

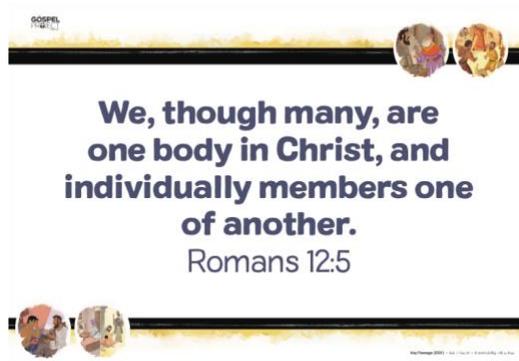
# THE MISSION BEGINS: THE EARLY CHURCH

*(The Gospel Project Volume 10 Unit 29: Customized from the Preschool, Younger, and Older Leader Guides)*

## BIG PICTURE QUESTION FOR THIS UNIT:

What is the church? The church is all Christians everywhere, who gather together in their communities to worship and serve God.

## KEY PASSAGE FOR THIS UNIT:



## TODAY'S LESSON: The Good News

### PARENT/LEADER OVERVIEW:

After Jesus returned to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit to the apostles, the gospel began to spread. Those who heard the good news at Pentecost included visitors from Rome, and they were likely among the three thousand who believed. (See Acts 2:10,41.) When Paul wrote his letter to the Romans in AD 57, he had never been to Rome. But by that time, Roman believers were meeting in house churches.

Paul wrote his letter in part to explain the essentials of the Christian faith and what it means to live for Jesus. Paul's words are helpful to Christians today. As you guide kids through Romans 5–6, help them grasp the good news of the gospel. This is the message for which Jesus' followers gave their lives. This good news changes everything.

First, help kids understand the benefits of believing in Jesus. To appreciate the good news, kids need to understand the bad news: Apart from Jesus, we are dead in our sin—separated from God. We need to be rescued. God sent Jesus into the world to rescue sinners. When we trust in His death and resurrection, we are made right with God and are saved from sin and death.

Next, compare and contrast the first Adam with Jesus—"the second Adam." Adam represented all people, but he sinned. Sin brought death into the world, and death spread to all people because all people sinned. Jesus came to bring us life. He obeyed God perfectly. All who trust in Him are forgiven and have eternal life.

Finally, introduce how believers deal with sin in view of God's grace. Since our sin is forgiven, should we keep on sinning? Paul was emphatic that the answer is no. When we are in Christ, we are no longer slaves to sin. Sin will still be a struggle in our fallen world, but we have power through the Holy Spirit to resist sin and live a life that honors God.

### PREPARING YOUR CHILDREN FOR GOD'S WORD:

Make sure that your children have a Bible with them even if they are too young to read.  
Have your kids sing along with the worship songs that are posted for this week.

### THE BIBLE STORY: (Video teaching online) *Romans 5-6*

Jesus' followers in **the early church wanted everyone to hear the good news about Jesus. God** had kept His promise to send a Savior. He **sent His own Son, Jesus, to earth to rescue sinners. Jesus lived the perfect life we cannot live and died the death we deserve** to die. **On the third day, God raised Jesus from the dead!**

This good news—**the gospel—changes everything.** People who love Jesus tell others about Him. That's what Paul did. **Paul wrote a letter to believers in Rome** to tell them that Jesus was the Savior they had been waiting for.

**Paul wrote, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes."** **Everyone sins** and needs to be rescued. **God saves people who believe the good news about Jesus.** Because of their faith, God forgives their sins and gives them eternal life.

Paul wrote that God showed His love for us by sending His Son to die for us. **"We were sinners—enemies of God—but Jesus died and rose again to make us right with God.** Jesus is God's good gift to us. Let's rejoice!"

**Paul reminded the people about the first man, Adam. When Adam sinned, death came into the world.** Everyone sinned, so death spread to all people. God sent Jesus into the world to bring us a gift that is greater than Adam's sin. **Adam brought death, but Jesus brings life. Adam disobeyed God, but Jesus obeyed Him perfectly.**

**Does that mean we can keep on sinning** because we are forgiven? **Paul said no! Jesus sets us free from sin** so we can live in a new way that honors Him.

### APPLICATION:

Paul's comparison of Adam to Jesus is really important. Looking at Adam before and after he sinned helps us see both what God's creation is supposed to be like, and how sin has damaged God's good work.

Adam was supposed to choose obedience to God, but instead chose to rebel against God. Adam rejected God's authority and tried to become wise by eating the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. His sinful choice brought pain, sadness, death, and destruction into the world.

Jesus, on the other hand, chose not to sin. He lived a perfect life. He showed us exactly what God is like by displaying God's power and glory. Jesus submitted to the Father's authority and, despite being God the Son, died on the cross—the death we deserve. His righteousness and sacrifice made the way for joy, peace, life, and restoration to come into the world through faith in Him.

### CHRIST CONNECTION:

Because God created everything, He is in charge of everything. Everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. The good news of the gospel is that God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Everyone who trusts in Jesus will be saved.

## FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

### 2-5 Year Olds:

Who wrote a letter to Jesus' followers in Rome and told them the good news? (*Paul*)

What is the good news about Jesus called? (*the gospel*)

What is the good news? (**God loves us and sent Jesus to save us.**)

Who sinned first and brought sin and death into the world? (*Adam*)

Who came to set people free from sin and to bring life? (*Jesus*)

***What is the church? The church is all Christians everywhere.***

### Kindergarten-2<sup>nd</sup> Grade:

How is a person justified—given a right relationship with God? (*by faith in Jesus' sacrifice, Romans 5:1, 9*)

Through whom did sin enter the world? (*Adam, Romans 5:12*)

Through whom does righteousness and justification come? (*Jesus, Romans 5:18-19*)

Does it feel fair or unfair that Adam's sin led to sin for all of us? *Guide your kids to see that all of us have sin. We aren't guilty simply because of Adam's sin, but also because of our own sins. Help them see this truth through the lens of Christ's sacrifice making righteousness available to all despite our sin.*

Does it feel fair or unfair that Jesus' righteousness leads to righteousness for all who have faith? *Help your kids see that this, too, is a picture of God's perfect justice. He showed us mercy when Christ became our perfect substitute. Help the kids wrestle with the difference between human ideas about justice and fairness in contrast to God's perfect justice and mercy.*

If God forgives all our sin when we have faith in Jesus, why is it necessary to live like Jesus? *Guide your kids to remember that God's plan for our lives is better for us than our own plans. Obeying God is good for us, because He knows what we need before we need it. Help them see obedience as a blessing, not a chore. Explain how sin may feel fun, but it leads to destruction, pain, and death.*

Say • **God sent Jesus into the world to rescue sinners.** The Bible is clear that we all are sinners and we all deserve death and separation from God. His choice to send Jesus proves His justice and mercy.

### 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Grade:

Why do we need the gospel? What bad news do we face apart from Jesus? *Lead your kids to discuss that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. Consider prompting your kids to identify that sin and death came into the world through Adam.*

(Option: read Rom. 3:23; 6:23.)

How are we saved from the punishment our sin deserves? *Remind your kids that God is holy and must punish sin. Guide them to explain how God provided by sending His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve by dying on the cross. When we trust in Him, God forgives our sin and gives us eternal life. Consider prompting your kids to identify that life and salvation came into the world through Jesus.*

(Option: 1 John 1:9.)

Why is it important to share the good news with others? *Help your kids understand that hearing and believing the gospel is a matter of life and death. Without the good news, we face eternity apart from God. God provided a Rescuer in Jesus, and He calls us to respond to the gospel and share the good news with others so they can be saved too.*

(Option: read Rom. 10:14-15.)

## The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask your kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means "good news." It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with your kids.

**God rules.** Explain to your kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.

**We sinned.** Tell your kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)

**God provided.** Read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.

**Jesus gives.** Share with your kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.

**We respond.** Tell your kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

### LIFEWAY KIDS APP:

You can download the LifeWay Kids app to find more activities that will go along with the lessons each week. Look for The Gospel Project and click on Volume 10 (the lite version is free). Then click on Unit 29 and you will see all of the lessons in that unit. Click on this week's Bible story for more activities.