

Matthias Is Chosen

Grades
5-6

WITNESS • EASTER 7 • YEAR B

ACTS 1:15-17; 21-26



What is happening in this story?

It's incredibly important to the preaching recorded in Acts that those who proclaimed Christ in the first generation were themselves eyewitnesses to Jesus' resurrection. So important that when one apostle is being chosen to replace Judas, that apostle himself needs to be an eyewitness. This person can truly proclaim they saw Jesus both dead and alive. As a participant in Jesus' ministry, this person also has a firsthand understanding of its purpose and content. It is easier for the disciples to trust someone who knew Jesus with the task of carrying on his ministry.

Why does this story matter for kids?

This story speaks to kids about different ways we can cope with change. Maybe they have experienced a Sunday school teacher or coach moving to another job. It's important to trust God in transitions, just as the disciples trusted the Holy Spirit to guide them to choose a new disciple. They can also carry on the mission, just as the disciples did by choosing Matthias to carry on Jesus' ministry.

What is the lectionary connection?

After Easter we read how the early church began and how the disciples put together their early leadership team. In the Gospel text, we hear Christ's words of promise that those who lead the movement Jesus is starting are his chosen ones and are blessed by him.

AGE LEVEL TIP

Kids this age maintain their childhood skills of observation, but some of them are beginning to feel pressure to appear "cool" by holding back and not volunteering to speak up. Use the activities in this lesson to show that telling what they've seen can be extremely important.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Pencils
- Permanent marker
- Colored pencils

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Sticky notes (2 x 2 in.)
- Dice (pair)

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

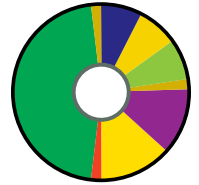
Set out a stack of sticky notes and a pair of dice. Have kids roll the dice three times and add their scores together. Have them write their names and total score on a sticky note and stick it to the wall to see who has the highest total. Have a “playoff round” if there’s a tie.

Invite kids to look at the Wall Chart.

Point out today’s date, church season, color, and icon. **We’re at the end of the Easter season now.** (Draw attention to today’s square on the chart. Pentecost is next week!) **Judas’s betrayal of Jesus—and Jesus’ death—leave an empty spot within the early apostles. Long before the Internet, they are realizing the work ahead to spread the Jesus story. The first thing they need to do is find someone to replace Judas. One of the most important things they’re looking for is someone who has witnessed what they’ve seen with their own eyes.**

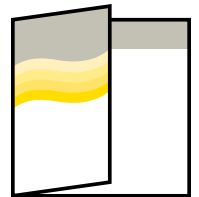
Ask for a volunteer to draw a magnifying glass on the Wall Chart.

Can you imagine the apostles gathered, as we are now, to talk about what Christ did for them? Repeat after me: Christ is risen! (pause) We share in Christ’s work! Repeat until everyone repeats it correctly.



Pass out leaflets and pencils.

Think about some cool things you’ve witnessed in your life. Prepare to tell the class about them. If you haven’t seen anything “cool,” make something up. Be as detailed and accurate as you can. The rest of us will use our flip signs to vote “Believe it” or “Not.” **Tear the front page off of your leaflet and fold it along the line.** Give kids a few minutes, then ask for volunteers to tell their story. When they finish, ask kids to hold up their flip sign to indicate whether they “believe” the account of the story or “not.”



Gather kids around the screen where you’ll watch the video.

Before people could read and write, they told important stories to each other. For generations, stories that taught history, morality, and other ideas passed from parent to child. In some places, it’s still done that way. Let’s watch this video.

View Episode 13, “Miss Guided,” on the Whirl Year B Spring Grades 3–6 DVD.

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- What does Eagle Eye mean by “real camping”?
- How did Chet learn what he knows about camping? What about Eagle Eye?
- How do you like to learn to do new things?
- Why do you think the kids were willing to follow Eagle Eye?
- How do you know the difference between someone you should believe and someone you should not believe?



Pass out Whirl NRSV Bibles and help kids find Acts 1:15-17.

Do the Easter 7 Preview Activity together on page 1274 and compare responses.

Read Acts 1:15-17 in this creative way together: The language in this reading can seem pretty stiff and difficult to understand. Help kids comprehend the story by doing an impromptu modern translation. Break the text into three chunks: verses 15-17, verses 21-23, and verses 24-26. Have a volunteer read each section, then help them retell that part of the story in contemporary language. Next, read the three sections again, with three different volunteers, from start to finish.



Ask these questions after you read the story:

- What is the purpose of the group's gathering?
- How do you think the apostles felt after Judas betrayed them?
- What were the criteria they used to select people worthy to replace Judas? Why do you think those were the most important things?
- What do you think about "casting lots"? Are people trusting God, or is it just luck? Explain your answer.
- How can you be a witness and share what you know and have experienced with God?

BIBLE BIT

Apostle means "messenger," and is the word used in the book of Acts to refer to the eleven "disciples" and the other early followers of Jesus.

WATCH IT AGAIN

After completing the Respond activity, watch the video again to see who had the most accurate memory of the video.

OUR CHURCH

Get to know someone in your church who has a strong faith and has been around for a while. Invite them to share a few stories about their faith.

RESPOND 10

Turn to leaflet squares and pass out colored pencils.

1. Turn to a neighbor and form a pair. Together, do your best to remember as much as you can about the video.
2. Fill in the frames of the film storyboard with words or pictures. Use as much detail as you can.
3. Answer the questions as you go. Keep your work to yourselves!
4. Have a few partners share their film storyboard. Note where they agree and diverge.
5. Where storyboards agree (or disagree) on significant points, ask partners why that scene was important to them.
6. After a few partners share their storyboards, ask the group who had the most accurate retelling.
7. Watch the video again together to see who's the best witness.
8. So what is the last thing Chet says to the other kids? ("Pay attention.") Why is this important? What does this mean to you?

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

Paying attention is important. You never know when you might be asked to share what you witnessed! Why do you think it was so important for the disciples to find someone who had witnessed the same things they did? Take time to hear kids' responses.

Return to the leaflet panels and pass out colored pencils.

We weren't there when Jesus performed his miracles, but there are surely things you've witnessed that reveal how God is working in the world. Write or draw about one in the binoculars on the leaflet.

Ask for volunteers to share their stories. Post leaflets around the room to bear witness to God at work.

Send kids out.

Being an apostle is really about taking Jesus' message of love out into the world. That's something we can all do. Repeat after me: Christ is risen! (pause) We share in his work!

Pray together: Gracious Jesus, help us be better witnesses to what you're doing around us every day. Help us share those stories with other people. Amen.

Thank kids for doing their best to pay attention, now and in the future. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.