

The Promise of The Spirit



Keep My Commandments — Live the Covenant!

It was the most unusual evening Jesus and his followers had spent together since the beginning of his ministry. They had gathered in an upper room and had a Passover meal together. This was Jesus' last opportunity to instruct them before being arrested and taken away from them. Jesus told them

many things including his promise not to abandon them, but to send them another helper. Saint John tells us about it in his Gospel:

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God still, and trust in me. There are many rooms in my Father's house; if there were not, I should have

told you. I am going now to prepare a place for you, and after I have gone and prepared you a place, I shall return to take you with me; so that where I am you may be too. You know the way to the place where I am going."

Thomas said, "Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through me. If you know me, you know my Father too. From this moment you know him and have seen him."

Philip said, "Lord, let us see the Father and then we shall be satisfied."

"I have been with you all this time, Philip," said Jesus to him, "and you still do not know me? To have seen me is to have seen the Father, so how can you say, 'Let us see the Father?' Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak as from myself; it is the Father, living in me, who is doing this work. You must believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; believe it on the evidence of this work, if for no other reason. I tell you most solemnly, whoever believes in me will perform the same works as I do myself, he will perform even greater works, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask for in my name, I will do it.

"If you love me you will keep my commandments.

"I shall ask the Father, and he will give you the Spirit to be with you forever, that Spirit of truth whom the world can never receive since it neither sees nor knows him; but you know him, be-

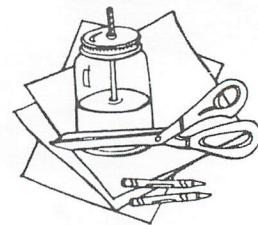
cause he is with you, he is in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come back to you. In a short time the world will no longer see me; but you will see me, because I live and you will live. On that day you will understand that I am in my Father and you in me and I in you.

"Anybody who receives my commandments and keeps them will be one who loves me; and anybody who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I shall love him and show myself to him."

And a disciple asked, "Lord, what is all this about? Do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?"

Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him. Those who do not love me do not keep my word. And my word is not my own; it is the word of the one who sent me. I have said these things to you while still with you; but the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you."

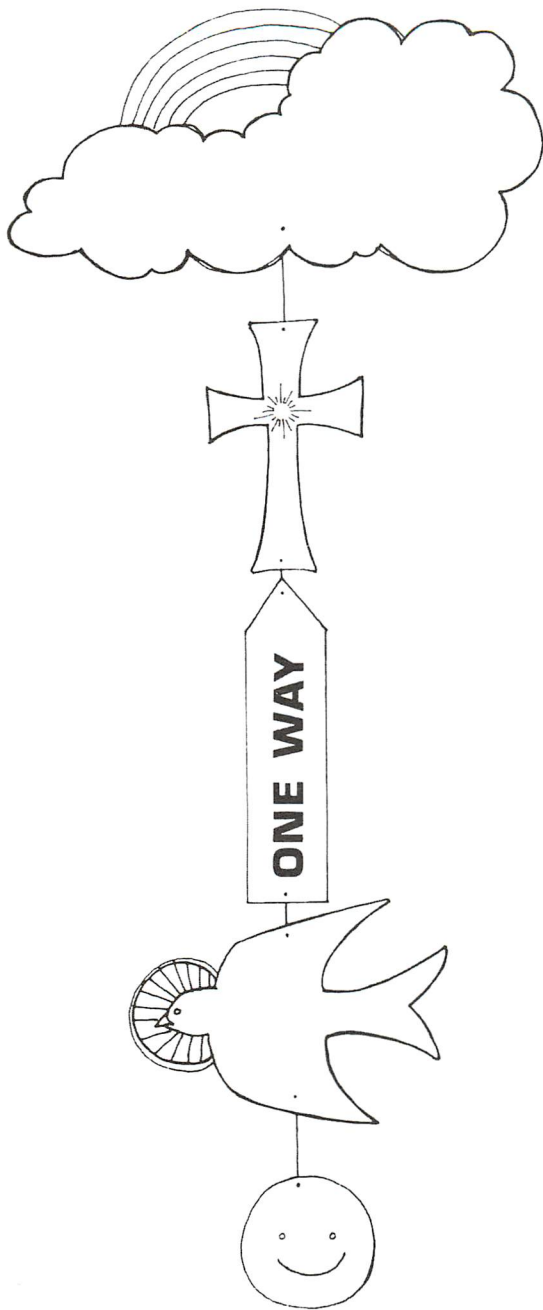
John 14:1-26



Activity:

THE WAY TO THE KINGDOM — ONE WAY!

Make this mobile (or one similar to it) to hang in your room to remind you of today's Bible passage. You will need string, heavy paper, scissors, and markers or crayons. After making your own mobile, tell the class how it helps you remember today's lesson.



I SAW JESUS TODAY

I brought a sick friend's schoolwork home.
Her mom thanked me so much.
Because I helped someone who was sick,
I saw Jesus today.

I wanted to watch a show on TV,
but mom wanted me to read a book.
Because I honored my mother's wishes,
I saw Jesus today.

I saved my ice cream money this week.
I put it in a collection box for hungry children.
Because I helped feed the hungry,
I saw Jesus today.

I shared my umbrella with a friend.
Both of us stayed dry.
Because I cared for someone else,
I saw Jesus today.

I wrote a note to a kid who doesn't seem to like me.
I said I wanted to be his friend.
Because I try to love my enemies,
I saw Jesus today.

A friend told me he forgot his lunch.
I gave him half of mine.
Because we shared a special meal,
I saw Jesus today.

When I look at another person, I see him clear and true.
But I also see someone else.
He said he'd be there too.
I see Jesus in you!

Jesus said to treat others as if each person were he! (Matthew 25:31-46)

This is how I share in God's Kingdom even now in an everlasting Covenant with him and with others!

The Bible tells us about our Covenant history.

comes up with a better one?

- Are you reluctant to give up your idea to go along with the other person's? Why?
- What does it mean to love God with all your heart, soul, and mind?
- What does it mean to love your neighbor as you love yourself? (List ideas on board.) (15 min.)

3. Look at the "Jerusalem Times" in the next part of the text and have various students read the different articles. Ask them if they have done any newspaper reporting at school to gain insight into their experience. Most students at this age do "current events" in school and are familiar with newspapers.

Discuss the religious and political climate of Jerusalem if the class is interested in learning more about the times in which Jesus lived.

Have each student write an editorial (see page 20). You might have to explain further what an editorial is. They might want to share their work or you may choose a few to be read aloud. (15 min.)

4. Go over the directions for making a "Love Box" (student activity packet).

Allow time for students to complete the activity. The children may wish to keep their responses private, but you may wish to display finished boxes. Stress neatness of work. (15 min.)

5. Unit Project: Have students judge each of the rules they have selected by the standard of the Great Commandments. If all pass evaluation, they may start making their final chart or bulletin board. (10 min.)

6. *Homework:* Try to accomplish some of the tasks in your box. Check previous week's homework.

End class with a prayer.

Session 4—The Promise of the Spirit

Key Concepts

1. We know God the Father through God the Son, Jesus Christ.
2. As Jesus left his followers, he assured them that he would not abandon them; the Holy Spirit would be with them and us always.
3. The Holy Spirit helps us remember to love God and keep the covenant.

Objectives

Students will

1. Complete an exercise to demonstrate that it is possible to know the Father through knowledge of the Son.
2. Read a story based on John 14:1-26 and underline passages that stress key concepts of this lesson.
3. Make a mobile to illustrate the passage.

4. Complete the unit project.

Background for Teacher

Concluding the unit, this session deals with the covenant once Jesus is no longer with his followers. The lesson centers around the time when Jesus tells his disciples how all can attain the Kingdom. Jesus stresses adherence to the commandments (i.e., the covenant).

The passage, John 14:1-26, starts with Jesus reassuring his followers not to worry; that he goes to prepare a place for us. He tells the disciples that the Kingdom is reached only through him. He assures his doubtful followers that to know him is to know the Father. He then tells them to continue doing his work and to ask him for whatever they need to continue the work that will glorify the Father.

Next Jesus promises his followers the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit Jesus will remain in us even though he leaves us. The Holy Spirit will teach Jesus' followers everything and remind them of all he has said.

Although this passage is complex, we will only deal with the aspects of it that relate to the covenant and how we share in God's Kingdom even now. If your class wishes to discuss the passage further, you might want to consult a good Bible commentary such as the Jerome, Abingdon, or another that your priest might suggest.

Materials Needed

- String
- Heavyweight paper
- Marker pens or crayons
- Scissors
- One paper bag with a toy inside for every two children, toy suggestion: stuffed animal or any other toy that can be easily described

Procedure

1. Make a positive remark to each student about his/her attendance as each arrives. (For example: Nice to see you, Bill. So far you have perfect attendance! Glad you're here today, Barbara.)

Start class with a prayer. (5 min.)

2. Begin the session with this activity designed to help the children understand the verses (John 14:7), "If you know me, you know my Father too"; and (John 14:9), "To have seen me is to have seen the Father." Say:

"Most of you know each other fairly well. Many of you know each other's parents, too. You could probably identify them in a crowd. Today we're going to think about each other and our parents. Suppose we had a boy in our room who had very good manners. Do you suppose one or both of his parents stress good manners in his home? What if we had a girl

with a real friendly smile who always made friends with newcomers? Do you think one or both of her parents would be like that?" (You might want to use some real examples similar to these to help students see that children are much like their parents.)

"We could probably draw the conclusion that children are much like their parents. We might even say that by knowing a child we could know a lot about the parents. We're going to read a passage in the Bible that has to do with this conclusion, and I want you all to look and listen for it.

"Now I'm going to divide you into teams of two and give one member of the team a bag with a toy in it. Please don't show your partner what is in the bag. Look in the bag and describe its contents one sentence at a time to your partner. See if your partner can identify it." (Allow time for this, but do not let it drag on.)

"How many of you were able to guess the toy with one description? Two? Three? You were able to identify what was in the bag through your partner's description. You did not have to see it for yourself to know what it was. This also has a lot to do with our lesson today. Again, I want you to listen and look for something like this in our story today. (10 min.)

3. Open texts and read "Keep My Commandments—Live the Covenant!"

Questions on the reading:

- Look back at the beginning of the Bible story. Where was Jesus going? (To his Father, to the Kingdom, or any other reasonable answer.)
- Why was Jesus going there? (To prepare a place for us.)
- How were his followers going to get there? (Through Jesus.)
- Can we go to this place Jesus has prepared? (Yes.)
- How can we get there? (Through Jesus.)
- Who would like to read the line Jesus says that is similar to the discussion we had today about knowing what a person's parents are like? (If you know me . . .)
- Did Jesus' answer satisfy the disciples? (No.)
- Who would like to read the line Jesus says that is like the "toy-in-the-bag" activity we did? (To have seen me . . .)
- How do any of us know what God the Father is like? (By knowing about Jesus.)
- What does Jesus ask his followers to do? (Works like his, keep his commandments.)
- What kind of works do you suppose Jesus is speaking about? (Feeding hungry people, healing the sick, caring for people, telling people about God, etc.)
- What is Jesus going to ask the Father to do? (Give us the Holy Spirit.)
- How will Jesus continue to live in his followers? (Through the Holy Spirit.)
- How will Jesus know those who love him? (They

will be the ones who keep his commandments.)

- There is a saying, "any friend of yours is a friend of mine," and it means that because I know what a nice person you are, you must have nice friends that I would like too. Jesus says something similar. Who can find it and read it to us? (Anybody who loves me . . .)

- Thaddeus is worried that Jesus is not going to show himself to the world, but Jesus tells him anyone who keeps his word will be loved by the Father. We have never seen Jesus, so how can we love him? (By keeping his word, by seeing Jesus in others, etc.; accept reasonable answers.)

- What is the job of the Holy Spirit? (To teach us everything and remind us of all Jesus has said.)

These questions require reasoning and/or knowledge beyond what the text provides. (10 min.)

4. "Now I want you to look back at the story and find and underline some key phrases. Jesus says, 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.' This means that he is the way to get to the Kingdom, that he is real and true and his teachings are right, and that he is life because through his resurrection we can have everlasting life with God in the Kingdom. Underline that phrase."

Jesus says, "If you love me you will keep my commandments." ("Remember the commandments are the rules of the covenant we have with God. To show God we love him, we must live our lives by his rules. Underline that phrase.")

Jesus says, "I shall ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to be with you forever." ("This is how we can share in God's covenant even now. This is how we all share it with each other. Underline the phrase.")

Jesus told us, "The Holy Spirit . . . will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you." ("The Holy Spirit is God with us each and every day. He is here for us now as he was for our parents, grandparents and all our ancestors, and as he will be here for our children and our children's children and so on. This is the everlasting quality of our covenant with God. Underline that phrase.") (10 min.)

5. Have students do the activity mobile. Use this time to work with individual students who need extra help. When all or most are finished, have them take turns interpreting their mobiles. (15 min.)

6. Have students finish up the unit project on class rules, and display the results. (10 min.)

7. *Homework:* Have students read the last page of the session, "I Saw Jesus Today," and follow its example throughout the week. Next week you might want to allow time for a few to report on their experiences.

End with a prayer.

Extending the Lesson

1. Teach students the Armenian words for Holy Spirit, Soorp Hoki.
2. In the tradition of the Armenian Church, we do not pray only “in Jesus’ name” (note that in John 14:13 Jesus tells us to ask in his name). Instead, we pray “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,” perhaps realizing that they are indivisible! You might want to review with students the words in Armenian: Hanoon Hor, yev Vortvo, yev Hokvooyrn Srpo.
3. On page 31 of the liturgy book you will find the hymn to the Holy Spirit (Hoki Asdoodzo) which you might want to sing/read to your class and discuss.
4. Also in the liturgy book (at the bottom of page 47) is the last blessing the priest gives before dismissal. “Be ye blessed by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Depart in peace and the Lord be with you all. Amen.” This blessing again reminds us that the Lord (i.e., Jesus) is with us today and every day.
5. Have students divide into two teams and ask each other questions on the first unit. Keep score and have the winners leave first, the losers stay behind to clean up the classroom. Quizzing each other is an excellent

way for you to judge your effectiveness as a teacher and evaluate your students’ learning.

6. The students might want to show their unit project—class rules—to the rest of the Sunday School at a future assembly period. Have them prepare what they will say about it.

7. Discuss other aspects of today’s passage (John 14:1-26), using a Bible commentary.

The following unit quiz may be given at the end of today’s session to review the unit.

1. Define covenant.
2. Who was Moses?
3. What did Moses receive from God to instruct the people?
4. What are the two Great Commandments?
5. Who taught us the two Great Commandments?
6. Who has the Father sent to be with us always?
7. How can we keep the covenant today?
8. To whom did God promise a great nation?
9. In which country were the Israelites slaves in Moses’ time?
10. Who will see God?

Notes
