of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The army of Judah was

relatively small, and the city under siege was most likely ill-equipped to defend itself against a larger foe.

Instead of turning to idols or to idolatrous nations as his father had done, Hezekiah prayed earnestly to the Lord for deliverance. The prophet Isaiah prophesied Sennacherib’s fall and delivered that message to Hezekiah. That night, the angel of the Lord destroyed 185,000 men in the Assyrian camp. Sennacherib withdrew and was later murdered by his sons. Hezekiah’s illness and prayer would have happened during this same time frame. His prayer life and faith offer lessons for God’s people of all times.

Devotions

Read Mark 13:32–37.

Have you ever heard of a bucket list? Some older adults make a list of all the things they would like to do before they die; maybe skydiving, swimming with the dolphins, or climbing Mount Everest. What would you put on your bucket list? Being a young adult, you probably have many goals and hopes and dreams. Would your list change if you knew you only had a few days or weeks to live? What dreams and plans would you make? God has a plan for us, and His plan is always best. We can live each day in confidence, knowing we are in God’s hands. Because Jesus has come to earth to forgive and save us, we can be hopeful, living each day as though it will be our last. Trusting in God’s guidance and grace, we can look for ways to serve Him in the experiences, challenges, and accomplishments life brings our way.

Mark 13 reminds us that we don’t know the day and hour of Christ’s return. Therefore, God would have us always be ready and have our “house in order.” The Lord might come for us at any time. Therefore, God would have us watch and wait for Him, living each day to its fullest, using our gifts and talents for God’s glory, and sharing His saving Gospel message with others.

Today, we will learn how King Hezekiah was told he was going to die. He went to the Lord in prayer, and the Lord heard and answered his prayer with another fifteen years of life. Through prayer, we bring our cares and concerns, as well as our joys and expressions of praise and gratitude, before our Father in heaven. And God hears and answers our prayers for Jesus’ sake.

PRAY: Dear Lord, help me to appreciate Your plan for my life. Help me to trust You and

Central Truth

God hears and answers prayer; He has a plan for each life.

Objectives

- Describe God’s grace demonstrated in the life of Hezekiah.
- Explain God’s plan for every person to receive forgiveness, new life, and salvation in Jesus.
- Demonstrate a desire to talk with God regularly and often in prayer.

Materials

- The Basics
- Reproducible 40
- Web Resource 40a
- Sample obituaries from newspapers

Bible Prep

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

- Isaiah 38:1–22
- John 14:13–14
- Luke 11:9–11
- Romans 8:26
- 1 Thessalonians 5:17

to remember that You alone know what is best for me. Help me to use my talents and abilities in Your kingdom. Grant me health and wisdom. If it be Your will, grant me a long life to serve You. I ask all these things in Your Son’s name. Amen.

Sing: “Son of God, Eternal Savior” (LSB 842).

INTO the Lesson

Read and discuss Isaiah 38:1, and then proceed with Isaiah 38:2–8. Encourage your students to share concerns and stories about loved ones who have serious illnesses, loved ones who have passed away, or their own fear of death. Encourage them to look for the blessings these people have received and the witness that these people leave behind. A Christian can leave a legacy of love and encouragement for others.

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2 Kings 20; Isaiah 38

HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER

Hezekiah Turns to God

Read Isaiah 38:1. Imagine being Hezekiah. Your father was a wicked king. Since you've been king, you have tried to serve the Lord, clean up the temple, and get rid of idols. You also have issues trying to relate to foreign kings and keeping your people together and strong against the attack of foes. Suddenly, you are struck down with a terrible illness. The prophet Isaiah comes to you with a very short message of bad news. You are going to die soon.

Set your house in order. You shall die and not recover.

What was Isaiah's message to Hezekiah? (Isaiah 38:1)

He prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly.

What did Hezekiah do in reaction? (Isaiah 38:2–3)

He would make the shadow cast by the sun go back down the steps it had already gone up.

The Lord heard Hezekiah's prayer. He sent Isaiah back to Hezekiah to tell him that He would add years to his life and deliver him and Jerusalem from the Assyrians. He even proved it to him with an earthly sign. What was that sign? (Isaiah 38:7–8)

Sang a hymn or prayer of praise and thanksgiving

There are some things that we just can't understand, like the shadow going backward! Miraculous medical healings are hard for doctors to explain, yet they happen. These can only be explained by God's mercy and grace. God's forgiveness and love for Hezekiah and for us are also great examples of God's mercy and grace.

What did Hezekiah do (vv. 9–20)?

Think about your own life. What can you do to show gratitude to God? What things do you still want to accomplish before God takes you to heaven?

REVIEW

mercy— the feeling that motivates compassion; a disposition to be kind and forgiving

justice— judgment involved in determining rights, rewards, and punishments

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INTO the Word

Hezekiah Turns to God

As you work through Isaiah 38 with your class, ask students to think of things they want to accomplish in their life. Ask them how the things they do can serve God and others. (Participating in servant events, singing in the church choir, being a nurturing Christian parent, writing a devotion book, etc.)

As students contemplate their lives and their hopes, dreams, and goals, remind them that God's plan is always for our best, that He knew us before we were born, and that He knows our future. John 14:2 reminds us that the Lord has gone ahead to prepare a place

for us. Although, in all likelihood, we will one day die, death will not be the end for us. We have the promise of new life in heaven. **Jesus earned heaven for us through His life, death, and resurrection.** If you choose to do so, distribute copies of **Reproducible 40** for students to complete at this time.

Review

As students define *justice* and *mercy*, ask them to consider what Hezekiah received. What do we receive? Justice would bring punishment and death for all. Hezekiah should have died as well, but God showed him mercy, undeserved kindness, compassion, and forgiveness.

Prayer

The prayer of Hezekiah is a wonderful example of faith in action. Sometimes, we get uncomfortable with prayer because we don't think we are doing it right. Prayer is communicating with our heavenly Father in a very natural and individual way. Read the following verses to see what they tell us about prayer.

John 14:13–14
Pray in Jesus' name. Jesus will answer so that the Father will be glorified in the Son.

Romans 8:26
The Spirit prays for us, helping us in our weakness.

Luke 11:9–11
Ask; the Lord gives good gifts.

1 Thessalonians 5:17
Pray continually; always give thanks.

Although there is no particular formula for prayer, there are different types of petitions that may be included in our prayers.

Think of a rainbow . . . ROYGBV.

REMEMBER

"Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me."

Psalm 50:15

INTO our lives

Prayer

Read and discuss the Bible verses. Comment that in prayer we come before God's throne of grace in the name of Jesus. Because of Jesus, we can come before our Father in heaven and talk to Him as children talk to a loving father. Plus, He gives us His Holy Spirit, who prays for us when we are, for any reason, either too weak or unable to pray.

Review the kinds of things we may pray for or use the rainbow included at the bottom portion of the Student Book page. Place students in groups to create a specific prayer that fits each description. See Web Resource 40a. As

you discuss prayer with your class and the privilege we have to talk to God in prayer, be sure to tell your class that you pray for them individually, asking God to bless and encourage them in the challenges they face and to grant them success and a continued close relationship with their God and Savior, both now and in the future.

Remember

Remind students of the comfort we as children of God can find in this verse. God invites us to call upon Him during times of trouble, and He promises to help! Praise God!

Your Salvation Story

You are saved by God's mercy and grace. How would you let people know about it? This is your chance to think about how your salvation story might look.

What does Jesus mean to you?	What are your favorite Scripture passages?
What are your favorite hymns or Christian songs? Why do you like them?	What are the names of your Christian friends and relatives?
Tell about the important events in your faith life.	Where will you live when you die? Why?

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Lesson Support



Curriculum Connection

Hezekiah wrote about his experience of God's merciful healing in the poem found in Isaiah 38:9–20. To make a language connection to this story, consider using section 8.3.4.8, Literary Devices Such as Metaphors, Analogies, and Symbols Used in Writing about Personal Experiences. This appears in the Language Arts volume of the Concordia Curriculum Guide. Hezekiah used vivid imagery, such as that of a tent being taken down and a lion breaking a man's bones. Encourage your students to write about personal experiences using vivid imagery of their own.



HANDS TO SERVE

Write and send notes of encouragement to members on your congregation's prayer list. Include those members in your prayers. A visit to a nursing home to deliver the cards and notes would be even better.



Technology

A rainbow can be easily drawn on the interactive whiteboard, and student ideas can be written on the corresponding colors.



Reaching Every Child

Students who have difficulty with writing might be encouraged to record their legacy ideas as a testimony to friends and family.



Bringing it home

Ask students to interview a grandparent or elderly adult about their legacy and the life of witness they have lived and hope to live in the future.



Critical thinking

Poems and songs have been written about death and dying. Have students find some of these poems and songs and analyze their messages about death. Use these for discussion and further study of how we should find comfort and reassurance in death because of the death and resurrection of Jesus, as opposed to much of the world, which fears death. As a society, we are often faced with stories of death, even among young people. Sadly, many families and communities do not know how to deal with the topic. A frank, honest discussion about death and dying may be healthy. Have students comment on the message of the liturgy for the funeral service (*LSB*, p. 278).



Searching Further

Ask students to research boils and treatment for diseases such as leprosy and other Old Testament diseases. Think about other medical advancements and diseases that we have today that need a cure. Comment that all healing that occurs happens as a blessing from our loving God and Savior.



Check it Out

Have students read the obituaries in the local newspapers for samples of Christian obituaries. What makes it Christian? What is the single, essential element of Christian life? Be sure to emphasize what Jesus has done above what the deceased has done.

Jesus Returns the Widow's Son to Life

LUKE 7:11–17

Background

Jesus' miracles demonstrate His power over physical elements (John 2:1–11) and over sin's effects on the physical body (Luke 7:1–10). Today's lesson demonstrates Christ's power over death, the ultimate effect of sin on our physical bodies. Two other miracles recorded in the Bible show Christ's power over death—the raising of Jairus's daughter (Luke 8:40–56) and the raising of Lazarus (John 11:38–44). These resurrection miracles are a foreshadowing of Christ's resurrection miracle on Easter morning.

No conflict with the Pharisees is evident following the raising of the widow's son or the raising of

Jairus's daughter. However, after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead in Bethany, the chief priests stepped up their plan to get rid of Jesus.

The word for the miracle in this lesson is *compassion*. Jesus had compassion on the woman who had lost her husband and her son. His compassion for her led Him to miraculously bring her son back from the dead. Imagine how the grief of the funeral procession was turned into a joyous celebration. This is a foretaste of the joy Christians can anticipate at the reunion we will enjoy one day in heaven when Jesus unites us in the final resurrection with all who have died believing in Him.

Central Truth

Jesus, our compassionate God and Savior, has power over sin and its consequences, including death.

Objectives

- Recognize Jesus' love and compassion in the story of the raising of the widow's son.
- Acknowledge Jesus' power over all sins and their consequences.
- Express confident trust in the forgiveness and restoring power of our compassionate Savior.

Materials

- The Basics
- Reproducible 59
- Web Resource 59a

Bible Prep

Post in advance so students can book-mark references before class time.

- Luke 7:11–17
- Matthew 9:1–8
- Luke 23:32–43
- James 2:15–16

Devotions

Sadly, no one moved a muscle to help. Instead, the crowd gathered on the bridge and simply watched as a woman, standing on top of her floating car, pleaded for help. No one moved. After several minutes, the car sank into the river, and the woman, unable to swim, sank into the water and died.

Why did no one help the woman? Could it be they were too shocked, too horrified to move? Or could it be that they simply lacked compassion, the type of compassion that compels a person to do something—*anything*—in an attempt to ease the suffering of another?

As we think about many of the miracles that Jesus did, we are reminded of His great love and compassion for people. Jesus was both willing and able to help them. And, in fact, He *needed* to be both willing and able. Imagine that He was willing but not able to help them—that His weakness could not overcome their struggle. Or what if He was able, but not willing? His unwillingness to act would keep others from receiving His help.

Read James 2:15–16. Jesus lived the life of faith and works. He did not just say to the people, “Oh, I hope things are okay for you.” He did things to help. He ultimately went to the cross and rose again to help all

people with their greatest need, the need for forgiveness of their sin.

PRAY: Thank You, Jesus, for Your great love and compassion for us. Thank You for willingly giving Your life to forgive and save us. Thank You for helping us each day of our lives and for giving us compassion for others. What a great and awesome Savior You are! Amen.

Sing: “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” (LSB 425, 426).

INTO the lesson

Encourage your students to share instances they know of when someone helped someone else. Jesus did not do miracles to show off His power. Before Christ went to the cross, Herod was glad to have Jesus appear before him on trial because he was hoping to see some miraculous sign (Luke 23:8). Jesus did His miracles to show that He was the Son of God who was able to help people with their physical needs. He was also the promised Messiah who would ultimately help all people with their spiritual need. He performed miracles to bring people to faith in Him as the Messiah.

Most of Jesus’ recorded miracles benefited average people whom He encountered in His ministry. Few of His miracles were for His family or the disciples. Each miracle showed His love for people and His power as the Son of God. Briefly discuss student reaction to Jesus’ miracles. Discuss questions and comments your students have about the miracles of Jesus.



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Luke 7:11-17

JESUS RETURNS
THE WIDOW'S SON TO LIFE

A Widow's Plight

You might not have called her old—not by today's standards, anyway—but in appearance, she looked to have aged far beyond her years. At the death of her husband, she had lost the man who had provided for her and her son. Getting along without him had been difficult. In Bible times, women were provided for by the men in their family. There existed no welfare assistance or government aid of any kind. Her only hope rested with her son, because the responsibility for caring for parents fell upon children. Pensions did not exist; the concept of retirement plans remained thousands of years in the future. Now, with the death of her only son, the woman's hopes for the future had died at well. As they carried her son's body outside the town, the woman began to weep.

Jesus acted compassionately toward the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11–17). Consider the following illustrations. Write Jesus' words inside the speech bubbles. Then tell what each of following scenes shows us about Jesus.

Luke 7:11-13
Jesus shows compassion for the woman in her suffering.

Luke 7:14-17
Jesus acts to help the woman. He brings her son back to life.

REVIEW

compassion—**sympathetic consciousness for distress over the suffering of another**

bier—**a container for a dead person; a coffin**

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INTO the Word

A Widow's Plight

See Web Resource 59a. Work through the introductory paragraph in this section of the Student Book with your class, commenting that in Bible times, those experiencing the loss of the family's primary breadwinner were often left immediately destitute, for they lived in a world without the benefits of life insurance or government assistance or social concern organizations and institutions. Jesus has compassion for the woman. As a human, He understands her situation, and it moves Him. The

Greek word used here for feeling compassion literally means “moved His gut with emotion.” Jesus comforts the woman with both His words and His actions.

Comment that with Jesus’ arrival, the desperation and sadness of the crowd turned into sheer joy and elation. Jesus knows how to ruin a funeral. He brought the young man back to life. This miracle foreshadows Christ’s upcoming death and resurrection as well as our own physical death and our resurrection to life eternal in heaven.

Jesus Has Compassion

We do not know the reason for the death of the young man of Nain. We do not even know his name. Those details were not important for Luke to record, but the fact that Jesus brought him back to life was. We are like the young man in that we were dead in our transgressions and sins. Jesus comes to us in His Word and Sacraments and raises us from the daily death of sin and gives us new life in Him.

Consider the words of Jesus in two encounters pictured below. On the lines above each scene, identify the Bible story, describing the compassion Jesus evidenced in each situation. On the lines below each situation, tell what Jesus’ words mean to us as twenty-first-century followers of Jesus.

Matthew 9:1-8

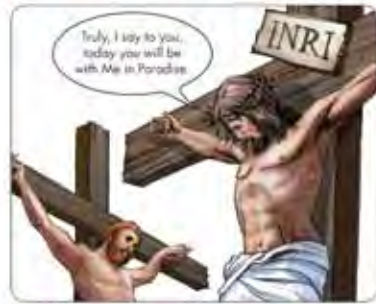
Jesus has compassion for the paralyzed man and forgives his sins.



Jesus has compassion on us and forgives our sins.

Luke 23:32-43

Jesus has compassion for the repentant criminal on the cross and promises him a home in heaven.



Jesus has compassion on us and promises us a home in heaven.

REMEMBER

You have seen the purpose of the Lord; how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

James 5:11b

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Review

As you review these words with the class, comment that the word *bier* is not commonly used today. *Compassion* is an emotion God builds into people to help us to care for one another. Compassion is the tender love that a mother has for her children. Jesus, knowing His people had physical and spiritual needs, acted compassionately to help them.

INTO our lives

Jesus Has Compassion

Distribute copies of **Reproducible 59**. Invite students to work in small groups to determine who received Jesus’ compassion in each miracle.

God cares for all people, just as He cared for those He encountered back in Bible times. After Jesus raised the young man from the dead, word of the resurrection traveled throughout the land of Judea, attracting more attention to Jesus. Eventually, Jesus’ care and compassion for all people would lead Him to a willing encounter with death on a wooden cross and to His own resurrection from the dead.

Like the human condition itself, Jesus’ love and compassion for all people extends unending into eternity. We, like the young man of Nain, were also dead—spiritually dead. Psalm 51:5 reminds us of this condition. We might say with David, “I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.” We are born sinners. No one had to teach us how to sin. Sinning comes naturally to us as a result of original sin. Sin brings a host of consequences. Ask students to name some of the consequences of sin in the world.

What corrupt and horrible lives we would have without God’s divine intervention. He knew that **the only way to rescue us from this “body of death”** (Romans 7:24) **of our sins would be to send His one and only Son into the world to live a perfect life, suffer, die, and rise in victory to pay the price for our sins.**

As students complete the activity in this section of the Student Book, stress the good news that Jesus has compassion on us when we suffer from the realities of our sins and their consequences in our lives. He forgives our sins just as He forgave the sins of the paralyzed man, and He promises eternal life in heaven to us just as He promised and provided it for the believing thief on the cross. We can rejoice knowing that our sins have been forgiven for Jesus’ sake and we, too, will be raised from the dead on the Last Day.

Remember

As you assign and review the memory verse, point out that we can trust in God our Savior to always love and care about us.



Curriculum Connection

The story of Jesus raising the widow's son to life is an excellent one for dramatic reading. Consider using it together with other activities mentioned in section 8.1.1.2, Reading with Expression, in the Language Arts volume of the Concordia Curriculum Guide series. Discuss these questions with students: **What emotions do you hear in the reader's voice? How does he or she show the change in direction of the story, from sadness to joy? What is the key moment of the story—and how does the reader emphasize it?**

Check it Out

Again, Jesus went against the norms of the culture by walking up to the casket carrying the dead man and touching it. In doing so, He made Himself ceremonially unclean. Once again, Jesus' compassion for this grieving widow supersedes the ceremonial law.



Technology

If your classroom or school has a blog, ask for posts of favorite Bible verses that provide comfort in the time of the death of a loved one. Have students create a PowerPoint presentation or posters of these favorite Bible verses to display at your school or church. Smaller versions of the Bible verses could be printed on postcards and distributed to families who have experienced a loss. This activity could be done in support of a grief ministry program at your church, as mentioned in "Hands to Serve."



Searching Further

The Greek word for "compassion" found in Luke 7:13 is *splagchnizomai*. It literally means "His gut moved." This compassion was not simply a feeling of pity for the woman. Jesus felt compassion in His body. This compassionate feeling in Jesus' inner being points to His death on the cross, where He also felt compassion in His body for us as poor, miserable sinners. We sometimes have physical symptoms when we feel extremely sad about a situation. As true man, Jesus experienced the same emotions that we feel. This was evident when Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus. God also experiences compassion. As true God, Jesus acted compassionately and conquered death in order to give us eternal life.



HANDS TO SERVE

Many churches have a grief ministry program where people reach out to families for a period of time after the death of a loved one. The ministry program might consist of visits, cards, bringing over food, or sending booklets about dealing with the death of a loved one at different times throughout the first year or eighteen months afterward. If your church has such a program, there may be a way for your class to be involved. Maybe students could address envelopes or write notes of encouragement to the bereaved families. Speak with your pastor or grief ministry coordinator and brainstorm ways that your students can be involved. If no such program exists, begin a prayer ministry in your classroom where you daily pray for families experiencing grief.



TEACHER TIPS

As you teach, be sensitive to the needs of students who may have recently experienced a death in the family. Also be aware of the needs of students who may have lost a grandparent, friend, or other family member in recent years. Discussion of death and resurrection through Jesus brings comfort, but it can also stir up emotions and feelings of loss. It is all right for students to grieve. Remember these students in your personal prayers, and speak to the student if you feel it would be the right thing to do. Many times, just a reminder that you are remembering their loss, recognizing their feelings, and praying for them will be a great encouragement to them.

The Sending of the Seventy-two

LUKE 10:1–20

Background

Various versions of today's Bible text denote the number Jesus sent out as either 70 or 72. According to ancient texts and translations, both numbers appear possible. The ESV gives the number as 72, based on the editors' interpretations of the manuscripts. Nevertheless, the number is really not the crucial matter. There is no serious matter of doctrine in question. It is, however, important to note that all the ancient texts mention that the disciples were sent out two by two. According to Old Testament requirements (Numbers 35:30; Deuteronomy 17:6; 1 Kings 21:13), two witnesses were required to offer testimony in regards to a crime. In this case, of course, the disciples are certainly not committing crimes, but

having two witnesses of the contact with the towns lent credibility to their message and reporting its success or failure.

In this story, Luke refers to the "kingdom of God" in verses 9 and 11, repeating this phrase twice for emphasis. The Jews needed to be reminded that this kingdom is not an earthly kingdom but a heavenly one, as the concept of the Messiah had come over time to mean an earthly king and political savior, rather than a heavenly one.

Today, students will be using detective skills to decode the message of the Scripture lesson, discussing along the way how they can use this story as inspiration to be disciples today.

Devotions

It was the first sunny day in weeks, and Chaz and Samantha decided to walk home from school instead of taking the bus. They lived in the same neighborhood, and it wasn't a long walk. "What did you think about Mr. Alvarez's lesson this morning?" Samantha asked.

Even though Mr. Alvarez had taught them many lessons that day, somehow Chaz knew exactly what Samantha was talking about. "The one about being a disciple? I don't know how we're supposed to do that."

Samantha nodded. "Do you even know anybody who isn't a Christian?"

Chaz shook his head. "Not unless you count my Uncle Freddie. Dad says he's an atheist, but I don't really know what that means."

They had reached their neighborhood, where they found a number of residents out on their porches enjoying the first warm days of spring. "I wonder who we could even talk to about God," Samantha said. Chaz

shrugged.

Samantha and Chaz just walked past a whole bunch of mission opportunities, didn't they? Sometimes we ignore what is right in front of us, forgetting that the world is right outside our door. All around us are people who desperately need to hear the Good News of salvation.

God has given us the privilege of sharing the Good News of salvation by grace through faith in His Son. Let's ask Him to help us make the most of every opportunity to do so!

PRAY: Dear Lord, open our eyes and our hearts today so that we may see those in need of Your Word. Give us the courage and the strength to be Your witnesses in all we do. In Your name. Amen.

Sing: "Lift High the Cross" (LSB 837) or "Thy Strong Word" (LSB 578).

Central Truth

Jesus empowers us to serve Him with active lives of faithful witness.

Objectives

- Explain the mission on which Jesus sent His followers as recorded in Luke 10.
- Relate the sending of the seventy-two to our life and mission as Jesus' twenty-first-century disciples.
- Call upon Jesus for strength and help as they fulfill their mission as Jesus' disciples.

Materials

- The Basics
- Reproducible 68
- Web Resource 68a

Bible Prep

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

- Luke 10:1–20
- Mark 11:24
- John 3:16–20
- Ephesians 2:4–5
- Philippians 2:12–16
- Philippians 4:6–7

Reflect with students on the idea of setting out on a mission. Refer students to the missions of explorers, adventurers, or military deployments. Of course, Jesus was not asking His seventy-two emissaries to venture into untamed regions or to topple corrupt governments, but He was asking them to attack the master of all deceit, to undermine his evil presence in this world, and to prepare for the coming of the one who would bring an end to the foothold Satan felt he had gained. Jesus is sending out those who trust and recognize **Him as their Savior from sin, death, and Satan's power** and who wish to bring the Good News of Jesus to others.

Comment that most agents on various missions need backup, essential skills, specialized training, and equipment. In contrast, the mission on which Jesus sent His disciples was the complete opposite of a typical spy's mission. Reflect on the previous lesson in which Jesus called His disciples to be fishers of men and charged them to leave everything behind as they followed Him. They may need to turn back in their books to recall the lesson. Articulate that a follower of Jesus needed no formal training, no special skills, no high-tech gadgets, nothing but the power of Christ and His Word. When on a mission for Christ, we can take courage knowing that Jesus will always guard our steps.

INTO the Word

Use this section to review today's Bible text. In this account, Jesus sends out the seventy-two, giving them specific instructions about what they are to take with them, how to engage with strangers in the village, and what to do if they are not welcomed. In this text, Jesus is preparing the nearby towns for His own coming, so that when He comes, they will be receptive to His message. His words remind them to remain focused on the mission and to not allow themselves to become distracted.

As an alternative, use **Reproducible 68** to guide students in their reading of Luke 10:1–20. Have students work on the reproducible with partners or in small groups, as some of the questions, because of the “mission briefing” format, may require critical thinking skills to answer. After students finish work on the reproducible, invite them to reflect on the story, making a connection between the sending of the seventy-two and their own lives. Students should recognize that, both then and now, Christians are called to share the Gospel, that some will reject it, and that our mission, while not easy, does bring joy in knowing that we are working to further the kingdom of God.

As you review student definitions with the whole group, be sure to connect the vocabulary words with elements of the story.

Message Received or Rejected

As students work individually, have them think about how the message of the Gospel comes into people's lives and how faith is either created by the working of the Holy Spirit or how it is rejected. Then place students into small groups to discuss the answers included in this section. Be sure that students are on track with their understanding of the role we play in our salvation: none whatsoever.

After students have finished their discussions, invite them to share with the whole group, leading them to realize that grace is a completely free gift (Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8–9), not something we can achieve through our own power or goodness. God wants all people to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4), but there will be many who reject this good news. Those who reject can do so for many reasons. According to the parable of the sower (Luke 8:4–15), sometimes the Word falls on ears unprepared to hear it, or easily distracted by sin, or too receptive to the devil's snares, or with no root in faith. The key is not to get discouraged, for God is a master planner, and we can never know whether those who seem to reject God and His Word will later find that the seed of faith, once planted, has begun to take root.

After students have looked up the passages and taken notes on the main idea of each, lead a class discussion about each one, making sure students understand that we can be witnesses by praying for others (Mark 11:24); that God wants all people to be saved, some will reject Him (John 3:16–20); that salvation is a gift given by the power and grace of God (Ephesians 2:4–5); that we need to remember that we are witnesses for Christ (Philippians 2:12–16); and that we should not be fearful or anxious about witnessing—and that we may pray for guidance if we are (Philippians 4:6–7). Use Web resource 68a as a lesson review.

Close with a prayer that thanks God for the opportunity to be His witnesses and asks for the strength to make use of the opportunities He presents to us.

When assigning and reviewing this memory verse, emphasize the Gospel as the power for salvation, effective witnessing, and faithful living as followers of Christ. Jesus only asks us to be faithful about the mission. His Spirit will work the results.



Curriculum Connection

The Lord sends all of us as His messengers to share the Good News of salvation, no matter what our callings are. Consider using section 8.5.3.2, Career and Vocational Opportunities in the Arts, with your students. You'll find it in the Visual Arts volume of the Concordia Curriculum Guide. Discuss with students: What careers are they considering for their own futures? How can they share God's love with others through their work?



HANDS TO SERVE

Most church offices have a procedure for keeping track of church visitors. Students may not be aware that most churches follow up on such visits. Discuss the ways churches can keep track of visits and make contact with the church secretary, or whoever is responsible for such follow-up, to get students involved in the process.

Perhaps the class can visit the church office and help write letters or input data from church visitor records. If the church does not have a method for recording and contacting visitors, perhaps students can devise a system for doing so. Talk about why it is important for a church to make further contact with visitors and how this interaction can be a witnessing tool.



Technology

Contemporary Christian artists—such as Third Day, Caedmon's Call, Newsboys, and Jars of Clay—have written and recorded songs that can inspire us in our mission to spread God's Word. Invite students to work in groups to look for songs that could provide inspiration and to find Web sites that play an audio version of those songs. Some Web sites have videos of the artists performing or slide shows of images that support the message of the song. You may choose to assign a particular artist to each group so there is no overlap in song choice. Once groups have selected their songs, have them play their songs for the rest of the class and invite each group to lead a discussion about how that song can inspire them as they share the Gospel message.



Faith in Action

If your congregation has an outreach or evangelism group, invite them to meet with students about how they can participate. Prayer for the work of the group may be the only option, but that is a vital task. Some congregations have note cards available for recording contact with those who do not know Christ, and as students share their faith with others, they can record their efforts with the congregation's system.



Working in Groups

Reproducible 68 may be an appropriate activity for students to complete in small groups. Some questions require critical thinking skills, and some of the language may be difficult for some students. In groups, students can pool their knowledge and help one another understand the prompts, share the task of looking up passages, and discuss their application to the items provided.

If your classroom does not already have established groups, assign students to groups, making sure that there are varied ability levels within each group.



Celebrating GROWTH

In the "Lesson Support" section for the previous lesson, students were asked to find ordering information about customizable wristbands that could be used as witnessing tools. If an order has been placed, talk to students about how they could create a chart that will record the distribution of the wristbands and support their effectiveness.

Allow students to work in groups to create these charts. Items to consider for inclusion might be: student names, dates, number of wristbands given out, results of wristband distribution. Within their groups, students can decide how best to show the data the class decides to include.

The chart could be in any format (such as bar, pie, line graphs, or a grid chart), and perhaps even more than one would be appropriate. After groups have had time to work, have them share their ideas with the whole group and then let the class choose which chart or graph best represents the data they want to show. Then invite the winning group—or the whole class—to prepare a final draft of the chart or graph to display on the wall, so students can record growth. They can organize to pray for the people to whom the wristbands were distributed.

Pentecost

ACTS 2:1–41

Background

Pentecost derives its name from a Greek word meaning “fiftieth day.” Occurring fifty days after the Feast of Passover, the Feast of Pentecost (or “Shavuot”) was a Jewish harvest feast commemorating the giving of the Ten Commandments to Israel. This day took on a new significance with the event recorded in Acts 2 and the imparting of the Holy Spirit.

In the moments following the inrushing of the Holy Spirit, Peter spoke to the gathering of peoples present. In his speech, he quoted the prophet Joel regarding the signs that would inaugurate the “last days.” During the Old Testament period, God’s people looked forward to the coming of the Messiah. The “last days,” on the other hand, are the period from the time of Jesus onward. As the word of the prophet Joel indicates, the events of Pentecost (“pour

out My Spirit”) are proof that the last days are upon us.

Peter quotes three sections of Old Testament Scripture: Joel 2:28–32; Psalm 16:8–11; and Psalm 110:1. Certainly, these words from the Hebrew Bible resonated with those assembled at that Pentecost.

Peter announced that “everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:21) and then ended his sermon with this final point: “God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified” (v. 36). Peter’s sermon, spoken by the power of the Holy Spirit, illustrates well the role of the Spirit: to direct people to Jesus Christ. Rather than making His own presence known, the Holy Spirit works through means and points people to Christ.

Central Truth

The Holy Spirit calls, restores, and empowers us to dedicate our lives to Him in response to all God in Christ has done for us.

Objectives

- Describe the events of Pentecost and the reactions of the people who witnessed and experienced them.
- Identify the Means of Grace, through which the Holy Spirit continues to work today to create and strengthen faith.
- Thank God for gathering and equipping us as His people in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Materials

- The Basics
- Reproducible 89
- Web Resource 89a

Bible Prep

Post in advance so students can bookmark the reference before class time.

- Acts 2:1–41

Devotions

Jared’s soccer team had worked incredibly hard to make it to the state championships. Everything was in place for them to win the final game—everything, that is, except for one thing: their coach could not be with them. Jared and his teammates understood that their coach could not make it because he had to attend a funeral three states away. Still, the team was afraid. Then, in the midst of their fears, their coach made a promise, saying, “I cannot be with you, but I will be sending someone in my place. Trust me; he will not let you down.”

When the day of the championship finally arrived, the team learned that their coach had sent his brother! It was almost as if their coach was there with them! Their fears and worries were gone, and they knew there was nothing left to do but win the game.

Jared’s soccer team felt much the same way as Jesus’ disciples felt after Jesus ascended to heaven. The disciples knew that their Savior had taken on and defeated sin, death, and Satan’s power on their behalf and had won. But now that He had left them, they were afraid to be without their leader. Still, Jesus had promised that He

would send Someone He especially designated to lead the disciples. On Pentecost, the Holy Spirit arrived, and the Christian Church was born. Today is like that first Pentecost—the Holy Spirit is by our side, and God’s people are never alone!

PRAY: Holy Spirit, fill us with Your power. Help us to live as God’s people and to share the Good News of Jesus every day with those we meet. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Sing: “Holy Spirit, Light Divine” (LSB 496).

INTO the Lesson

Talk with the class about times when they were fearful and apprehensive due to the absence of a trusted leader. Reflect with students about how life for the disciples in the presence of Jesus would have differed from life without the physical presence of Jesus after His ascension. Imagine the large crowds that came to hear Jesus. The disciples must have been excited to watch as their leader, Jesus, spoke to the crowds about the kingdom of God. Then they witnessed **Jesus’ suffering, death, and resurrection to atone for the sins of the world**. They were with Him at His physical ascension into heaven. After Jesus’ departure, they realized that the enormous task of communicating Jesus’ words would fall upon them.

Like us, the disciples were never alone. At Pentecost, God’s people received the Holy Spirit and the assurance that they would never be alone.

INTO the Word

The Spirit Comes

Review with students the meaning of Pentecost. Pentecost was a Jewish religious festival occurring fifty days after Passover and commemorating the giving of the Ten Commandments. It brought thousands of people to Jerusalem. Read Acts 2:1–41 together as a class. Allow time for students to write the missing words in the blanks to review the story events.

Talk about the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Holy Trinity. The Holy Spirit is God. He is also known as “the Comforter,” “the Helper.” He works through the Means of Grace to bring people to faith and to keep alive their saving faith in Jesus.

The gift God’s people received at Pentecost is made that much greater when we realize that we have been given the gift of God Himself! The Holy Spirit is fully God, just as the Father and the Son are both fully God. He is not some lifeless force or “thing”; He is a person who does things you would expect a person to do. Distribute copies of **Reproducible 89**. Allow students to work in pairs or teams to look up the passages and record what God’s Word reveals to us about the person and work of the Holy Spirit. A physical body is not the only determination of personhood.

Comment that those assembled in Jerusalem at Pentecost were Jews from many different cultures, speaking many diverse languages. Point out that the ability of a message to successfully get from the

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Acts 2:1–41

PENTECOST

The Spirit Comes

The disciples knew what was coming: they knew Jesus was leaving and that He would ascend to heaven. Still, they were afraid of being without their leader and teacher. In the days leading up to Pentecost, the disciples were afraid and anxious. They begged Jesus: “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us” (John 14:8). They were fearful about where Jesus was going: “Lord, we do not know where You are going. How can we know the way?” (John 14:5).

To calm their fears and anxieties, Jesus promised the disciples that He would not leave them alone as if they were orphans (John 14:18), and He promised that He would send a helper—the Holy Spirit.

On Pentecost, Jesus made good on His promises to the disciples. On that day, they very clearly and publicly received the gift of the Holy Spirit. There was no doubt in anyone’s mind: Jesus had made good on His promises, and the disciples were certainly not alone.



Fill in each blank with the correct word(s) from the following list:

understand	baptized	Jerusalem	tongues	Holy Spirit
fifty	grave	three thousand	languages	primary languages

Pentecost occurred fifty days after Christ’s resurrection from the grave. People who spoke many different languages from many different countries had gathered in Jerusalem. The gift of the Holy Spirit allowed everyone present to speak in primary languages. Although they were not speaking in their tongues, they were still able to understand one another. This allowed three thousand people to hear the Gospel, repent, and be baptized.

REVIEW

tongues—**languages; also refers to tongue-like shapes, as in tongues of fire**

witness—**to give an account of what has been seen, heard, or touched**

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sender to the receiver depends greatly on language. Both speaker and hearer must know and understand the language that conveys the message. Play for the students an audio or video clip of someone speaking in a foreign language. Clips can come from any number of Internet resources (YouTube is a good source) or any one of CPH’s multilingual resources. Ideally, the language played will be one in which none of the students is proficient. Ask what the clip was about. Naturally, there will be confusion, and the language barrier will be obvious. On Pentecost, the Holy Spirit did the unexpected by letting everyone hear the Gospel in their own native language through miraculous means.

Have students offer examples of different customs practiced by people from different countries. These customs may

seem strange, even bizarre to us, but they are perfectly natural to those who practice them. Then have students offer examples of what Christians have in common with one another. It will become evident that Christ is the ultimate source of community for all of God’s people. Even though we may say our prayers in different languages, the one and only Jesus Christ is still the source of our forgiveness. And that truth is the same truth that was presented on the day of Pentecost!

Review

Allow time for students to define these words. As you review definitions with the class, relate these words and their meanings to today’s lesson.

One Though Many

Language can be a massive barrier when trying to communicate with someone; trying to make sense of a foreign language is frustrating, if not impossible. To make things even worse, there are thousands of different languages spread out across the world, resulting in ample opportunities for communication breakdowns.

Communicating with one another was not always this frustrating. In Genesis 11, we are told there was a time when all people spoke the same language. Having only one language made communication so easy that the people worked together and plotted to build a tower to heaven! This gateway to heaven that the people tried to build is known as the tower of Babel. God saw the people’s great pride in their arrogant plan to build the tower. So He confused their language, mixing up their speech and creating many new languages.

Notice how what happened at Pentecost is the exact opposite of what happened at the tower of Babel. At Babel, the world went from one language to many languages, and people could no longer understand one another; at Pentecost, people miraculously were all able to understand what was being said, despite the fact that they spoke many different languages. On this day after Christ’s death and resurrection, creation was given a glimpse of what life was like before sin corrupted the world. Not only did Christ conquer sin and death on the cross, but He also restored life to the way it was before sin! Pentecost offered a glimpse of the restored language that God’s people will enjoy when Christ returns.

On the arrow below, write the letters *a* through *f* to place the following events of human history in their correct order: (a) tower of Babel, many languages in the world; (b) the Last Day, when language will never again be a barrier; (c) God’s creation has one language; (d) sin enters the world; (e) Christ’s perfect life, death, and resurrection; (f) Pentecost, when language is no longer a barrier.



REMEMBER

“Repent and live, because every one of you is due to die. But because of your faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God, you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who love the Lord our God and keep His commands.” (Acts 2:38–39)

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INTO our lives

One Though Many

See Web Resource 89a. Contrasts are most apparent when objects are viewed side by side. Something black is seen better when it is held against a white backdrop. A beautiful sound is fully appreciated when performed amid an otherwise silent setting. Convey this to students by holding a shiny ring or wristwatch in front of different objects: a mirror, a piece of yellow paper, and a piece of black paper. In the same manner, Pentecost is best understood when it is viewed together with its contrasting Old Testament event, the tower of Babel. At Babel, one language multiplied into many different languages. At Pentecost, people of many different languages and backgrounds were brought together and united by one saving message: Jesus Christ is Savior and Lord!

The Person of the Holy Spirit

Remember that an essential event for every Christian was receiving the promise of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is fully God, just as the Father and the Son are both fully God. The Holy Spirit is not some lifeless force or “thing”; He is a person who does things you would expect a person to do. What do you think the passages tell you about the person and work of the Holy Spirit?

John 14:26	He teaches.
John 15:26	He is a witness for Christ.
Romans 8:14	He leads.
Romans 8:26	He intercedes (prays) for us.
John 16:7	He is a helper.
1 Corinthians 12:7	He empowers us (works in us).
1 Corinthians 13:2	He works faith in Jesus.
1 Corinthians 12:8	He brings to us an understanding of spiritual things.
Romans 10:17	He gives us hope in the Gospel.
John 3:5	He gives us salvation.

Jesus gave us many images of the Holy Spirit. These include a dove (John 1:32), the sound of rushing wind and tongues of fire (Acts 2:3–4), and being called (John 14:26–27). Which of these describes the Holy Spirit most helpful in understanding the Spirit and His work?

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Check it Out

Some denominations believe that speaking in tongues (as was witnessed during the Pentecost event) is proof of having the gift of the Holy Spirit. The word *tongue* is an old-fashioned word that simply means *language*. Some go so far as to say that *unless* one speaks in tongues as at Pentecost, he or she does not truly have the Holy Spirit.

A few things ought to be pointed out on this topic. First, Scripture never requires speaking in tongues; that is to say, the speaking in tongues seen at Pentecost and at some other times is always *descriptive* of something that happened, not *prescriptive* of how things must be. The time immediately following the birth of the Christian Church (the Apostolic Age) had unique aspects to it that the Church no longer experiences. For instance, the apostles' ability to raise people from the dead is, like speaking in tongues, a feature of the Apostolic Age that is no longer in effect for the Church today.



Curriculum Connection

The coming of the Holy Spirit was heralded by “a sound like a mighty rushing wind” (Acts 2:2), which filled the house where the disciples were staying and brought together a crowd of people to see what was going on. Make a fun science connection to this story by learning more about sound. Section 8.1.5.1, Travel of Sound, and 8.1.5.2, Characteristics of Sound, both have plenty of ideas and activities to help you. You'll find them in the Science volume of the Concordia Curriculum Guide series.



Technology

With the multicultural nature of Pentecost, this lesson provides ample opportunity to delve into different languages and cultures. Make use of the great wealth of video and sound clips of different languages that the Internet has to offer so that students can experience the confusion of trying to understand a foreign language. This may help them to more fully appreciate the miracle of Pentecost, when each person heard the Gospel in his or her own language.

For an even more realistic Pentecost experience, try this: devise a way in which multiple sound clips of various languages can be played at once. In other words, use a computer or CD player to play five or six different languages at once, with the obvious result being utter confusion on the listeners' part. Be sure to convey how this *would be* a moment of confusion *without* the aid of the Holy Spirit and how it *was* a moment of complete Gospel clarity *with* the Holy Spirit.



Bringing it home

This lesson provides an ideal opportunity to engage the multicultural aspects of a classroom. On Pentecost, many different people with many different languages, customs, and foods realized that they had one thing in common: the triune God eternally united them. Have students look into their own heritage and country of origin. They might need to ask parents or grandparents about customs, languages, and foods unique to their heritage. Depending on your classroom, students may have to research multiple generations to find their immigrant lineage; or they may only have to look back to their own childhood, to a time when they did not live in this country.

This activity can culminate in a “Pentecost Party” at which students share various aspects of their heritage. Foods unique to their home region can be prepared, and students can learn a few phrases unique to their native land. Ideally, this great mixture of countries and people will create an eclectic feel similar to that which existed at Pentecost.



Celebrating GROWTH

The Holy Spirit works through the Means of Grace. To help students recognize the person and work of the Holy Spirit in their lives, have them keep a Holy Spirit Log. This log can have columns labeled “Date,” “What Happened,” “What the Holy Spirit Used,” and “Faith Outcome.” This will get students in the habit of recognizing the many ways that the Holy Spirit is at work in their lives. To assist students in filling in the “What the Holy Spirit Used” column, share with them examples of ways God’s Word came to them, such as in a Bible verse that fit a situation perfectly, through someone’s prayer for them, through a card sent by their grandmother, through their pastor’s sermon; or through a parent’s words of encouragement.