The JOY of the GOSPEL

*Five Lessons for February and the First Sunday of March 2019*

**February 3, 2019** – Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**February 10, 2019** – Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**February 17, 2019** – Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**February 24, 2019** – Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

**March 3, 2019** – Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time
The Rejection at Nazareth
(Lower Elementary)

February 3, 2019 – Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Overview
In this week’s Gospel passage, Jesus brings His message home to Nazareth, near the beginning of His public ministry. He is not well-received and the people chase Him from town and mean to kill Him. In this lesson, students will reflect upon a fundamental condition of being a follower of Jesus: persecution for the sake of the Gospel.

Directions

A. Read the Gospel passage aloud to your students as they follow along. Then discuss the focus and reflection questions with them as a class.

B. Read the reflection from Following Jesus aloud to your students. Then have them answer the questions or answer them together as a class. When finished, discuss student responses.

Answer Key

Focus Questions

1. Accept reasoned answers, which may include because those closest to us know us best.
2. Jesus came to speak God’s word. Unlike the prophets, Jesus doesn’t just speak for God, He is God.
3. They chased Him out of town and tried to kill Him.
Jesus began speaking in the synagogue, saying: “Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.” And all spoke highly of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They also asked, “Isn’t this the son of Joseph?” He said to them, “Surely you will quote me this proverb, ‘Physician, cure yourself,’ and say, ‘Do here in your native place the things that we heard were done in Capernaum.’” And he said, “Amen, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own native place. Indeed, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah when the sky was closed for three and a half years and a severe famine spread over the entire land. It was to none of these that Elijah was sent, but only to a widow in Zarephath in the land of Sidon. Again, there were many lepers in Israel during the time of Elisha the prophet; yet not one of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.” When the people in the synagogue heard this, they were all filled with fury. They rose up, drove him out of the town, and
led him to the brow of the hill on which their town had been built, to hurl him down headlong. But Jesus passed through the midst of them and went away.

Focus Questions

1. Jesus says, “No prophet is accepted in his own native place.” He is talking about how hard it is to share the Gospel with those closest to you. Why do you think this is?
2. Jesus tells a couple of stories of prophets from the Old Testament who came to the people to speak God’s word. How is Jesus like the prophets? How is He different?
3. What did the people do to Jesus at the end of the Gospel story?
Following Jesus

Directions: Read the brief reflection and then answer the question.

This week’s Gospel is a hard teaching. Jesus comes home to Nazareth to begin His ministry. At first, He is welcomed. But soon the people turn against Him.

Later, in John 15, Jesus says this:

“If the world hates you, realize that it hated me first...If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.”

To be persecuted means to be badly mistreated, especially because of what you believe. Jesus tells us that we will be persecuted when we follow Him. Even Jesus was persecuted! Being a disciple of Jesus is hard. People will not want to listen to us. They will mistreat us for living differently.

But Jesus promises to be with us. He promised to send the Holy Spirit to make us strong and to guide us. He does not leave us alone. He helps us when we are persecuted for following Him.
1. What are two things about being a Christian that are easy for you to do?
   • _____________________________________________________
   • _____________________________________________________
   • _____________________________________________________
   • _____________________________________________________

2. What are two ways that being a follower of Christ is hard?
   • _____________________________________________________
   • _____________________________________________________
   • _____________________________________________________
   • _____________________________________________________

3. When being a Christian is hard, what can you do to stay strong?
   • _____________________________________________________
   • _____________________________________________________
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The Joy of the Gospel

The Call of Simon the Fisherman
(Lower Elementary)

February 10, 2019 – Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Overview

In this week’s Gospel passage, Jesus meets the Apostles Simon, James, and John and invites them to come follow Him. Jesus tells them to “not be afraid” of following Him. In this spot the differences lesson, students will contemplate Jesus’ invitation to be free from fear.

Directions

A. Read the Gospel passage aloud to your students as they follow along. Then discuss the focus and reflection questions with them as a class.

B. Have students complete the *The Miraculous Draught of Fish Spot the Differences* activity. Tell your students to compare the two versions of the painting *The Miraculous Draught of Fish* by Jacapo Bassano and find 8 differences between the two images. Have them circle the differences.

Answer Key

1. “Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch.”
2. Simon and the other fishermen caught a great number of fish so that their nets were tearing. They filled two boats with fish to the point that the boats were in danger of sinking.
3. They were astonished at the miraculous catch of fish.
4. They would be catching men.
5. They left everything and followed Him.
The Miraculous Draught of Fish
A Reading from the Gospel of Luke 5:1-11: The Call of Simon the Fisherman

While the crowd was pressing in on Jesus and listening to the word of God, he was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret. He saw two boats there alongside the lake; the fishermen had disembarked and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, he asked him to put out a short distance from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. After he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch.” Simon said in reply, “Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets.” When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish and their nets were tearing. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come to help them. They came and filled both boats so that the boats were in danger of sinking. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at the knees of Jesus and said, “Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.” For astonishment at the catch of fish they had made seized him and all those with him, and likewise James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners of
Simon. Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.” When they brought their boats to the shore, they left everything and followed him.

Focus Questions

1. What did Jesus tell Simon to do?
2. What happened when Simon did what Jesus asked him to do?
3. Why did Jesus tell Simon “do not be afraid”?
4. What did Jesus tell Simon, James, and John that they would be doing from now on?
5. What did Simon, James, and John do in the end?
The Miraculous Draught of Fish

Directions: Compare the two images of *The Miraculous Draught of Fish* by Jacapo Bassano. See if you can spot 8 differences between the two images. Circle the differences when you find them.
The Joy of the Gospel
Sermon on the Plain
(Lower Elementary)

February 17, 2019 – Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Overview

In this week’s Gospel passage, Jesus delivers the Sermon on the Plain in which He teaches a variation of the Beatitudes. He continues His message that being His disciple will require suffering and persecution in His name, but that our reward in Heaven will be great. In this lesson, students will reflect on the meaning of the Beatitudes and what it means to be truly happy.

Directions

A. Read the Gospel passage aloud to your students as they follow along. Then discuss the focus and reflection questions with them as a class.

B. Read the reflection from The Beatitudes aloud to your students. Then, have them draw lines to connect the “blessed” with their reward, and those to whom Jesus said “woe” to their reward.

C. Review and discuss the answers as a class when finished.

Answer Key

1. A great number of His disciples from all over the region.
2. Blessed.
3. These people will be blessed when they suffer in Jesus’ name.

The Beatitudes
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Blessed</th>
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<tr>
<td>Blessed are you who are poor...</td>
<td>...for you will be satisfied.</td>
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<td>...for you will laugh.</td>
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A Reading from the Gospel of Luke 6:17, 20-26: Sermon on the Plain

Jesus came down with the twelve and stood on a stretch of level ground with a great crowd of his disciples and a large number of the people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon. And raising his eyes toward his disciples he said:

“Blessed are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours.
Blessed are you who are now hungry, for you will be satisfied.
Blessed are you who are now weeping, for you will laugh.
Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude and insult you, and denounce your name as evil on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice and leap for joy on that day! Behold, your reward will be great in heaven.
For their ancestors treated the prophets in the same way.
But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.
Woe to you who are filled now, for you will be hungry.
Woe to you who laugh now, for you will grieve and weep.
Woe to you when all speak well of you, for their ancestors treated the false prophets in this way.”
Focus Questions

1. Whom was Jesus teaching in this sermon?

2. In this Gospel, Jesus teaches us about the poor, the hungry, those who weep, and those who are hated by others. What does Jesus say these people are?

3. Jesus promises that these people will be given great rewards in Heaven. Why do you think He make this promise?
The Beatitudes

**Directions:** Read the reflection. Then, draw lines to connect the “blessed” from each Beatitude to their reward. After that, draw lines to connect those Jesus said “woe” to with their reward.

Everyone wants to be happy. But what the world thinks will make us happy is different from true happiness. In this Sunday’s Gospel Jesus teaches us the Beatitudes. The Beatitudes tell us how to be holy and happy now so we can one day be happy in Heaven forever with God.

### The Blessed

| Blessed are you who are poor... | ...for you will be satisfied. |
| Blessed are you who are now hungry... | ...for you will laugh. |
| Blessed are you who are now weeping... | Behold, your reward will be great in heaven. |
| Blessed are you when people hate you... | ...for the kingdom of God is yours. |
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February 24, 2019 – Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Overview

In this week’s Gospel passage, Jesus continues to teach about the challenges of being His disciple. Here, He teaches us to love our enemies and gives us the Golden Rule, “Do to others what you would have them do to you.” In this lesson, students will reflect on ways they can live according to the Golden Rule.

Directions

A. Read the Gospel passage aloud to your students as they follow along. Then discuss the focus and reflection questions with them as a class.

B. Read the reflection from The Golden Rule aloud to your students. Then read each scenario aloud and have your students reflect on how they could follow the Golden Rule in each situation.

C. Review and discuss the answers as a class when finished.

Answer Key

1. Jesus teaches us to love our enemies, do good to them, and to pray for them, even when they mistreat us.

2. He says, “Do to others as you would have them do to you.”

3. Jesus tells us that it is easy to love those who love us, and to treat well those who treat us well. Even sinners love those who love them and so forth. When we treat even our enemies well and love them, though it may be hard to do, our reward will be great in Heaven with God.

4. The measure with which we judge and condemn others will be the measure with which we are judged.
Sunday Reading


Jesus said to his disciples: “To you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. To the person who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other one as well, and from the person who takes your cloak, do not withhold even your tunic. Give to everyone who asks of you, and from the one who takes what is yours do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. For if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same. If you lend money to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, and get back the same amount. But rather, love your enemies and do good to them, and lend expecting nothing back; then your reward will be great and you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

“Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned.”
Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give, and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.”

Focus Questions

1. How does Jesus tell us we should treat others, even our enemies?
2. Why does Jesus tell us to treat others in this way?
3. Why should we not judge or condemn others?
The Golden Rule

Directions: Read the reflection and each scenario. Then reflect on how you could follow the Golden Rule in that situation.

Jesus taught us: “Do to others as you have them do to you.” This saying is called the Golden Rule. It is easy to forget the full meaning of this teaching. Jesus tells us we should not only treat well those who treat us well. He tells us to treat well even those who have hurt us. This fact makes living the Golden Rule much harder. It is easy to treat our best friend the way we would want to be treated. It is much harder to treat the school bully in the same way.

1. A friend borrowed your favorite toy but never gave it back.

2. A student in your class has been lying about you to others.
3. You witness a student at your school make fun of another student during lunch.

________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________

4. You notice a student who sits next to you copying your paper during a math test.

________________________________________________________
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March 3, 2019 – Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Overview

In this week’s Gospel passage, we find the conclusion to Jesus’ teachings about being His disciple before we enter the season of Lent. Jesus teaches us what is perhaps the entire point of the past few weeks’ Gospels: to be His disciple is to be like Him. In this lesson, students will contemplate how they can follow Jesus’ teaching to be like Him.

Directions

A. Have students read the Gospel passage, or read it aloud to your students, and then answer the focus questions. You may have students answer them on their own or you may discuss them together as a class.

B. Have students read the reflection and Scripture passages from Be Like Jesus. Then have each student choose one of the Scripture passages and draw a picture of themself following Jesus’ teaching to be like Him.

C. Have students share their drawings with the class and talk about which Scripture passage they chose and why.

Answer Key

1. No disciple is superior to their teacher. But, when they have been fully trained, every disciple will be like his teacher.

2. It is important to take care of our own sinfulness first because we can control our own behavior. Note: Jesus does not say that we shouldn’t be concerned at all with the sinfulness of others, but rather that we should first attend to ourselves. He is not calling us to leave others completely alone in their sinfulness.

3. Good trees do not bear rotten fruit, nor do rotten trees bear good fruit.
A Reading from the Gospel of Luke 6:39-45: A Tree Known by its Fruit

Jesus told his disciples a parable, “Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit? No disciple is superior to the teacher; but when fully trained, every disciple will be like his teacher. Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own? How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me remove that splinter in your eye,' when you do not even notice the wooden beam in your own eye? You hypocrite! Remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter in your brother's eye.

“A good tree does not bear rotten fruit, nor does a rotten tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit. For people do not pick figs from thornbushes, nor do they gather grapes from brambles. A good person out of the store of goodness in his heart produces good, but an evil person out of a store of evil produces evil; for from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks.”
Focus Questions

1. What does Jesus say about being a disciple, or student, at the beginning of this Gospel?

2. In the past few weeks, Jesus has taught us to be careful about judging others. This week, Jesus says, “Remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter in your brother’s eye.” In other words, Jesus is teaching us to take care of our own sinfulness before we worry about the sinfulness of others. Why do you think this teaching is important?

3. What kind of fruit would a good tree not bear? What kind of fruit would a rotten tree not bear?
Be Like Jesus

Directions: Read the reflection and Scripture passage about being like Jesus. Then draw a picture of you being like Jesus.

In this week’s Gospel Jesus teaches us that to be His disciple means we have to be like Him. How do we become like Jesus? Jesus’ whole life and teachings show us how to be like Him.

Let’s look at what else Jesus said about being like Him.

“I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.” – John 13:34

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” – John 14:15

“Be merciful, just as [also] your Father is merciful.” – Luke 6:36

“No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” – John 15:13
Choose one of Jesus’ sayings above about being like Him. Then draw a picture of you following Jesus’ teaching.