

“You are my Son, whom I dearly love; in you I find happiness.” (Luke 3:22)

Jesus in the Synagogue – Luke 4:14-30

Prepare to Wonder

Faith Word: JOURNEY

Synagogues are places of worship for Jewish people. In Jesus’ time, Jewish people gathered together in the synagogue for worship and for teaching the Scriptures and the law. After Jesus’ baptism and his experience being tempted in the wilderness, Jesus began to teach in the synagogues. The Bible tells us it was Jesus’ custom to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath. Jesus’ visit to the synagogue in Nazareth is significant for two reasons: because Nazareth was his hometown, and because of the Scripture Jesus read that day.

During worship in a Jewish synagogue at that time, there were usually several readers. Each would read a part of Scripture and then preach on the text. The Bible tells us Jesus stood to read from the scroll and then sat down to teach. This was the customary practice at the time. Jesus read a passage that essentially announced what his ministry was to be about: bringing good news to the poor, proclaiming release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind. It could be said that Jesus was reading his mission statement.

The last part of the story is more difficult to understand. The crowd in the synagogue turns on Jesus. In verse 22, we are told they are amazed at the words that he spoke. In verse 29, they are attempting to hurl him off a cliff! It has been speculated that the crowd became upset when Jesus insisted his message was for everyone. The people of Nazareth may have wanted Jesus to spend extra time in Nazareth and were upset when this was not Jesus’ plan.

Spiritual Practice for Adults

We will all be called to do something that others may not like. Maybe it’s taking a new job and your current employer is unhappy. Maybe you have to draw a boundary with a friend to keep from gossiping. Whatever it is, we will never be able to make everyone happy. When this happens next, detach with love. Remember that God is also on the journey with this person, and ask God to care for each of you.

Come Together

Come Together

Supplies: Class Pack, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, Wonder Box, green cloth, battery-operated candle, scroll

Prepare Ahead: Set up a Wonder Table (see p. 3) with a green cloth, battery-operated candle, and a Wonder Box (see p. 3). Display the Unit 2 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 12 & 13) and Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 4). Place the scroll inside the Wonder Box.

- Point to the Unit 2 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 4), and invite the children to wonder about what the word *journey* means.
- Invite the kids to join you in a circle.

SAY: This month we are talking about stories from Jesus' life. Our story today is about Jesus being in the synagogue. It was like the church where we come to worship and learn about God.

- In this curriculum, we recommend reading stories from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Allow an elementary-age child to read the story, "Jesus in the Synagogue" (pp. 210–1), from the storybook.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for helping us to learn and worship together. Amen.

Jesus in the Synagogue – Preschool

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Jesus in the Synagogue" (Reproducible 8A) for each child.

- Invite the preschoolers to use crayons to color the picture.

SAY: Jesus told people that he was sent by God to do good work.

Find the Hidden Word – Younger Elementary

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons or markers

Prepare: Photocopy "Find the Hidden Word" (Reproducible 8B) for each child.

SAY: The synagogue is where Jesus worshipped God each week. Find the hidden letters that spell the word SYNAGOGUE on the page. Color the letters. Then color the rest of the page.

- Invite the kids to find the hidden letters on the page.

ASK: What are the letters you found? What do they spell?

SAY: We will learn more about what happened when Jesus read in the synagogue.

Reading Backwards – Older Elementary

Supplies: CEB Bible, Reproducible Kids' Book, pencils or markers

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Reading Backwards" (Reproducible 8C) for each child.

SAY: In today's Bible story, Jesus opened a scroll and read it out loud in his home synagogue (kind of like a church). The Scripture Jesus read is printed on the page, but it is written from right to left. Rewrite the words onto a separate sheet of paper so the Scripture can be read more easily.

- Refer to Luke 4:18-19 in a *Common English Bible*.

My Sunday Comic – All Ages

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, pencils, colored pencils or crayons, optional: Sunday comics from a newspaper

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "My Sunday Comic" (Reproducible 8D) for each child.

ASK: What do you do on Sundays?

- Invite the kids to think about the things they do on Sundays. They might come to church and Sunday school, eat lunch with family, and do different activities during the day.
- Invite the kids to fill in the comic panels on the reproducible page to make a comic illustrating their typical Sundays.
- Have the kids share their comics with the rest of the class when they are finished.

SAY: Jesus came to the synagogue to worship God and to learn. We come to our church to worship and learn.

Wonder Time

Interactive Bible Story

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Jesus in the Synagogue" (Reproducible 8F) for each child.

- Invite several readers to take turns reading the story one section at a time.

ASK: What happened to Jesus in today's Bible story?

Share a Story

Supplies: Celebrate Wonder DVD, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, TV, DVD player

- Invite the children to join you, sitting in a circle on the floor.
- Watch the Session 8 video (Celebrate Wonder DVD).

Wonder with Me

Supplies: Class Pack, Wonder Box, scissors

Prepare Ahead: Lay out the Wonder Story Mat for Unit 2 (Class Pack—pp. 8 & 17). Cut out the two remaining Bible story figures (Class Pack—p. 19), if not done yet.

- Place the Wonder Box on the Unit 2 Wonder Story Mat.
- Show the children the Unit 2 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 4).

SAY: The definition for *journey* is to faithfully follow where God leads. We are following Jesus' journey this month as he grows and follows where God leads him. In today's story, Jesus journeys to the synagogue where he reads a scroll of Scripture.

- Point to the Wonder Story Mat.

WONDER together:

- Why do you think Jesus read this Scripture?
- What does it mean to be faithful?
- Why do you think the people were angry with Jesus?
- Place the figure of the scroll on the Wonder Story Mat near Nazareth.
- Open the Wonder Box to reveal the scroll.

WONDER: What did the scroll Jesus read say?

Experience Wonder

Make a Scroll

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, at least two paper towel tubes, tape, additional paper, markers or colored pencils

Prepare Ahead: Make a few photocopies of "Make a Scroll" (Reproducible 8E). Use the Bible passages written out earlier from the activity on Reproducible 8C (Reading Backwards).

- Hand out a few copies of "Make a Scroll" to the class.

SAY: In Jesus' time, Scripture was written on scrolls. Scrolls were made from animal skins that were stitched together. Scribes wrote on the animal skins. Then the long, stitched pages were rolled up. Follow the directions on the page to make a scroll.

- Invite the kids to use the directions on Reproducible 8E to make the long line of Bible passages into a scroll. If you only have two or three papers from the "Reading Backwards" activity, you may want to have the kids make a few more now using the extra paper provided.

SAY: Take the pages you wrote the Bible passages on earlier. Lay them end to end and tape them all together. Then place a cardboard tube at one end of your taped pages. Tape the cardboard tube as you see in the illustration on the page.

- Invite the kids to finish making their scrolls. Have them roll up the scroll.

Examine the Bible Verse

SAY: Our Unit 2 Bible verse is Luke 3:22. Find it in your Bibles.

ASK: Is the Book of Luke in the Old or New Testament? (*New*) Where is Luke located in the New Testament? (*third book*) In what chapter of Luke is our verse located? (*3*) What is the verse number? (*22*)

SAY: Our Bible verse tells us how God felt about Jesus.

- Gather the kids around the Bible Verse Poster. (Class Pack—pp. 12 & 13). Read it together.

Peaceful Place

Supplies: Leader Guide—p. 114, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, book: "For the Beauty of the Earth" by Folliot S. Pierpoint, paper, crayons

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy the Unit 2 Faith Word coloring sheet (Leader Guide—p. 114) for each child.

- Assist the children, as needed, as they interact with the items provided.
- Invite the children to write or draw what they feel God is calling them to do.
- Have each child color the Faith Word coloring sheet.

Tip: All of the supplies/activities suggested for the Peaceful Place are optional.

Go in Peace

Spiritual Practice – Exploring Jesus’ Journey Through Scripture

SAY: Spiritual practice is something we do to help us connect to God. This month we are learning about journey, following where God leads us. We are hearing stories about Jesus’ journey. Today Jesus goes to the synagogue to worship God. We come to church to worship God.

- Guide the children through a spiritual practice:
 - **SAY:** We’re going to take a prayer walk around our church building. As we walk, we will notice the church and the community around it. We will pray to God about what we see. If you notice something you’d like us to all notice, raise your hand and I will let you tell us what you see.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for spaces where we can come together to worship you. Amen.

- Bless the children before they leave. Touch each child as you say this blessing: “May you feel God’s presence as you journey through the day.”

Family Spiritual Practice

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids’ Book; Leader Guide—pp. 111, 112*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy Reproducibles 8F–8G for each child. Photocopy “Celebration Chart” (p. 111) and “Family Letter” (p. 112) for any child who does not have these.*

SAY: Let’s take a look at your Take-Home Pages (*Reproducibles 8F–8G*). Ask your family to read the Bible story and participate in this week’s spiritual practice with you. There’s an extra activity for you to do sometime this week.

- Send home a copy of the Take-Home Pages, a copy of the Family Letter, and a copy of the Celebration Chart with each child.

Supplemental Activities

Preschoolers – Worship Dancing

Supplies: device connected to Wi-Fi

SAY: We learned that Jesus worshipped God in the synagogue. Worship can include different activities. Sometimes worship includes dancing. Today we will dance our praise and worship for God.

- Using your device, go to the *Celebrate Wonder: Celebration Songs* Spotify playlist: <https://rb.gy/vaadao>
- Invite the children to dance praises for God.

SAY: We can worship God in lots of ways.

Early Elementary – Worship Cube

Supplies: foam, wooden, or cardboard cube; marker

Prepare Ahead: Purchase a large foam cube (craft supply store) or make a large cube from cardboard. You may also find a large wooden cube at your craft store or hardware store. On each side of the cube, write directions for worship (see below).

- Use these directions to complete your preparation: 1) Sing a song, 2) Pray together, 3) Read a Scripture, 4) Give a friend a high five, 5) Dance to a song, 6) Pat a friend on the back.

SAY: We learned that Jesus worshipped God in the synagogue. Worship can include different activities. This Worship Cube will help us to worship.

- Have one kid toss the Worship Cube onto the floor and see what side is facing up.
- Invite the class to follow the direction for worship (sing a song, dance to a song, pat a friend on the back, and so forth).
- Continue in this way until the ways of worship have been tried.

SAY: We have many ways to worship God!

Older Elementary – Worship Jar

Supplies: large glass jar, index cards, marker or pen

Prepare Ahead: Obtain a large glass jar. You will write directions for worship on six index cards and place them in the jar.

- Use these directions to complete your preparation: 1) Sing a song, 2) Pray together, 3) Read a Scripture, 4) Give a friend a high five, 5) Dance to a song, 6) Pat a friend on the back.
- Show the Worship Jar to the kids in your class.

SAY: We learned that Jesus worshipped God in the synagogue. Worship can include different activities. This Worship Jar will help us to worship.

- Have one kid pull a card from the Worship Jar.
- Invite the class to follow the direction for worship (*sing a song, dance to a song, pat a friend on the back, and so forth*).
- Continue in this way until the ways of worship have been tried.

SAY: We have many ways to worship God!

Intergenerational Activity – Gingerbread Church

Supplies: one or more gingerbread house kits, wax paper, disposable knives, paper towels, wet wipes, plastic sandwich bags (to send pieces of the gingerbread structure home)

Prepare Ahead: Look over the instructions from the gingerbread house kits before class.

- Have the participants get into groups, with a mix of different ages in each group.
- SAY:** In today's Bible story, Jesus went to the synagogue in his hometown. The synagogue was a lot like our church building. People would come there to worship and to learn.
- Instruct the groups to work together to build their gingerbread house using the kit.
 - Invite the groups to use the decorations in their kit to make their gingerbread house look more like a church.
 - You may need to plan for this activity to start during class, but have the groups finish afterwards if time is limited. Once the groups have finished, invite them to share their creations.
 - Take the structures apart. Share the pieces and eat them together, or send pieces home in plastic sandwich bags.