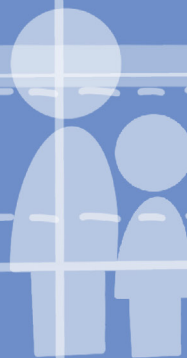


SIMPLE CHURCH

GOD'S GOOD DESIGN



SIMPLE CHURCH

UNIT 6 - GOD'S GOOD DESIGN

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SIMPLE CHURCH

MONTHLY PREPARATION GUIDE

UNIT 6 - ELEMENTARY

This month's focus is on God's blueprint for His Church from Acts 2:42 - listening to teaching, fellowshiping, break bread, and praying. It is crucial for your kids to know that humans did not create "Church," God did! Help your kids discover more about God's design for His Church this month in the unit, *Simple Church*.

WEEK 1

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece (one per class), *Mystery Plan* Activity Page (1 set per pair), Paper (1 per child), Pencils (1 per child), Blueprint or *Blueprints* Activity Pages (1 large poster per class), *Teaching* Activity Page (1 per class), Tape, *Scroll* Activity Page (1 per child), 8" Pieces of Yarn (1 per child), Markers or Crayons

WEEK 2

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece (1 per class), Hula Hoop (1 per class), Blueprint or *Blueprints* Activity Pages (1 large poster per class), *Fellowship* Activity Page (1 per class), Tape, *Stay Together* Activity Page (1 per child), Markers or Crayons

WEEK 3

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece (one per class), Plastic Cups (10 per team), Small Rubber or Plastic Balls (2 per team), Painter's Tape, Blueprint or *Blueprints* Activity Pages (1 large poster per class), *Communion* Activity Page (1 per class), *Breaking Bread* Activity Page (1 per child), *Church* Activity Page (1 per child), Velcro Circles (1 per child), Scissors, Markers or Crayons

WEEK 4

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece (1 per class), Blank Paper (1 sheet per person), Pencils (1 per person), Blueprint or *Blueprints* Activity Pages (1 large poster per class), *Prayer* Activity Page (1 per class), Tape, Color Cardstock (1 per child), White Paper (1 per child), Pipe Cleaners (1 per child), Hole Punch, Markers or Crayons

TEACHING OTHERS

BIBLE PASSAGE

Acts 8:26-31, 35-39 (ICB)

BIG IDEA

God has a plan for His Church.

FOCUS VERSE

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” Acts 2:42 (NIV)

LESSON MATERIALS

| Puzzle Piece | *Mystery Plan* Activity Page | Paper | Pencils | Blueprint or *Blueprints* Activity Page | *Teaching* Activity Page | Tape | *Scroll* Activity Page | 8” Pieces of Yarn | Markers or Crayons |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- Name something you do really well. Could you teach someone how to do that?
- Where is the farthest place you have traveled?

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

Sometimes, we can think that worship is for ourselves, but worship is not about us; it is about God! Worship happens when our heart is attuned to God and what brings Him glory. So, lead by example as the class worships and praises the One who created the heavens and the earth and the One who loves us beyond comprehension. Approach worship with this truth in your heart and your kids will learn by watching you.

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

Conversation with the Most High God is something we should never take for granted. Pray to Him in humility and reverence.

SAMPLE PRAYER: *“Lord, thank You for letting us come to You just the way we are. I am grateful we do not have to change ourselves or attempt to ‘get perfect’ before You listen to us. Instead, as our Good Father, you love us and our prayers. Help us believe that truth as we learn from Your Word. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”*

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say, "Today marks the start of a brand new series called *Simple Church*. This entire month, we will be talking about four simple things God has planned for His Church. But before we begin, I want to talk about the word 'church.' We often use the word 'church' to describe a building. However, in the Bible, the word 'church' describes a group of people who love God and meet to worship Him. 'Church' is also a term for the whole group of Christians from all the earth. So, the 'church' is us! Now, let's get started by talking about the first of four big things God has planned for us—His Church!" Place the Puzzle Piece on the wall.

TRANSITION: Say, "Who wants to play a game to get our minds and bodies ready to hear our story?"

ENGAGE — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | *Mystery Plan* Activity Page (1 set per pair) | Paper (1 per child) | Pencils (1 per child) |

Say, "We are going to call today's game, *What's the Plan?* We will have a step-by-step plan that one partner reads to another partner. Your job is to determine what the plan is asking you to draw! Do you think you can do it? Great! Let's play *What's the Plan?*"

GAME GOAL: To follow the plan to draw a specific item/object.



BEFORE CLASS, CUT THE *MYSTERY PLAN* ACTIVITY PAGE INTO 8 CARDS. BE SURE TO HAVE ENOUGH FOR EVERY 2 KIDS TO HAVE A SET.

HOW TO PLAY:

- Divide the class into pairs and designate one person to be Partner A and one person to be Partner B. Give Partner A the first *Mystery Plan* card and Partner B a piece of paper.
- Partner A will start by reading the *Mystery Plan* card to their teammate (Partner B). Partner B will listen carefully and draw a picture based on the instructions they hear. When the drawing is complete, Partner B will show the drawing to Partner A, and Partner A will reveal what object their *Mystery Plan* card was describing.
- If Partner B draws the object correctly, their team receives a point. (No points are awarded if an incorrect image is drawn.)
- Repeat the steps above with partner A and partner B switching places. Play as time allows.



THIS GAME CAN BE MODIFIED FOR A WHOLE GROUP IF YOU HAVE SEVERAL YOUNGER STUDENTS WHO CANNOT READ WELL.

TRANSITION: Say, "How did you like playing *What's the Plan?* It can be hard to follow plans when we do not get clear directions. Fortunately, we will not have to worry about figuring out God's plans for His Church. He makes it simple for us. Let's read about God's first plan for His Church!"

LEARN — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | *Blueprint* or *Blueprints* Activity Pages (1 large poster per class) | *Teaching* Activity Page (1 per class) | Tape |



USE AN OLD BLUEPRINT FOR THIS UNIT IF YOU CAN. BEFORE CLASS, HANG IT ON THE WALL TO BE USED ALL MONTH. IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO SECURE AN OLD BLUEPRINT, USE THE *BLUEPRINT* ACTIVITY PAGE. PRINT SEVERAL COPIES AND TAPE THEM TOGETHER TO CREATE A LARGE BLUEPRINT-SIZED POSTER.

Say, "When God created the Church, He also provided a plan for how to run it. God's design is found in Acts 2:42 [NIV]. The first church 'devoted themselves to the apostles' *teaching* and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.' This week, we will hear the story of a Christian named Philip who taught a stranger about Jesus. God's plan includes listening to *teaching* from believers! Let's see what we can learn as Philip teaches the Bible to an Ethiopian man." Read Acts 8:26-31, 35-39 (ICB).



VS. 37 IS OFTEN OMITTED FROM MODERN TRANSLATIONS BECAUSE IT DOES NOT APPEAR IN BIBLICAL MANUSCRIPTS PRIOR TO THE 6TH CENTURY. HOWEVER, THE THEOLOGY AND TRUTH OF THIS VERSE SUPPORT SCRIPTURE, AND IT REFLECTS THE EARLY CHURCH'S UNDERSTANDING THAT CONFESSION OF FAITH PRECEDES BAPTISM.

²⁶ An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip. The angel said, "Get ready and go south. Go to the road that leads down to Gaza from Jerusalem-the desert road." ²⁷ So Philip got ready and went. On the road he saw a man from Ethiopia, a eunuch. He was an important officer in the service of Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians. He was responsible for taking care of all her money. He had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and ²⁸ now he was on his way home. He was sitting in his chariot and reading from the book of Isaiah, the prophet. ²⁹ The (Holy) Spirit said to Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."

³⁰ So Philip ran toward the chariot. He heard the man reading from Isaiah, the prophet. Philip asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹ He answered, "How can I understand? I need someone to explain it to me!" Then he invited Philip to climb in and sit with him.

³⁵ Philip began to speak. He started with this same Scripture and told the man the Good News about Jesus. ³⁶ While they were traveling down the road, they came to some water. The officer said, "Look! Here is water! What is stopping me from being baptized?" ³⁷ [Philip answered, "If you believe with all your heart, you can." The officer said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."] ³⁸ Then the officer commanded the chariot to stop. Both Philip and the officer went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. ³⁹ When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord took Philip away; the officer never saw him again. The officer continued on his way home, full of joy.

Say, "On this special day, this man who wanted to understand God's Word became a part of the Church! This Ethiopian officer became a Christian after Philip taught Him about Jesus. Aren't you glad God gives us such wonderful instructions on how to be the Church? **God has a plan for His Church** and that plan includes teaches others His Word."

Ask, "Why do you think God made sure Philip could talk to this man? [Wait for response.] This man wanted to understand God's Word, and God honored the man's desire. He was reading the Bible—the book of Isaiah—trying to figure out what it meant, but he needed help understanding. We also need someone to teach us about Jesus and to help us understand God's Word, the Bible. God's plan is that church leaders teach us, just as Philip taught this man. We need people who are full of God's Spirit to teach us. I am so glad **God has a plan for His church**. We do not have to wonder what God wants from us; He wants us to listen to Spirit-filled teaching about Scripture."



PLACE THE *TEACHING* ACTIVITY PAGE ON THE *BLUEPRINT*.

TRANSITION: Say, "It is true! **God has a plan for His church**. Let's make sure we are taking time to be taught the words of the Bible."

DISCUSS — 10 MINUTES

Say, "Let's talk about the story a bit more."

1. Fill in the blank: God has a plan for His _____.

Response: **God has a plan for His Church.**

2. Why did the Holy Spirit tell Philip to go to the Ethiopian officer's chariot?

Response: The Holy Spirit knew this man was reading God's Word but that he did not understand it. He needed someone to teach Him.

3. If I hear different things from different people about the Bible or God, how do I know which is true?

Response: God's Word (the Bible) tells us what is true. If you have a question about what is true or about what God's Word says, talk with your children's leader or your pastor. They can help you like Philip helped the Ethiopian man.

4. Why do we need someone to teach us about Jesus and God's Word?

Response: Parts of the Bible can be hard to understand, even for adults. That is why we need good teachers who love God. (See our note about the GOSPEL Message in the REFLECT section.)

5. When the Ethiopian man heard the Good News of Jesus, what did He do? What does this teach us about God's plan for the Church?

Response: This new Christian wanted to be baptized immediately after understanding who Jesus is and what He had done for him! Remind the children that Baptism is an outward sign of God's work in an individual's heart. When we are baptized in water, we make a public statement that Christ has become our Lord. Baptism symbolizes that our old life is gone (entering water), and our new life in Christ is beginning (coming out of water).

6. Why do you think God gave His Church instructions?

Response: Answers will vary, but point out that God loves His Church SO MUCH that He gave His people a plan for how to love Him and one another. God knows we need His wisdom, so He gave us the wonderful gift of His Word.

7. What do we learn about God in this teaching?

Response: **God has a plan for His church**, God wants His Church to teach His Word, God wants His Church to learn about Jesus, God loves His Church, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, "Do not forget, **God has a plan for His church.**"

RESPOND — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Scroll Activity Page (1 per child) | 8" Pieces of Yarn (1 per child) | Markers or Crayons |

Say, "Today's activity will help us remember that **God has a plan for His church.** Does anyone remember what that plan includes? [Wait for responses.] Right! God's plan is that we teach and learn from the Bible just like Phillip and the Ethiopian. The Scripture that Phillip used to teach the Ethiopian probably looked more like a scroll. Let's create a scroll to remind us of how Philip taught the Ethiopian man the words of Scripture."

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Give each child a *Scroll Activity Page*, one piece of yarn, and markers or crayons.
- Have the kids color the page and explain what is happening in the picture to the person sitting next to them.
- When the kids finish coloring, they will roll their papers from both ends toward the middle, and tie the string around the middle.
- Explain that the scroll they created reminds us of the scroll Phillip may have used to teach the Ethiopian officer about Jesus. Have the kids use their scrolls to practice telling each other about Jesus.

TRANSITION: Say, "Great job! Remember, **God has a plan for His church.** Whenever we do not know His plans, we can go to the Bible for honest answers."

MEMORIZE — 5 MINUTES

Say, "I recited a verse earlier that listed four things God has planned for His church. Does anyone remember what those four things are? The verse is Acts 2:42, and it describes four parts of God's simple plan for His church—that is why we call these lessons Simple Church. Who is ready to learn the words to this verse? Great! Me too!"

"They devoted themselves [take a step forward with hands on hips] to the apostles' teaching [point to mouth] and to fellowship [lock arms with the person next to you], to the breaking of bread [pretend to break a piece of bread] and to prayer [show praying hands]." Acts 2:42 (NIV) (hold out hands like a book)

CHALLENGE: We add actions to make it easier for kinesthetic students to remember the words of our memory verses, so be sure to teach the body motions too!



IF THE KIDS IN YOUR CLASS AREN'T EAGER TO HEAR GOD'S WORD, PRAY THAT HE WILL CAPTIVATE THEIR HEARTS. REMEMBER, DISCIPLESHIP IS A JOURNEY, AND WE MUST BE PATIENT WITH THE CHILDREN. WE OFTEN HAVE NO IDEA THE SEEDS THAT ARE BEING PLANTED AS WE FAITHFULLY LOVE THESE CHILDREN AND TEACH THEM TRUTH.

REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

Say, "God's 'simple church' plan consists of listening to the teaching of *His Word*, fellowship with other believers, breaking of bread, and prayer. I am so glad **God has a plan for His church!** Let's ask God to help us be like the Ethiopian man who was eager to understand God's Word. One day God may use you to teach others about Jesus!"

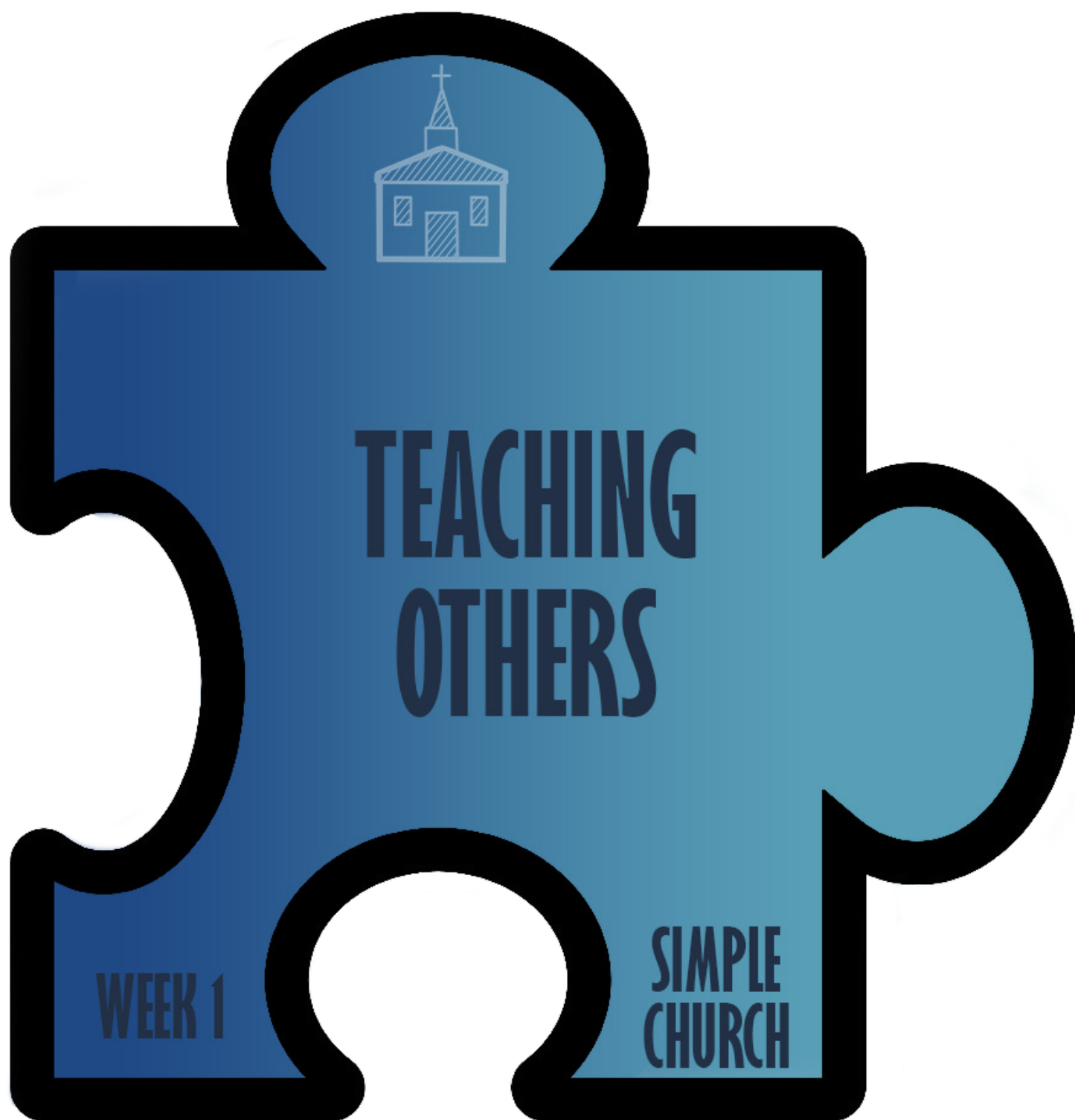


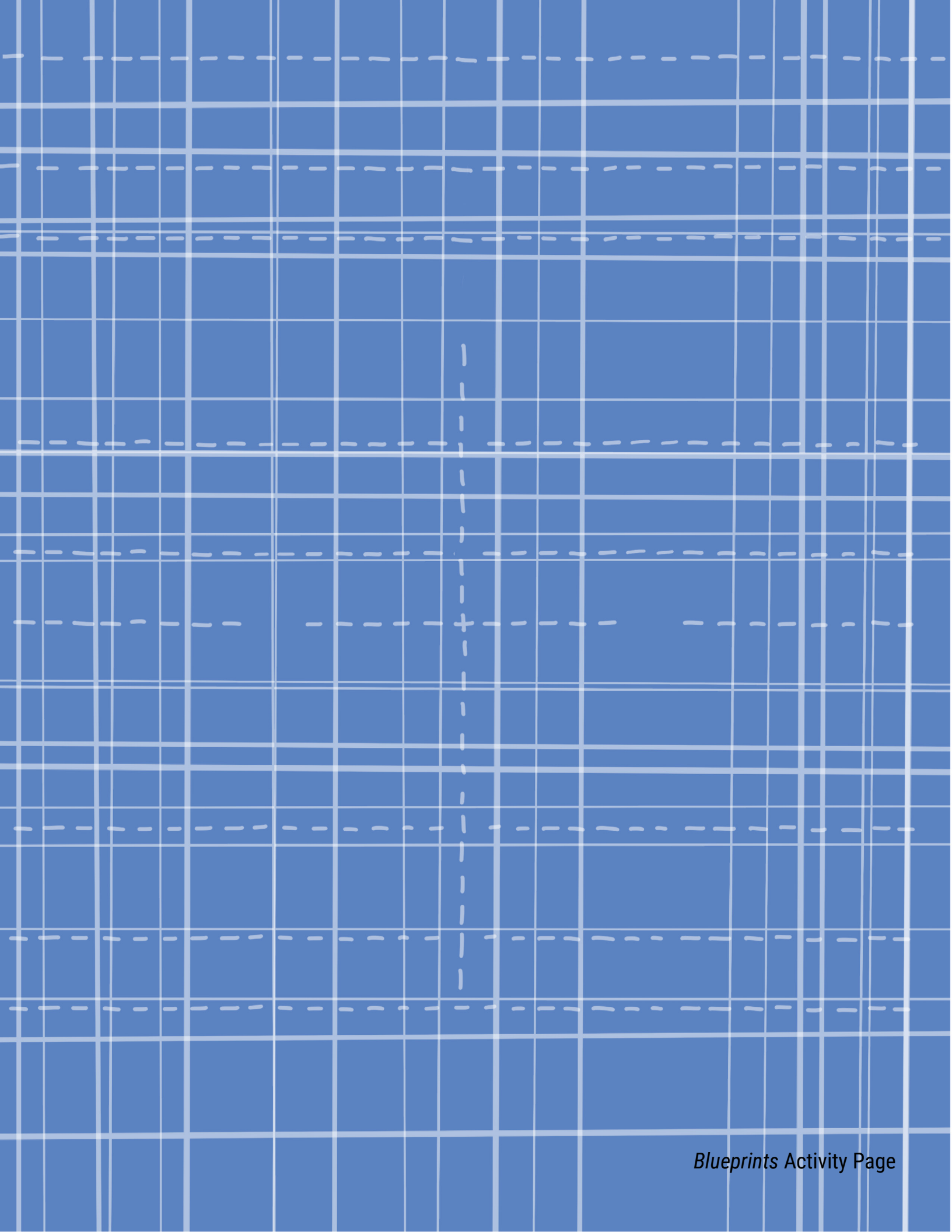
DARE TO SHARE MINISTRIES HAS A TOOL FOR EXPLAINING THE GOSPEL IN SIX SENTENCES, ALL BEGINNING WITH A WORD THAT SPELLS "GOSPEL." HERE ARE THEIR SIX STATEMENTS: #1) GOD CREATED US TO BE WITH HIM. #2) OUR SINS SEPARATE US FROM GOD. #3) SINS CANNOT BE REMOVED BY GOOD DEEDS. PAYING THE PRICE FOR SIN, JESUS DIED AND ROSE AGAIN. #5) EVERYONE WHO TRUSTS IN HIM ALONE HAS ETERNAL LIFE. #6) LIFE WITH JESUS STARTS NOW AND LASTS FOREVER. FOR DETAILS ABOUT THIS TOOL, SEE DARE TO SHARE MINISTRIES' WEBSITE: LIFEIN6WORDS.COM/THE-G-O-S-P-E-L-MESSAGE-EXPLAINED/

SAMPLE PRAYER: *"God, thank You for giving Your Church a plan. Help us be eager to understand Your Word, and provide us with teachers who know and love You. In Jesus' name, Amen."*

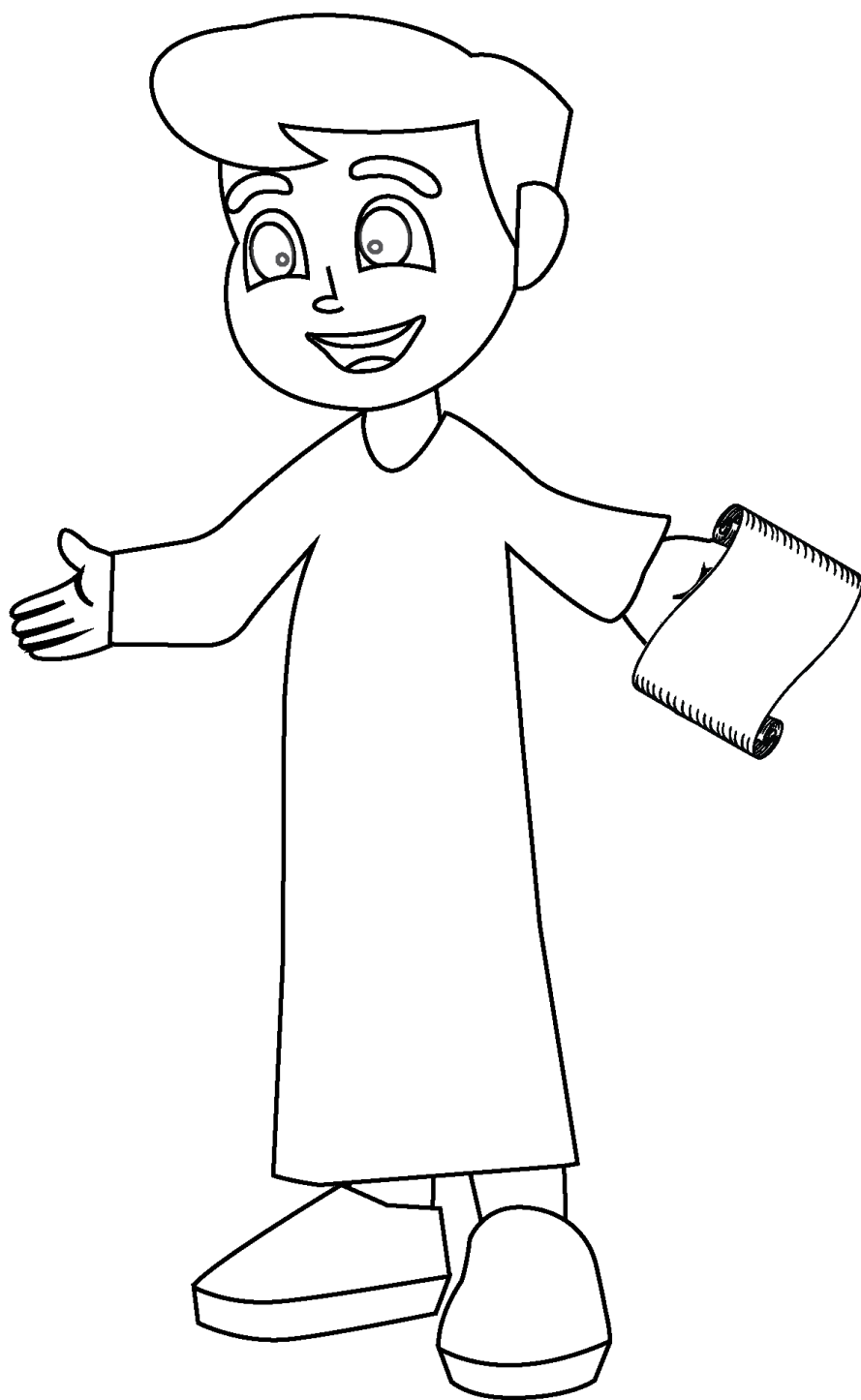
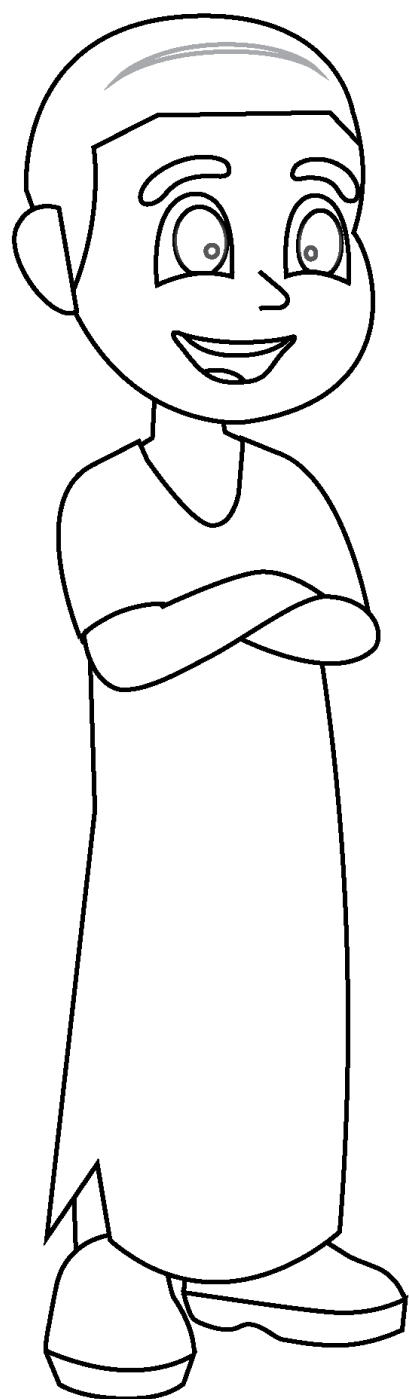
RELEASE — 5 MINUTES

If you have extra time, work on your crafts, retell the story, recite your memory verse again, etc. Be sure to hand out a parent guide to every parent/guardian that comes to pick up their child.









Card 1:

1. Draw a medium-sized circle on the bottom of the paper. 2. Draw another circle on top of the first circle. 3. Draw a small circle on top of the other two circles. 4. Draw three tiny circles in a line inside the second circle. 5. Draw two small circles, side-by-side, in the top circle. 6. Draw a sideways skinny triangle underneath the side-by-side circles.

ANSWER: Snowman

Card 2:

1. Draw a long skinny rectangle. 2. Draw a small square to one of the small ends of the rectangle. 3. On the other side of the rectangle, draw a triangle on the end.

ANSWER: Pencil

Card 3:

1. Draw a big circle in the middle of your page. 2. Draw a very small in the center of the big circle. 3. Draw one little line and one big line coming out from the middle of the small circle. 4. Around the edge of the big circle, draw little dash marks all the way around the outside edge of the circle.

ANSWER: Clock

Card 4:

1. Draw a circle with equal-sized bumps all around the outside of it. 2. Draw four tall, skinny rectangles out from the bottom of the bumpy circle. 3. Draw an oval connected to the right side of bumpy circle. 4. Inside the oval, draw two very small circles, side-by-side.

ANSWER: Sheep

Card 5:

1. Draw an "L" shape. 2. On the bottom of the "L," draw four equal-sized lines.

ANSWER: Chair

Card 6:

1. Draw a straight line pointing upwards. 2. Draw a small circle on the top of the line. 3. Draw five equal sized circles surrounding the small circle on top. 4. Draw two ovals diagonally, coming out of the bottom of the straight line.

ANSWER: Flower

Card 7:

1. Draw a large square. 2. Draw another large square (only slightly smaller) inside of the first big square. 3. Inside both squares, draw five vertical lines equal distance apart. 4. Then, draw five horizontal lines crossing the vertical lines (equally spaced apart).

ANSWER: Window

Card 8:

1. Draw two flat triangles right next to each other, touching at corners. 2. Draw a curved "U" shaped line connecting the far ends of both triangles together.

ANSWER: Mouth/Lips

FELLOWSHIP WITH BELIEVERS

BIBLE PASSAGE

Acts 2:44-47 (ICB)

BIG IDEA

God has a plan for His Church.

FOCUS VERSE

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” Acts 2:42 (NIV)

LESSON MATERIALS

| Puzzle Piece | Hula Hoop | Blueprint or *Blueprints* Activity Page | *Fellowship* Activity Page | Tape | *Stay Together* Activity Page | Markers or Crayons |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- Who is the person you get most excited about coming to your house?
- What do you like to do with your friends?

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

There is something special about coming together as a body of believers (a church) to sing to God. Read Colossians 3:15b-16 (ICB) as you begin to remind the children (and yourself) that we have been called as a people to worship Christ: “... You were all called together in one body to have peace. Always be thankful. Let the teaching of Christ live in you richly. Use all wisdom to teach and strengthen each other. Sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

Start the lesson by praying that your kids will learn new truths about God today.

SAMPLE PRAYER: “God, we want to learn about You, and we are here for You. We come to church because we want to worship You with Your people! Give us hearts that long to worship You every day. Amen.”

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say, “We are on our second week of lessons called *Simple Church*. Last week, we discussed how we [the Church] should devote ourselves to teaching [and learning] God’s Word. Do you

remember who taught the Ethiopian officer about Jesus? [Wait for responses.] Yes! It was Philip. In Acts 2:42, we see that God has a plan [or instructions] for His Church: teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. This week we will be talking about another piece of this plan: fellowship with other believers (Christians).” Place this week’s puzzle piece on the wall.

TRANSITION: Say, “You know what time it is. It is game time!”

ENGAGE — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Hula Hoop (1 per class) |

Say, “This week’s game is called *Pass Through the Hoop*. We will all have to work together as a team to win! Are you ready?”

GAME GOAL: To work together to pass the hula hoop around the circle without unlatching hands.



MODEL HOW TO PLAY THIS GAME FIRST SO THE KIDS CAN VISUALIZE HOW THEY WILL “PASS THROUGH THE HOOP” THEMSELVES.

HOW TO PLAY:

- Have everyone stand in a circle facing one another.
- The teacher will put the hula hoop around one child’s arm and then instruct everyone to hold hands and to not let go throughout the duration of the game.
- The kids will then “pass through the hoop” around the circle while holding each other’s hands. (Kids will have to step through the hoop and pass it to the next kid while the circle holds hands.) The hula hoop must make it around the circle for the class to win.
- Once the hula hoop has traveled around the circle, your class can play again but try to do it faster than the time before.

TRANSITION: Say, “How did you like *Pass Through the Hoop*? Did you work well as a team? We played this game because our story is about fellowship, and fellowship involves working together. Let’s find out what else fellowship means in today’s story from God’s Word.”

LEARN — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Blueprint or *Blueprints* Activity Pages (1 large poster per class) | *Fellowship* Activity Page (1 per class) | Tape |

Say, “**God has a plan for His church.** Last week, we learned that God wants His people to listen to the teaching of the Bible, and this week we are learning that God wants His Church to live in fellowship [or relationship] with one another. The Bible says that the first church ‘devoted themselves...to fellowship’ [Acts 2:42]. We are about to discover just how much God’s first church—or the first Christians—fellowshipped! **God has a plan for His Church**, and His plan tells us to fellowship [spend time with] other Christians! Let’s read together.” Read Acts 2:44-47 (ICB).

⁴⁴ All the believers stayed together. They shared everything. ⁴⁵They sold their land and the things they owned. Then they divided the money and gave it to those people who needed it. ⁴⁶ The believers met together in the Temple every day. They all had the same purpose. They broke bread in their homes, happy to share their food with joyful hearts. ⁴⁷ They praised God, and all the people liked them. More and more people were being saved every day; the Lord was adding those people to the group of believers.

Say, "In the verse we just read, we see that **God has a plan for His Church**. God wants His Church to fellowship, spend time and build relationships with one another. In what ways did you see fellowship part of the early Church? [Review the scripture if necessary and wait for responses.]

"That's right! You see, God never wanted His people to follow Him alone; He knows we need to be in fellowship [or relationship] with other believers! That was true for the early Church and it's true for us today. What do you think? Is it easier to be a Christian when you are all alone or with other people who love God? [Wait for response.] Yes! It is easier for us to grow in our love for Jesus when we spend time with other Christians. Jesus knows it can be hard to follow Him, so He gave us the Church [each other] to encourage us. **God has a plan for His Church**, and that plan helps us be better and stronger."



TAPE THE *FELLOWSHIP* ACTIVITY PAGE TO THE *BLUEPRINT* POSTED ON THE WALL IN WEEK 1 OF THIS UNIT.

TRANSITION: Say, "**God has a plan for His Church**, a good, good plan! When we feel like following God is hard, find other people who love Jesus and spend time with them. We were created to be a Church who fellowships."

DISCUSS — 10 MINUTES

Say, "Let's talk about our lesson to make sure we understand it."

1. Fill in the blank: God has a plan for His _____.

Response: **God has a plan for His Church.**

2. The passage says, "The believers met together in the Temple every day." How is this different than how we do church today?

Response: Answers will vary.

3. Why was fellowship part of God's plan for His Church?

Response: God knows we need fellowship. Being good friends with other Christians helps us follow Jesus.

4. Why would it be hard to follow God alone?

Response: Answers will vary.

5. Read verses 44 & 46 again. What do you think is essential for us to remember from these verses?

Response: Answers will vary.

6. What do we learn about God in this teaching?

Response: **God has a plan for His Church**, God designed us for fellowship, God loves His Church, God knows we need each other, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, “**God has a plan for His Church**, and His plan includes fellowship!”

RESPOND — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | *Stay Together* Activity Page (1 per child) | Markers or Crayons |

Say, “Today’s activity will help us remember that God wants His people to be in fellowship [be together]. He gave us each other, and we are His Church! Let’s make a craft to help us remember these truths.”

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Give each child a *Stay Together* Activity Page and markers or crayons.
- The kids will color the *Stay Together* Activity Page.
- Once it is colored, fold the page on the dotted lines. When you fold it, it should look like the people are staying together. When it is unfolded, it should look like the people are far apart.

TRANSITION: Say, “God’s plan is for Christians to stay together in fellowship! Remember, **God has a plan for His Church**, and it is such a good plan because it is from Him. Whenever we do not know His plans, we can go to the Bible for clear answers.”

MEMORIZE — 5 MINUTES

Say, “This month’s memory verse talks about four things God wants for His Church—for us! Let’s say it together.”

“They devoted themselves [take a step forward with hands on hips] to the apostles’ teaching [point to mouth] and to fellowship [lock arms with the person next to you], to the breaking of bread [pretend to break a piece of bread] and to prayer [show praying hands].” Acts 2:42 (NIV) (hold out hands like a book)

CHALLENGE: Be sure to connect the verse to each week’s theme.



SINCE THIS VERSE HIGHLIGHTS FOUR BIG IDEAS, HAVE THE KIDS SHOUT THE WORD OR PHRASE FOR THE WEEK. THIS WEEK, AS THEY REPEAT THE VERSE, THEY WILL SHOUT “FELLOWSHIP!”

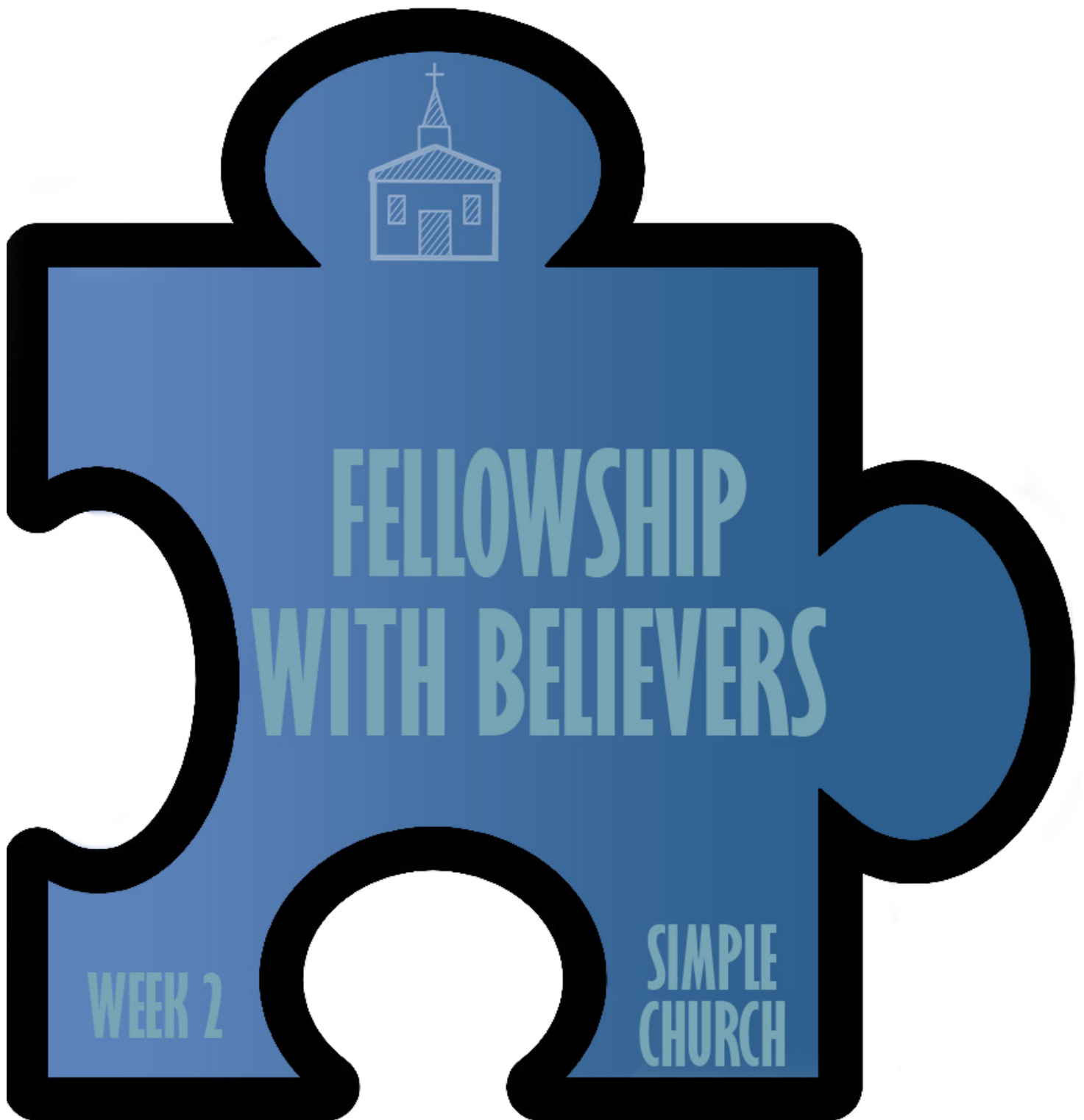
REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

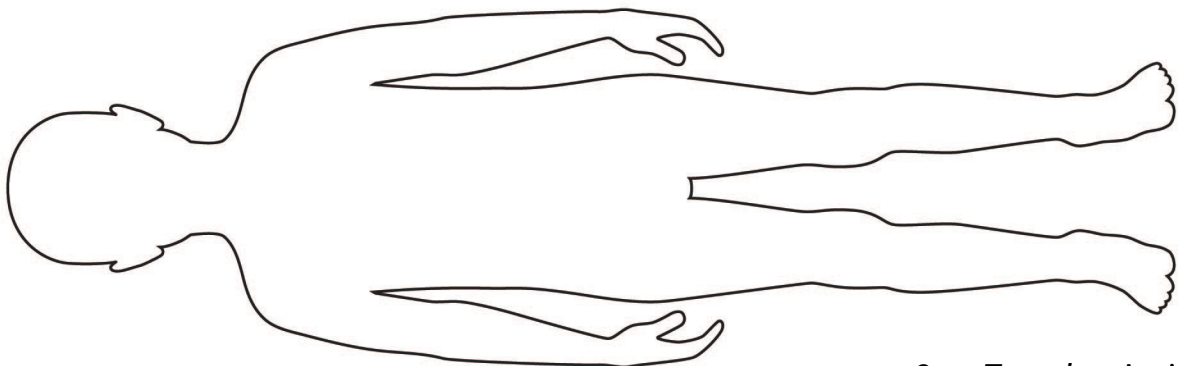
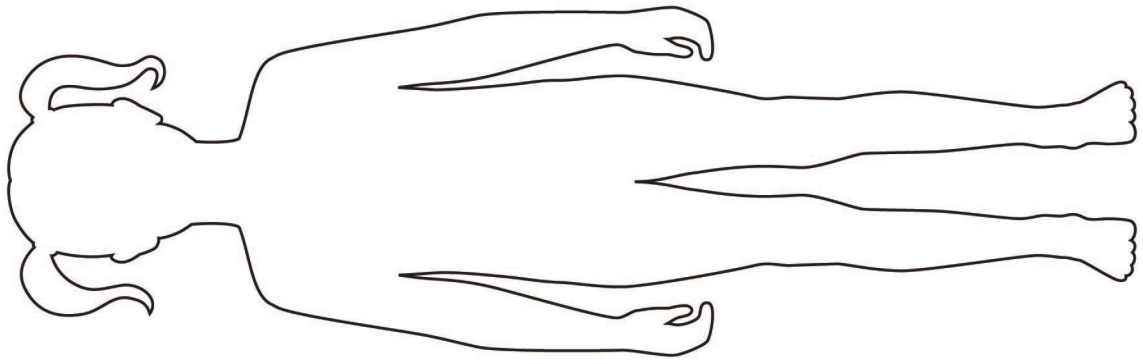
Say, “God has a plan for His Church—for us! So far, we have learned that teaching and fellowship are part of God’s plan for His people. How can we be like the first, simple church where all the believers spent time together?” (Allow kids to respond.)

SAMPLE PRAYER: “God, give us lots of good friends at church, and help us want to be with Your people. Thank You for hearing our prayers. Thank You for the gift of Your Church. Amen.”

RELEASE — 5 MINUTES

With the remaining time, work on building relationships with the kids in your class. You can go back to the GREET section and ask those questions, or you can check out our free resource, “Questions to Get Kids Talking,” at <https://iphc.org/discipleship/printable-resources/>.







COMMUNION WITH BELIEVERS

BIBLE PASSAGE

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 (ICB)

BIG IDEA

God has a plan for His Church.

FOCUS VERSE

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." Acts 2:42 (NIV)

LESSON MATERIALS

| Puzzle Piece | Plastic Cups | Small Rubber or Plastic Balls | Painter's Tape | Blueprint or Blueprints Activity Page | Communion Activity Page | Breaking Bread Activity Page | Church Activity Page | Velcro Circles | Scissors | Markers or Crayons |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- If you could eat dinner with anyone in the world, who would it be and why?
- What is your favorite meal?

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

Teach your class about engaging with God in worship. Say, "When we worship, God wants us to focus our minds and hearts on Him. This means we don't do things that distract the people around us. What keeps you from paying attention to God when we sing? [Share something that distracts you too.] Thank you for sharing those things! Now, let's help one another worship by giving God all of our attention!"

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

Pray to begin the lesson.

SAMPLE PRAYER: *"Jesus, we need You. We need You every single day, every single hour, and every single breath. Help us to remember how much we need You. Thank You, Lord. Amen!"*

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say, "Today is a big day! It is the third week of our lessons called *Simple Church*. Does anyone remember what kind of plans God has for His Church? [Wait for responses.] Right! So far, we have

learned that God wants us to teach His Word and be in fellowship with one another. These are not the only things God has planned for His Church, though. We have two more to learn! Let's read about the next plan God has given to us—His Church. Who would like to put up this puzzle piece before we start?"

TRANSITION: Say, "Now, it is time for a game."



WE PLAY GAMES TO HELP OUR KIDS START THINKING ABOUT WHAT THEY'LL BE LEARNING IN GOD'S WORD BEFORE THEY HEAR THE SCRIPTURE. THIS ENCOURAGES RETENTION WHILE ALSO ENGAGING KINESTHETIC LEARNERS.

ENGAGE — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Plastic Cups (10 per team) | Small Rubber or Plastic Balls (2 per team) | Painter's Tape |

Say, "Today, we will be playing a team game! Are you ready to know what this game is called? It is called *Break it Down*. I can't wait to see which team wins!"

GAME GOAL: To see which team can "break down" their tower the most amount of times.



BEFORE CLASS, DESIGNATE AN AREA FOR EACH TEAM TO BUILD THEIR TOWERS. USING THE PAINTER'S TAPE, MARK A STARTING POINT ON THE FLOOR ABOUT 15 FEET FROM THE TOWER BUILDING AREAS.

HOW TO PLAY:

- Split everyone into teams of four or five kids. (Try to balance each teams' ability levels.)
- Have the teams form lines behind their designated starting point. Give each team ten plastic cups and two balls.
- First, have someone from each team build a tower by stacking their plastic cups in rows (four on the bottom row, three on the second row, two on the third row, and one on the top row) in their designated tower building area.
- When you say, "go," each team's first player will throw the two balls at the tower from their starting point to try and "break it down." If the player knocks the cups down, that team gets one point.
- The person who threw the balls collects the balls and sets the cups up again. If they miss, the thrower collects the balls and gives them to the next person in line. No points are given when the cups are not knocked down.
- The game is over when every person from each team has had a chance to break the tower down. Replay if time allows.

CHALLENGE: If this game is too easy, move the cups back further or create a rule about only throwing the ball with their non-dominant hand.

TRANSITION: Say, "How did your team do with *Break it Down*? Well, there is a reason we broke our cup tower in today's game. Our story is about breaking something too, but it's not a cup tower. Who is ready to find out what God wants His Church to break?"

LEARN — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Blueprint or *Blueprints* Activity Pages (1 large poster per class) | *Communion* Activity Page (1 per class) | Painter's Tape |

Say, "Do you remember how we have been learning about God's plan for His Church? Well, this week, we're learning that God wants His Church to 'break bread.' Let's reread our verse of the month, Acts 2:42 [NIV]. It says, 'they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.' When the Bible uses the term 'breaking bread,' most of the time, it is referring to God's people taking Communion [also called the Lord's Supper or the Eucharist]. God tells us to 'break bread' together in a very specific way. He gives us a blueprint for His blueprint. Let's read about a group of believers, in the Early Church, who need a little reminder of how and why believers should break bread together." Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 (ICB).

²³ The teaching that I gave you is the same teaching that I received from the Lord: On the night when Jesus was handed over to be killed, he took bread ²⁴ and gave thanks for it. Then he broke the bread and said, "This is my body; it is [broken] for you. Do this to remember me." ²⁵ In the same way, after they ate, Jesus took the cup. He said, "This cup shows the new agreement from God to his people. This new agreement begins with the blood of my death. When you drink this, do it to remember me." ²⁶ Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you show others about the Lord's death until he comes.

Say, "**God has a plan for His Church.** God wants us to break bread together until He returns to earth.

"But why was breaking bread such an important part of God's plan for His Church? And why was it important for the Church to break bread in this specific way? [Wait for responses.] You see, Jesus established the practice of Communion [or 'breaking bread'] on the night before He died. One of the last things Jesus did with His disciples was serve them the bread and the cup to symbolize the sacrifice He was about to make of His body and blood. Then, Jesus commanded the Church to continue this practice in remembrance of His death for us [Luke 22:19]. This is why we take Communion today.

"Like any command that Jesus gave, there are times when even His Church doesn't recognize or remember it's significance [it's importance]. In our scripture today, Paul is addressing this very issue to the church in Corinth. Paul, who wrote 1 Corinthians, tells us that the church in Corinth was not taking the breaking of bread together very seriously. Breaking bread is meant to be a time for the Church to reflect on the sacrifice Jesus made. It is a time for the Church to be unified in their belief of Jesus' sacrifice. The church in Corinth was not breaking bread in this way. This is why it's so important that we, the Church today, should take this time to genuinely reflect on the sacrifice that Jesus Christ made with the breaking of His body and the shedding of His blood. God's perfect plan for His Church includes us taking Communion together."



TAPE THE *BREAKING BREAD* ACTIVITY PAGE TO THE *BLUEPRINT* POSTED ON THE WALL IN WEEK 1 OF THIS UNIT.

CHALLENGE: Make a plan and invite parents to join you after service or at the end of your class time for Communion [breaking bread]. Including parents in this ministry opportunity will remind them the importance of Communion while leading them in the process of discipling their children.

TRANSITION: Say, "Can you see now that the believers' breaking bread together [Communion] is a part of God's plan for His Church?"

DISCUSS — 10 MINUTES

Say, "Let's talk about our lesson to make sure we understand it."

1. Fill in the blank: God has a plan for His _____.

Response: **God has a plan for His Church.**

2. Why is it important to take Communion (break bread) as a church?

Response: Jesus tells us to break bread together to remember His sacrifice. When we take Communion, we remember Jesus' death for us. When we take Communion as a church, we show that we are unified in our belief in Jesus' sacrifice.

3. When did Jesus establish the practice of Communion [breaking bread]?

Response: Jesus established the practice of Communion on the night before He died.

4. In what way did Jesus instruct us to take Communion together?

Response: When we drink from the cup, we are to remember that Jesus shed His blood for us. When we break and eat the bread, we are to remember that Jesus' body was broken for us. (Read Luke 22:19-20 for Luke's account of the Lord's Supper.)

5. Why did God need to give His Church a plan? Why does He not just let us figure it out?

Response: Answers will vary.

6. What do we learn about God in this teaching?

Response: **God has a plan for His Church**, God's plan includes breaking bread with believers, God loves His Church, God knows we need to be reminded of Jesus' sacrifice, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, "**God has a plan for His Church**, and His plan includes breaking bread with other believers!"

RESPOND — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | *Breaking Bread* Activity Page (1 per child) | *Church* Activity Page (1 per child) | Velcro Circles (1 per child) | Scissors | Markers or Crayons |



WE SUGGEST THAT YOU PRINT THE *BREAKING BREAD* ACTIVITY PAGE ON CARD STOCK BEFORE CLASS. CARD STOCK WILL BE A LITTLE STURDIER AND STRONGER WHEN KIDS "BREAK THE BREAD."

Say, "Today's activity will help us remember that God's plan for His Church includes us breaking bread [or taking Communion]. Let's break bread for our craft today!"

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Give each child a *Breaking Bread* Activity Page, a *Church* Activity Page, a pair of scissors, and markers or crayons.
- While the kids are coloring the *Breaking Bread* Activity Page and *Church* Activity Page, explain that this act of remembering Christ's death is part of God's design for His church.
- Then have the kids cut out the bread from their *Breaking Bread* Activity Page leaving them with two halves of the bread.
- Once they have both halves cut out, instruct the kids to overlap the halves in the middle one inch.
- Then give each child a Velcro circle. Show the kids how to place the Velcro circles on the backside of one half and the front side of the other half so that the two pieces of bread can be connected with the Velcro.
- Show the kids how to "break the bread" by pulling the Velcroed pieces apart. And then show them how to put the bread back together.
- Have the kids practice "breaking bread" with their craft.

TRANSITION: Say, "Do you think you will be able to remember that **God has a plan for His Church**? I know that I will remember that His plan includes breaking bread with other believers."

MEMORIZE — 5 MINUTES

Say, "God designed the Church and has given us instructions about what we are to do when we are together. As His children, we are to follow His design because He is our Father, and **God has a [good] plan for His Church!**"

"They devoted themselves [take a step forward with hands on hips] to the apostles' teaching [point to mouth] and to fellowship [lock arms with the person next to you], to the breaking of bread [pretend to break a piece of bread] and to prayer [show praying hands]." Acts 2:42 (NIV) (hold out hands like a book)

CHALLENGE: Say the verse together, leaving out a word each time. When the kids have mastered filling in one word, leave out phrases or pairs of words to further challenge them.

REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

Say, "**God has a plan for His Church**—for us! We learned that breaking bread or taking Communion is part of God's special design for His Church. We remember Jesus' sacrifice and death every time we take Communion, so it is no wonder why God would choose breaking bread as a part of His plan. Let's thank God for Jesus!"



DON'T FORGET TO TAKE PRAYER REQUESTS

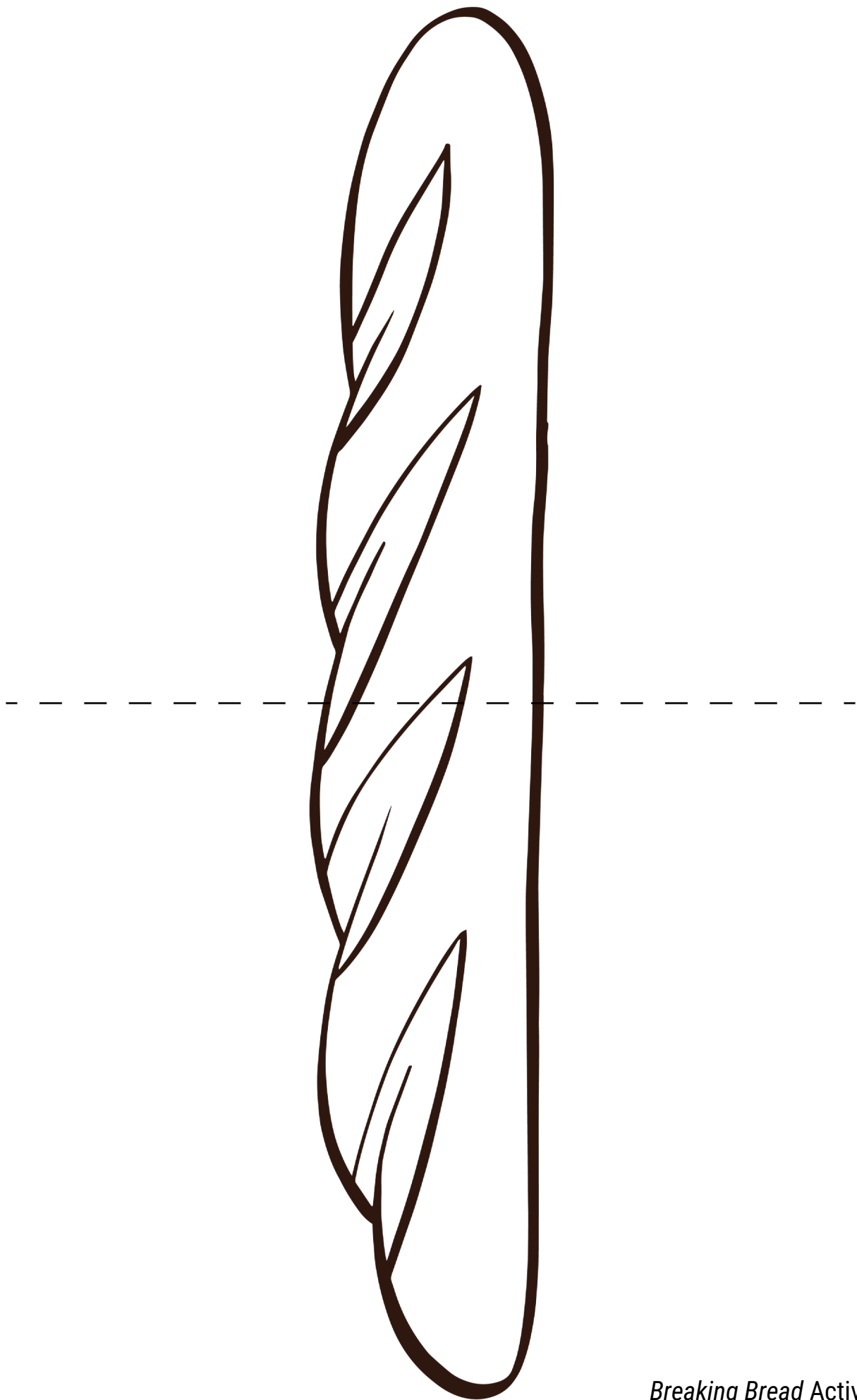
SAMPLE PRAYER: "God, thank You for Your Son, Jesus! We know that You want us to remember Him and His death. You gave us Jesus to save us from our sins and show us how much You love us. We are so grateful! No words can describe how wonderful You are. Thank You, God. Amen."

SAMPLE PRAYER: *"God, thank You for Your Son, Jesus! We know that You want us to remember Him and His death. You gave us Jesus to save us from our sins and show us how much You love us. We are so grateful! No words can describe how wonderful You are. Thank You, God. Amen."*

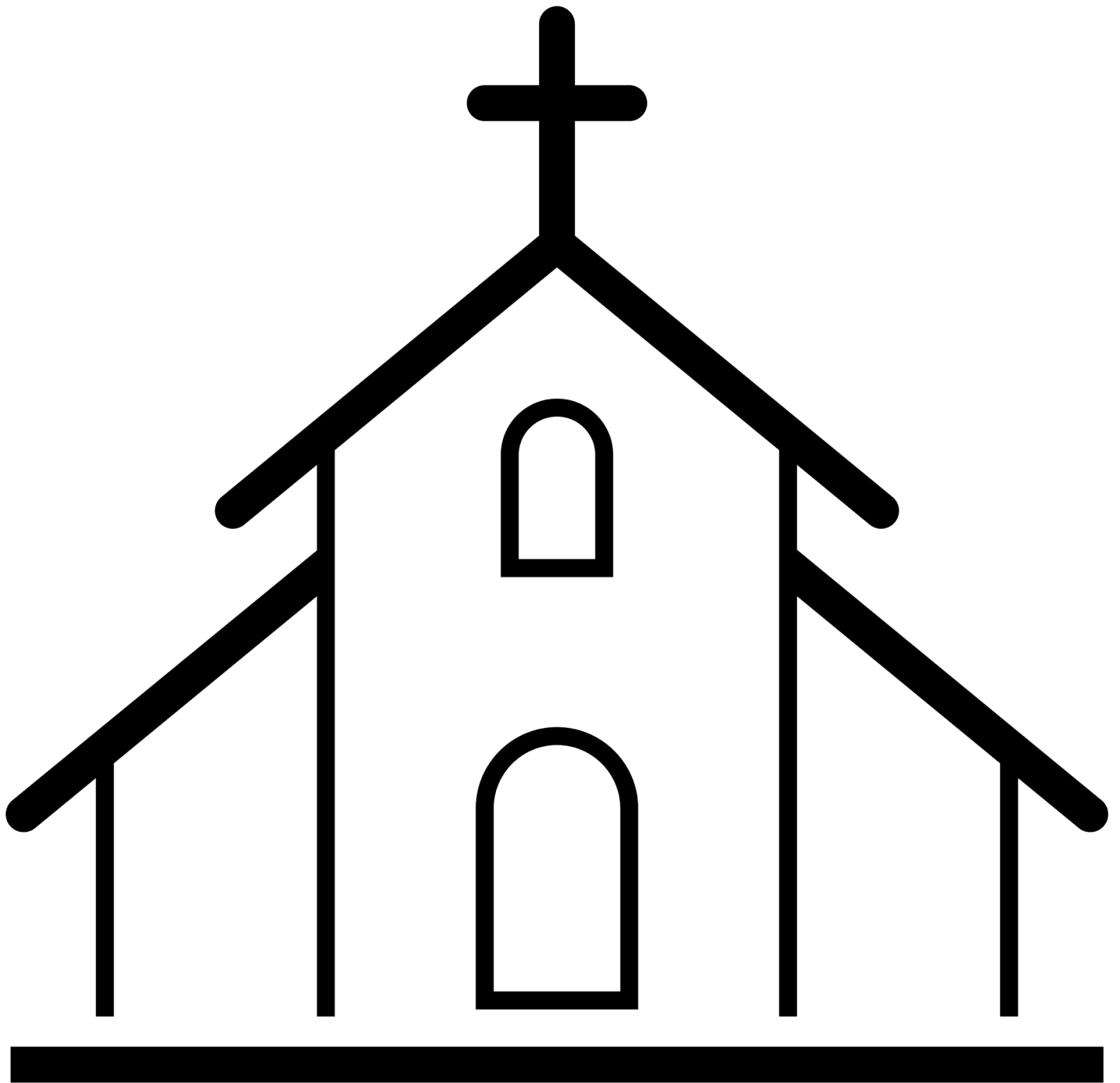
RELEASE — 5 MINUTES

Sometimes, kids have questions about the lesson, but they are not sure when to ask them. Make time at the end of today's lesson for your class to ask questions and wonder about the story. Give opportunities for the children to process what they've heard. Then answer their questions to the best of your ability (and with the help of the Holy Spirit). This is also a great time to implement the CHALLENGE at the end of the LEARN section of our lesson.









PRAYING FOR OTHERS

BIBLE PASSAGE

Acts 12:1-16 (ICB)

BIG IDEA

God has a plan for His Church.

FOCUS VERSE

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." Acts 2:42 (NIV)

LESSON MATERIALS

| Puzzle Piece | Blank Paper | Pencils | Blueprint or *Blueprints* Activity Page | *Prayer* Activity Page | Tape | Color Card Stock | White Paper | Pipe Cleaner | Hole Punch | Markers or Crayons |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- When you are in trouble, who is the first person you ask for help?
- What is your favorite thing about church?

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

This week, teach your kids to worship with their hands! One fun and simple way to do this is by searching for worship songs on YouTube that have sign language in the video. Two great options are:

1. "I've Got the Joy" from *We Play Along*:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ILA-BSuO5w>
2. "Jesus Loves Me" from *We Play Along*:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJxrBmX8pGA>

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

Pray knowing that the God who formed you and loves you is listening.



PRAYER IS THE WAY WE HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. ASK THE KIDS TO SHARE ABOUT THE ROLE COMMUNICATION PLAYS IN THEIR FRIENDSHIPS. THEN, HELP THEM SEE THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN OUR PRAYERS TO GOD AND THEIR CONVERSATIONS WITH THEIR FRIENDS.

SAMPLE PRAYER: "God, You are great and greatly to be praised! We love that You listen to us when we pray. Sometimes I can't believe You want to have a relationship with us. We could not have asked for a better God than You. Thank You! In Jesus' name, Amen."

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say, “Who remembers the name of this month’s unit? Right! It is *Simple Church*. We have been talking about how **God has a plan for His Church**—a good, good plan! When the first church began, God had four big things in mind for them, and they were simple things. First, the people were to listen to God’s Word just like the Ethiopian listened to Philip teach about Christ. Second, the church was supposed to be in fellowship [or relationship] with other believers. Do you recall reading about how the first church did almost everything together? Third, God calls His people to “break bread” [or take Communion] to remember Jesus’ death and sacrifice. Today we have one final instruction to discover. Together, we’ll find out what that is, but first, who would like to put up this week’s puzzle piece?”

TRANSITION: Say, “To get our minds ready to hear and understand our story, I have a fun game for us to play. Who is ready?”

ENGAGE — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Blank Paper (1 sheet per person) | Pencils (1 per person) |

Say, “I want to play a really fun game that will also help us think about today’s story. First, I want each of us to write a special prayer to God, and then we will do something crazy with our prayers! Let’s play *Paper Airplane Prayers!*”

GAME GOAL: To write a prayer down and see if you can fly your prayer to someone else in the room.

HOW TO PLAY:

- Give everyone a sheet of paper and a pencil, and have the children write a prayer. (The prayers can be short and simple.)
- As each child finishes their prayer, instruct them to make a paper airplane out of their prayer and then find a place in the room to wait for others to finish.
- When everyone has found a spot in the room, one at a time, have the kids throw their airplane to a friend. (Make sure each person has one prayer from another child.)
- Once everyone has a paper airplane prayer, they should unfold the plane, pray the prayer written inside, fold it back up, and fly it to someone else in the room.
- Replay as time and interest allow.

TRANSITION: Say, “What a fun game of *Paper Airplane Prayers!* Did you enjoy it? Great! Well, we wrote out our prayers to help us remember that prayer is God’s next plan for the church.”

LEARN — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Blueprint or *Blueprints* Activity Pages (1 large poster per class) | *Prayer* Activity Page (1 per class) | Tape |

Say, “Let’s reread our verse, Acts 2:42 [NIV], about God’s plan for His Church. It says, ‘they devoted

themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.' Did you hear the word 'prayer' mentioned at the end of the verse? God wants us to devote ourselves to prayer! Let's see what happens when God's church prays together." Read Acts 12:1-5 (ICB).

During that same time King Herod began to do terrible things to some who belonged to the church. 2 He ordered James, the brother of John, to be killed by the sword. 3 Herod saw that the Jews liked this, so he decided to arrest Peter, too. (This happened during the time of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.) 4 After Herod arrested Peter, he put him in jail and handed him over to be guarded by 16 soldiers. Herod planned to bring Peter before the people for trial after the Passover Feast. 5 So Peter was kept in jail. But the church kept on praying to God for him.

Say, "Here we see that King Herod was a wicked king who did terrible things to God's people—His Church. He even threw Peter in jail for being a Christian! However, the church prayed. Let's see what happened next. Are you ready?" Read Acts 12:6-16 (ICB).

6 The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping. He was between two soldiers, bound with two chains. Other soldiers were guarding the door of the jail. 7 Suddenly, an angel of the Lord stood there. A light shined in the room. The angel touched Peter on the side and woke him up. The angel said, "Hurry! Get up!" And the chains fell off Peter's hands. 8 The angel said to him, "Get dressed and put on your sandals." And so Peter did this. Then the angel said, "Put on your coat and follow me." 9 So the angel went out, and Peter followed him. Peter did not know if what the angel was doing was real. He thought he might be seeing a vision. 10 They went past the first and the second guard. They came to the iron gate that separated them from the city. The gate opened itself for them. They went through the gate and walked down a street. And the angel suddenly left him.

11 Then Peter realized what had happened. He thought, "Now I know that the Lord really sent his angel to me. He rescued me from Herod and from all the things the Jewish people thought would happen." 12 When he realized this, he went to the home of Mary. She was the mother of John. (John was also called Mark.) Many people were gathered there, praying. 13 Peter knocked on the outside door. A servant girl named Rhoda came to answer it. 14 She recognized Peter's voice, and she was very happy. She even forgot to open the door. She ran inside and told the group, "Peter is at the door!" 15 They said to her, "You are crazy!" But she kept on saying that it was true. So they said, "It must be Peter's angel." 16 Peter continued to knock. When they opened the door, they saw him and were amazed.

Say, "Wow! God did an amazing thing for Peter because the church prayed! This shows us that **God has a plan for His Church**, and a crucial part of His plan is prayer."

Ask, "How did prayer change things for Peter? [Wait for responses.] The church prayed, and when they did, God sent an angel to Peter and freed Him from jail. Prayer is powerful! It is no wonder that **God has a plan for His Church** that includes prayer. God has called us, His church today, to pray together and for one another as well. I don't know about you, but this story encourages me to pray for others. I can't wait to see what God does next!"



TAPE THE PRAYER ACTIVITY PAGE TO THE BLUEPRINT POSTED ON THE WALL IN WEEK 1 OF THIS UNIT.

TRANSITION: Say, "Can you see now that **God has a plan for His Church?**"

DISCUSS — 10 MINUTES

Say, "Let's talk about the story a bit more."

1. Fill in the blank: God has a plan for His _____.

Response: **God has a plan for His Church.**

2. Why do you think God's plan for His Church includes prayer?

Response: Answers will vary, but encourage the kids that God hears and answers prayers. Nothing is too hard for God, and He is always listening.

3. The church in today's Bible reading prayed for Peter! How did their prayers change Peter's situation?

Response: We don't know what would have happened to Peter if this church had not prayed for him. We do know that God hears our prayers, and He answered this church's request and freed Peter.

4. Why do you think it is helpful for us to pray together as well as on our own?

Response: Answers will vary.

5. Is prayer hard or easy for you? Why do you think that is?

Response: Answers will vary.

6. Is there someone you would like for us to pray for today? If so, who?

Response: Stop and pray for the requests the children share.

7. What do we learn about God in this teaching?

Response: **God has a plan for His Church**, God answers prayers, God wants us to pray, God wants His people (the Church) to pray together, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, "God's perfect plan for His Church includes prayer! Isn't it amazing that God wants a relationship with us—His Church!"

RESPOND — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Color Card Stock (1 per child) | White Paper (1 per child) | Pipe Cleaners (1 per child) | Hole Punch | Markers or Crayons |



BEFORE CLASS, CUT THE WHITE PIECES OF PAPER INTO 6 SQUARES. MAKE SURE EACH CHILD HAS AT LEAST 6 SQUARES.

Say, "Today's craft will help us remember that God wants His people [the Church] to pray! We're going to create journals you can use to record your prayers and observe how God answers you. Do not forget, **God has a plan for His Church—prayer!**"

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Give each child one piece of card stock, 6 squares and a pipe cleaner.

- Help the children trace their right and left hands onto the card stock. Then instruct them to cut the hands out.
- Instruct the kids to write a prayer request on one of the squares then stack the other blank squares behind it.
- Have the children place their paper hands on the top and bottom of the stack of squares. This should make it look like they're holding the squares between their paper hands.
- Help kids punch a hole in the bottom corner of the stack of papers. Then have them pull the pipe cleaner through the hole and then twist the pipe cleaner to secure the papers.
- Explain that this is their prayer journal. They are to write their prayer requests on one side of the squares and record how God answered those prayers on the other side of the squares.
- If time allows, have the kids color and decorate their prayer journals. Be sure to tell them that they can add more pieces of paper later on if they'd like.

TRANSITION: Say, "I hope you will use your Prayer Journal. Writing prayers down is a great way to remember what you have asked of God. I want you to know that He hears every word you say, even if it does not feel like it."

MEMORIZE — 5 MINUTES

Say, "**God has a plan for His Church!** Do you believe that? I know I do! This month's verse describes what God's first Christian church looked like, so we would have an example of how to live together as God's people now. Let's practice our verse once more."

"They devoted themselves [take a step forward with hands on hips] to the apostles' teaching [point to mouth] and to fellowship [lock arms with the person next to you], to the breaking of bread [pretend to break a piece of bread] and to prayer [show praying hands]." Acts 2:42 (NIV) (hold out hands like a book)

CHALLENGE: To make the verse "stick," have the kids share what each of the four "plans" we've been learning about means to them. You could also ask which of the four characteristics (teaching, fellowship, Communion, or prayer) comes easiest for them and which one is most challenging.

REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

Say, "God has a plan for His Church—for us! Let's not forget that God's plan is for us to commit to teaching from God's Word, fellowship with one another, breaking bread [or Communion], and prayer! All four of these things are so important. If you want God to help you with any of these things, ask Him. He gave us His Holy Spirit to help us do everything God commands!"

SAMPLE PRAYER: *"We love You, God! Thank You for Your plan. When we find it hard to follow You, please help us. Thank You, God. Amen."*

RELEASE — 5 MINUTES

Stay engaged with the children through the dismissal. Every moment is valuable. God can use you to meet these kids, encounter them, and change their lives for His glory. Often it's in the unexpected moments and conversations that He uses us the most. Thank you for serving!





John 1:14-15

Matthew 1:1-2