**A group of trees in a forest

Description automatically generated**

**Day 1**

|  |
| --- |
| **Faith Fact**  I can share God’s love.  **Faith Verse**  John 20:21 (NLT)  [Jesus] said, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.”  **Question of the Day: Who is someone you can tell about the love of Jesus?** |

**Read about It**

**Read:** Matthew 9:9–11

Jesus was assembling His team of closest disciples. Some of the men He called were from different places. Jesus called fishermen from their boats. In this Scripture, He called a tax collector from his booth. These men had something in common. When they had an encounter with Jesus, each man’s life turned upside down!

Matthew was a tax collector, a person many people did not like. They thought that tax collectors were bad people. When Jesus called him, Matthew had a choice to make: Would he go with Jesus? The Bible says that Matthew immediately left his booth and followed Jesus. Something about Jesus made Matthew go without hesitation. His life would be forever different!

What was Jesus like that made people decide to change their life in an instant? While we don’t have Jesus with us in the flesh today, we know from the Bible who He is. Jesus is the King of kings. He is the Lord of lords. Jesus is good, kind, and merciful. He is the Best Friend we could ever ask for. We don’t even have enough words to describe how great Jesus is!

Have you experienced how great He is? There are millions of people in the world, just like Matthew, whom Jesus is calling to come to follow Him. He uses us to share the good news with them. They may be people that others don’t like. Some may be people others think badly of. Even so, Jesus loves them! He has an amazing plan for each person’s life. One encounter with Jesus can change everything. Let’s share the good news with others so they can leave everything and follow Him.

**Talk about It**

|  |
| --- |
| **Question 1.** What was Matthew’s job?  **Answer 1.** A tax collector (Matthew 9:9) |
| **Question 2.** What did Matthew do when Jesus said to follow Him?  **Answer 2.** Matthew got up and followed Him. (Matthew 9:9) |
| **Question 3.** Why do you think Matthew left his tax booth so quickly to follow Jesus?  **Answer 3.** Answers will vary. |
| **Question 4.** How does Jesus feel about a person that other people may not like?  **Answer 4.** He loves that person. |
| **Question 5.** Who is someone you can tell about the love of Jesus?  **Answer 5.** Answers will vary. |

**Pray about It**

Dear Jesus, I am so thankful that I can follow You. Lord, You have changed my life! Give me boldness and wisdom so that I can share this good news with others. Everyone needs to hear how much You love them. Amen.

**Day 2**

|  |
| --- |
| **Faith Fact**  I can share God’s love.  **Faith Verse**  John 20:21 (NLT)  [Jesus] said, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.”  **Question of the Day: Who did Jesus come to help?** |

**Read about It**

**Read:** Matthew 9:11–12

Matthew made a quick decision to follow Jesus, which forever changed his life. So, what was the first thing he did to celebrate his new life? He had a dinner at his house! Matthew invited other tax collectors and sinners to come to sit at the table with Jesus and His disciples. Matthew knew that the One who called him loved these other sinners too. The Pharisees, however, seemed unhappy about it. What kind of man was Jesus who hung out with sinners? Why did Jesus sit down and eat with these types of people? Jesus replied, “Healthy people don’t need a doctor—sick people do.” Jesus knew that He came to heal the sick and broken. Matthew was one of those people. Because Jesus saved him, Matthew could not help but tell others who needed to hear!

Jesus wasn’t talking about people who had a cough, fever, or even needed to go to the hospital. He was talking about people living in a way that wasn’t honoring Him. There may be many people in your school, your neighborhood, and even your church who aren’t living for Jesus. Some people may have forgotten about them. Others may have labeled them as *cheaters*, *liars*, or *bad kids*. Jesus hasn’t forgotten them. He offers them new labels like *friend*, *worthy*, and *good*. We can be like Matthew and “set the table.” What does that mean? We can invite others and allow them to meet Jesus!

**Talk about It**

|  |
| --- |
| **Question 1.** Who were Matthew’s dinner guests?  **Answer 1.** Jesus, His disciples, tax collectors, and sinners (Matthew 9:10) |
| **Question 2.** What was the reaction of others when they saw who Jesus was eating with?  **Answer 2.** “Why does your teacher eat with such scum?” (Matthew 9:11) |
| **Question 3.** What did Jesus mean when He said, “Healthy people don’t need a doctor”?  **Answer 3.** Answers will vary. |
| **Question 4.** What keeps some Christians from reaching out to people like those at Matthew’s party?  **Answer 4.** Answers will vary. |
| **Question 5.** Who did Jesus come to help?  **Answer 5.** Answers will vary. |

**Pray about It**

Dear Jesus, thank You for coming to save both the sick and the healthy. You are kind and gracious. Open my eyes to see others as You see them. Give me the words to share the good news about You with others. I know You love me so much. Help me to tell others about Your love. Amen.

**Day 3**

|  |
| --- |
| **Faith Fact**  I can share God’s love.  **Faith Verse**  John 20:21 (NLT)  [Jesus] said, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.”  **Question of the Day: How can you show mercy?** |

**Read about It**

**Read:** Hosea 6:6; Matthew 9:13

Jesus reminded the Pharisees about an instructive Bible verse from Hosea. As religious leaders, they told others how to act and what to do to be close to God. The Pharisees offered sacrifices and taught the Law. They did certain good things for God. But their hearts were far from God, and it was clear because they weren’t ready to offer mercy. Mercy means to show forgiveness to someone who deserves to be punished.

When these leaders saw Jesus eating with sinners and tax collectors, they couldn’t believe it! Why would Jesus spend time with bad people? Jesus knew that sacrifices and following the Law were good. But Jesus also knew that loving others was even more important. The sinners and tax collectors needed mercy. They needed Jesus more than any sacrifice or good deed. This was a time to put mercy before rules.

Imagine you are playing soccer with your friends. The score is tied, and you are about to score the winning point. But as you are about to kick the ball, you notice someone from the other team has tripped. The kid is hurt. The rules say you should score the goal. But what would mercy tell you to do? Jesus always looks at people first. He loves them. He shows them mercy. Sharing God’s love means sometimes we have to look beyond the man-made rules. We have to look at the person and show love and mercy the way Jesus did.

**Talk about It**

|  |
| --- |
| **Question 1.** What did Jesus say the Scriptures tell us to show more than sacrifices?  **Answer 1.** Mercy (Matthew 9:13) |
| **Question 2.** Is it more important to follow man-made rules or show Jesus’ love? Explain.  **Answer 2.** Jesus made it clear that God wants us to show His love and mercy to others. (Hosea 6:6; Matthew 9:13) |
| **Question 3.** Talk about a situation when you were shown mercy.  **Answer 3.** Answers will vary. |
| **Question 4.** How does it feel to receive mercy?  **Answer 4.** Answers will vary. |
| **Question 5.** How can you show mercy to someone else?  **Answer 5.** Answers may vary. |

**Pray about It**

Dear Jesus, thank You for the mercy that You have shown me. I know I don’t deserve it. I know I haven’t earned it. Jesus, You are so good! Help me to show others the same mercy that You have given me. Help me to love them as You have loved me. Amen.

**Day 4**

|  |
| --- |
| **Faith Fact**  I can share God’s love.  **Faith Verse**  John 20:21 (NLT)  [Jesus] said, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.”  **Question of the Day: How has the Holy Spirit called you to go?** |

**Read about It**

**Read:** Acts 16:6–10

Paul, the missionary, traveled far and wide, telling others about the love of Jesus. He started churches, trained leaders, and encouraged new Christians. The Holy Spirit led Paul. He knew that he needed to follow the Holy Spirit’s leading so the Church could grow. He kept traveling and preaching, but the Holy Spirit stopped him from going to a certain place. What was he to do? Then, in a dream, Paul saw a man from Macedonia begging for help. Paul didn’t think twice. He immediately left for Macedonia to spread the good news about Jesus there.

Who do you know that needs to hear? Everyone needs to hear about Jesus! But, just one person can’t tell the entire world. Paul, the first missionary, who started many churches and saw many come to Jesus, couldn’t reach the whole world alone.

Like Paul, we need to be obedient to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will lead us and guide us. He will show us where to go and who to talk to. Like Paul, we can obey when the Holy Spirit calls. Listen carefully for times you think the Holy Spirit is leading you. It could be in prayer time, or it could be during your day. He can help you know who to tell about Jesus. He helps you know where to go. Keep working for Jesus and sharing His love. When the Holy Spirit speaks to you, then obey!

**Talk about It**

|  |
| --- |
| **Question 1.** How did Paul know to go to Macedonia?  **Answer 1.** Through a vision (Acts 16:9) |
| **Question 2.** Has the Holy Spirit ever prompted you to share the good news about Jesus? Explain.  **Answer 2.** Answers will vary. |
| **Question 3.** Why should we depend on the Holy Spirit when we are spreading the good news about Jesus?  **Answer 3.** Answers will vary. |
| **Question 4.** What are a few ways the Holy Spirit can help lead you?  **Answer 4.** Answers will vary. |
| **Question 5.** How has the Holy Spirit called you to go?  **Answer 5.** Answers will vary. |

**Pray about It**

Dear Jesus, thank You for sending the Holy Spirit to guide me! You have called me to obey and go. I am listening, and I am getting ready for what You need me to do. Help me to be bold. Help me to share the good news. Most of all, help me to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. Prepare the hearts of others to hear the good news and begin their journey with You. Jesus, please use me to share Your love with the world. Amen.

.