

Share God's Love

Lesson At-A-Glance

Scripture Reference
Mark 9:38-50

Lectionary Sunday/
Church Season
Pentecost 17

Lesson Focus
I can encourage others by sharing God's love.

Bible Memory Verse
Whoever is not against us is for us. Mark 9:40



Gather (10 minutes)

| | Spark Resources | Supplies |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| Arrival Activity Kids do the crab walk around the room and laugh together. | Activity Pages  | Pencils |
| Opening Conversation Kids consider what it means to be on a team. | Leaflets | Rope, index cards, pencils, markers |
| Opening Prayer Kids pray responsively with the teacher. | None | None |

Open the Bible (20 minutes)

| | Spark Resources | Supplies |
|--|--|----------|
| Share God's Love Story Kids dig into the Bible story. | Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers, Leaflets | Pencils |
| Grossology Kids look up gross Bible stories. | Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers, Leaflets | Pencils |
| Is Tim Too Young? Kids read facts and react by looking up more about Timothy in their Bibles. | Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers, Leaflets | None |
| Remember It Kids will memorize the Bible Memory Verse (BMV) and place "I Memorized It" stickers in their Bibles. | Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers | Pencils |

Activate Faith (10 minutes)

| | Spark Resources | Supplies |
|---|------------------------------------|--|
| What Time Is It? Kids begin to understand the church year calendar. | Leaflets | None |
| Smashing Stumbling Blocks Kids talk about their own stumbling blocks by acting them out. | Leaflets | Pencils |
| Staying Salty Kids sample popcorn with and without salt to contemplate what Jesus meant about having salt in oneself. | Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers | Pencils, unsalted popcorn, salt, napkins |

Send (5 minutes)

| | Spark Resources | Supplies |
|--|---|---------------------------------|
| Closing Conversation Kids consider growth in faith and take a seed home. | Leaflets | Seeds, paper cups, potting soil |
| Closing Prayer Kids pray with the teacher. | Family Pages  | None |

 Visit www.sparksundayschool.org for more Spark content! Watch a short Lesson Prep Video that will prepare you and give you confidence to explore this Bible story with the kids you are leading. You will also find four downloadable resources for this lesson: an Activity Page, a Family Page, and two additional in-class activities.

Gather (10 minutes)

Arrival Activity

If some kids arrive earlier than others and you need a lesson-based activity, make copies of the downloadable Activity Page and set them out for kids to try.

As kids arrive, explain that they will greet one another with a crabby greeting. To do the crabby greeting, kids crab walk up to a person and make a really crabby face. Kids probably won't stay crabby for long! They can continue to greet other kids as they arrive with this crabby greeting until all have arrived.

Spark Resources

Activity Pages



Supplies

Pencils

Opening Conversation

Distribute leaflets and ask kids to look at the photos and read the Life Question and Lesson Focus. Then ask a volunteer to read Which Team Are You On? on the second leaflet page. **We're going to play tug-of-war to think about teams, sides, and right and wrong.** Clear a space and divide the group in half. If the number is uneven, join the smaller team. Give the ends of the rope to each team and play a round.

Then ask one person from the losing team to join the winning team. Play another round. Keep moving one person to the winning team until they are all on the same side. **What happened when one team got bigger than the other?** (*The bigger team probably won.*) **What happened when everyone was on the same side?** (*There was no one to compete with.*) **When everyone is on the same time, what is different about winning?**

Distribute index cards, pencils, and markers. **As we read in the leaflet, sports team loyalty can be really important to people. Draw a jersey of your favorite sports team—from any sport. If you're not a sports fan, draw something original on a jersey.**

When kids are done, invite them to talk about their jersey. **Let's imagine all these players could join the same team.** Put the index cards in a pile on the table. **There, that's our team! What would our team be like? What name would you give it? Would we be a winning team?**

Ask a volunteer to read Did You Know? on the second page of the leaflet. **That's a lot of denominations! As I name just a few of them, raise your hand if you've heard of the denomination, and stand up if you know someone from that denomination.** Name these and any other denominations: **Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Moravian, Congregationalist, Methodist, Baptist, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, and Quaker.**

Why do you think there are so many different denominations? Encourage all answers and focus on the fact that people have different beliefs about Jesus and

Spark Resources

Leaflets

Supplies

Rope

Index cards

Pencils

Markers

different ways of teaching and worshipping. **Even though we have differences, we are still all on Jesus' team. Let's consider what it would be like if everyone did and believed the same things.** Ask kids to complete the sentences in If on the second page of the leaflet. Encourage creative and humorous responses. For example: If everyone on every football team played offense . . . the grass in the end zones would be dead from all the foot traffic.

Ask a transitional question that leads into the Bible time. **Do you think it matters to God that there are different beliefs among Christians? Why or why not?**

Opening Prayer

Stand in a circle with everyone's hand on top of the teacher's fist, like a sports team.

Dear God,

Be with us now as we study your Word and learn from Jesus. Help us to work together as one heavenly team to get your work done on earth. Amen! 1-2-3 . . .

The whole group says "Let's Go!" as they push hands down, release the circle, and applaud.

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

None

Open the Bible (20 minutes)

Share God's Love Story

Pass out Spark Bibles and help kids find Mark 9:38-50 on page 1112. Go around the group, with each kid reading one verse. Invite kids to place an I Read It sticker in their Bible. They can sketch a cup of water in the margin near verse 41.

Jesus' followers were confused about the ways they should follow him. What about the other people who were casting out demons in his name? It didn't seem right to them. These kinds of questions still confuse us today. Jesus reminds us all that we need to focus on our similarities instead of our differences. Together we can do so much to share God's love.

Sometimes we are surprised and confused by what Jesus says. Ask kids to look at Say What? on the third page of the leaflet. After kids have ranked the statements, talk about their opinions. Then ask kids to share what would be the most difficult thing to do. Take time to deal with these disturbing suggestions. You may need to reinforce to kids that sometimes symbolic language is a powerful way to make a point but that Jesus was not asking us to do these things literally. **Why do you think Jesus says these things?** (*He wants us to take sin seriously. Jesus does not want us to lead his followers astray. Life in his kingdom is more important than life in the earthly kingdom. Jesus knows our sins will be forgiven after he is raised from the dead.*)

Spark Resources

Spark Bibles

Spark Bible Stickers

Leaflets

Supplies

Pencils

Getting along with other believers was difficult during Jesus' time, and it's still difficult today. We can remember Jesus' words that those who are not against us are for us.

Grossology

Invite kids to work in pairs to complete the matching activity in Grossology on the third page of the leaflet. Decide as a group which is the grossest Bible story.

Answer Key

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Judges 3:12-30 | Eglon is killed while on his "throne" (meaning toilet) |
| Job 2:1-10 | Job has sores oozing pus from the top of his head to the bottom of his feet |
| Isaiah 20 | Isaiah walks around naked for three years (it was God's idea) |
| Jeremiah 13:1-11 | Jeremiah walks around in dirty underwear |
| Acts 1:16-19 | Judas dies when his belly explodes and his intestines spill out. |

Spark Resources

Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers
Leaflets

Supplies

Pencils

Is Tim Too Young?

Have a volunteer read Look It Up! on the third page of the leaflet. Help kids look up 1 Timothy 4:12-16 on page 1325 in their Spark Bibles. **Why do you think people would look down on Timothy just because he was young? Have you ever felt people looked down on you because of your age? Why do you think the church leaders had confidence in Timothy? In what ways can Timothy inspire you to be a confident Christian no matter how young you are?** Kids can place a sticker near these verses or write notes in the margin.

Spark Resources

Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers
Leaflets

Supplies

None

Remember It

Have kids look up the BMV, Mark 9:40, on page 1112. Teach these gestures to accompany the verse:

Whoever is not (shake head no)
against us (two thumbs down)
is for us. (two thumbs up)

Kids can place an I Memorized It sticker next to the BMV and draw or write in the margin.

Spark Resources

Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies

Pencils

Activate Faith (10 minutes)

What Time Is It?

If this is one of your first Sunday school classes with the kids in your group, point out the color and the symbol on the front. Help them recognize that they will be able to figure out the church year season on their leaflets each week. **Look at the symbol on the leaflet. What season are we in?** (*Pentecost, sometimes called the season after Pentecost*)

Spark Resources

Leaflets

Supplies

None

We use the color green to symbolize Pentecost, a season for growing in our faith. Jesus had some strong words in today's story about what to do if something got in the way of our faith. He also described a simple way to show care for someone who bears the name of Christ.

Smashing Stumbling Blocks

In this teaching, Jesus said it is important for us to get rid of our stumbling blocks. What would an actual stumbling block be like? (*something in your path that makes you trip*) **What was Jesus' deeper meaning of the term "stumbling block"?** (*something that keeps you from doing God's will or leading someone away from God*)

Spark Resources

Leaflets

Supplies

Pencils

Ask a volunteer to read Smashing Stumbling Blocks on the last page of the leaflet. Help kids think of things that keep them from sharing God's love (*My friends would make fun of me, I don't know what to say, I'm too young, etc.*) Have them write these on the stumbling blocks. Then help them identify gifts and talents they have that would help them smash the stumbling blocks. They can write these words on the hammers.

Staying Salty

Reread Mark 9:50 on page 1112. **I'm going to give you each some popcorn.** Pass out napkins and popcorn. **I didn't put any salt on it. Let's eat some and discuss how it tastes.** Listen to responses. *Before serving any food, always check with caregivers for kids who have food allergies. Provide an alternative if necessary.*

Spark Resources

Spark Bibles

Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies

Pencils

Unsalted popcorn

Salt

Napkins

But guess what? I brought salt. I'm going to shake a dash onto your popcorn. Salt their popcorn. Try it again and talk about how it tastes. Listen to responses. Then read Salt Sources on the bottom of page 1112.

Whether or not you like salt, you can certainly taste the difference. What if I had brought some salt that didn't taste salty? Would you want it? It would be worthless!

Jesus warned us not to lose our saltiness. He wasn't talking about salt literally.

He meant we must keep our peaceful and committed attitude of service throughout our lives. To lose this would be as bad as salt losing its saltiness.

What can you do to keep your “saltiness”? How can your church support you as you do this? (*Answers will vary.*) Kids can sketch a saltshaker in the margin of their Bibles.

Send (5 minutes)

Closing Conversation

Ask a volunteer to read Faith on the Go! on the last page of the leaflet. Distribute seeds, paper cups, and potting soil. Have kids fill their own cup with potting soil and plant their seed. Talk together about the ways in which this seed will need care.

Spark Resources

Leaflets

Supplies

Seeds
Paper cups
Potting soil

Closing Prayer

Gather together in a circle and have kids respond to each petition with “We can do it!”

O Loving God, We can do it!

Even though we are young, We can do it!

Even though we are still learning how to follow you, We can do it!

We can stomp out our stumbling blocks. We can do it!

We can stay salty. We can do it!

We can live at peace with one another. We can do it!

We can help the little ones to grow in faith. We can do it!

We can share your love with everyone. We can do it!

Amen.

Send leaflets and a Family Page home with kids.

Spark Resources

Family Pages

Supplies

None