Lesson 6: We Are His Witnesses

Overview:

Key Focus: Jesus gave His followers the job to be His witnesses and tell everyone the gospel message.

Bible Story: The Apostles and Paul Tell Others About Jesus

Scriptures: Luke 6:12–16; Mark 16:14–15, 19–20; Acts 1:8, 5:32–33, 38–40, 41–42; 22:15; Romans 10:14–15

Memory Verse: Mark 16:15 (NKJV) And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

Prep:

Classroom Prep:

- Draw an eye on an index card and a mouth on another index card.

Engage:

There are two meaning of "witness" and they are represented on these cards. Select two volunteers to hold the cards for the group. **How does the eye explain the word "witness?"** (When you witness something, you see it happen.) **What are some things you witnessed today?** Have the children tell a partner seated beside them about things they saw at home, on the way to church, or at church. **When you witness something, you can tell someone who didn't see it. When you told your partner something you saw at your home, your partner now knows about it and could tell someone what they heard. The retelling by your partner might not be exactly accurate because your partner didn't see it. In court cases, the judge wants to hear from witnesses who actually saw something happen. The judge knows an eye witness is believable.**

How does the mouth explain the word "witness?" (When someone witnesses, they tell what they saw or experienced.) **A witness tells the situation or what someone said as exactly as they can remember. Who can be a witness and tell exactly what I said to you when you came in to class today?** Allow responses. **No one can be a witness to a phone call I had**

yesterday, but you are a witness to what I said to you. Today we will learn about our job as witnesses!

Memory Verse Activity:
Display and discuss the verse. **The Great Commission is the job that Jesus gave all of His followers. The job has two parts: go and tell.** Divide the group in half and have everyone bring a chair and sit in a line facing the other group. Have the groups as far apart as possible. While the children "say" the verse, they all "go" across to the chair opposite them and time it so the last word is said as they sit down. Each time they say the verse and go to the opposite side, give a different direction for how they are to move, such as hop, skip, crawl, or crabwalk.

Memory Verse: Mark 16:15 (NKJV) And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

Bible Story:

Give two volunteers the eye and mouth witness cards to hold up during the lesson when you mention "witness." After holding up the card, they silently give the card to someone else who hasn't had a turn.

Read Luke 6:12–16. **What was the first thing Jesus did?** (Jesus went to the mountain to pray.) **Jesus went to be alone and talk to God because He had a big decision to make. Jesus had many people who followed Him and listened to Him. Jesus needed a small group close to Him to train and later they would teach people what He said. After praying, Jesus chose a small group to be trained as apostles who would carry on His work when He returned to heaven. Count while I name these men: Simon, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James, Simon, Judas, and Judas Iscariot. How many men?** (12)

These twelve traveled with Jesus and saw Him do miracles. They learned truths about God and the kingdom of God. When Jesus died on the cross, they were confused because Jesus was no longer with them. Three days later, Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to some women who went to visit the tomb. When the women told Jesus' followers, they didn't believe that Jesus was alive, even though He had told them before He died that He would live again. Read Mark 16:14–15. **Why were there only 11 of His apostles?** (Judas Iscariot had been one of the twelve, but he killed himself after he betrayed Jesus.) **Even though they had doubted that Jesus was really alive again, Jesus appeared to them with a message. What job did Jesus give His followers?** (Go into all the world and preach the gospel to everyone.) **The Great Commission is the job of telling the gospel to everyone, and Jesus gave the job to His apostles and to all who believe Him. The gospel is the message of good news that Jesus died and paid for everyone's sins. Jesus did for us, what we could not do—pay the price of sin. All people have to do is believe that Jesus died and rose again, and they will receive forgiveness**

of their sins. The Jewish people originally thought Jesus' salvation was only for them. But Jesus told them to go into all the world with the gospel message. Salvation was for everyone—Jews and Gentiles. Look at what happened right after Jesus talked to them.

Read Mark 16:19–20. **Where did Jesus go?** (Jesus went up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.) **In the last lesson, we learned that we are citizens of heaven and our spirit is seated in heavenly places with Jesus. What did the apostles do?** (The went out and preached everywhere and did miracles.)

Acts 1:8 gives us more details about the assignment Jesus gave His followers. Have the children recite the Memory Verse from "Who Is the Holy Spirit?" as you read Acts 1:8. **The apostles gathered with other followers of Jesus and ten days after Jesus returned to heaven, the Holy Spirit filled all the believers. Now the men were ready to preach and tell what they had witnessed in their time with Jesus. A witness tells what they saw. What do think are some of the miracles they told the people about?** (Possible answers: seeing healings, feeding the crowd of over 5000, seeing Jesus alive again, being filled with the Holy Spirit)

Read Acts 5:32. **Peter and the apostles were talking to religious leaders who believed they were the representatives of God on the earth. Peter and the apostles had been given the job of being Jesus' witnesses because they were filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. Do you think the religious leaders were happy to hear what Peter said?** Allow responses. **Let's read more to find out how they responded.**

Read Acts 5:33. **How did they react?** (The religious leaders were furious and wanted to kill the apostles.) **Not everyone is happy to hear about Jesus. A respected man named Gamaliel spoke wisdom that calmed the religious leaders.** Read Acts 5:38–40. **Gamaliel had reminded them of other men who had followers and when the leader died, the followers all stopped talking about the leader. He encouraged the religious leaders not to kill them but to leave them alone to see what happened. Gamaliel knew that if God was really with these men, nothing could stop them. The religious leaders didn't kill the apostles. Instead, they beat them and told them not to speak about Jesus anymore. Do you think the apostles stopped talking about Jesus?** (No.) Read Acts 5:41–42. **How did the apostles react to their beating?** (They rejoiced that they suffered for Jesus.) **Did the apostles stop talking about Jesus?** (No, they didn't stop teaching and preaching about Jesus.)

Do you think the 11 apostles completed the job of telling everyone in the world the gospel message? (No.) **They traveled to many places, but telling everyone is a huge job and 11 people couldn't finish the job. Paul was another man in the New Testament who helped tell the gospel message even though he hadn't followed and talked with Jesus.** Read Acts 22:15. **Paul told people what he saw and heard. Paul did many miracles because he was filled with the power of the Holy Spirit and used the powerful name of Jesus.**

Even with Paul's help, the gospel message didn't make it all around the world. Today, there are many people who have never heard that Jesus died to pay for their sins. They don't

know that God wants a relationship with them and all they have to do is accept Jesus Christ as their Savior. How do you think these people will learn about Jesus? (Someone has to tell them or witness to them.)

Missionaries often go to other countries to tell people about Jesus. Missionaries didn't walk and talk with Jesus, but they can still be His witnesses. Missionaries go and tell like Jesus said, but is the job of telling everyone finished? (No.) **Who else should be a witness to tell about Jesus?** (Christians should be His witnesses.) **Yes! Every person who says "yes" to Jesus becomes part of Jesus' "go and tell group of witnesses." Even though you are still a child, you can be His witness if you have received His forgiveness of your sins. You can tell the wonderful things that God has done in your life. You have the power of the Holy Spirit inside you. You have a mission field that is unique to you. Look at your feet. Everywhere your feet take you, that is your mission field!** Read Romans 10:14–15. **People need to hear about Jesus to believe in Him. When you are Jesus' witness and tell someone about salvation, you have beautiful feet. Take another look at those beautiful feet that can take you to people in your school, around your neighborhood, or in stores or restaurants. When you say "yes" to have your sins forgiven, you have the job of being Jesus' witnesses. If someone teases or says something mean because you talk about Jesus, will you stop being Jesus' witness?** Point out that children need to let an adult know if they encounter problems, but we should always be willing to share about Jesus whenever we have opportunities.

Maybe you don't know what to say to people. You can share what you have seen and heard about Jesus. You can share how Jesus took away your sins and gave you the Holy Spirit. You can share about the miracles you have seen or heard about at church. You can tell how God's love makes you feel peace inside. What are some other things you will share with someone? Answers will vary.

Bible Story Questions:

- **How many followers did Jesus train to be His witnesses?** (12)
- **What job did Jesus give them before He returned to heaven?** (Jesus told them to go into all the world and preach the gospel to everyone.)
- **What is the gospel message?** (The gospel message is the message of good news that Jesus died and paid for everyone's sins.)
- **Was everyone excited about the apostles preaching the gospel**? (No, religious leaders wanted to kill them.)
- **Did these apostles finish the job of telling everyone?** (No.)
- **Who are Jesus' witnesses now?** (Everyone who believes Jesus and accepts salvation becomes Jesus' witnesses.)
- **Where is your mission field to share the gospel message?** (My mission field is wherever my feet take me.)

- **Which situation this week could you be a witness for Jesus, and what might you say?** (Answers will vary.)

Bible Story Activities:

Games:

- Divide the class into three groups and choose one leader for each group. Arrange the groups to face toward different walls so the groups aren't looking at each other. Have the three leaders come to you and witness what you do, such as silent clap three times while you lean forward. The leaders of each group stand in front of their group and show the group what they witnessed. Watch and see which groups did your action correctly. Choose different leaders each time to witness a new action and then get their group to do the action.

- Ideas for Working with Younger Kids:
  Have the children spread out all around the room. Select a child to be the "witness." Say, "Go and tell, everybody everywhere. Go and tell __." Have the witness go and tell the child, "Jesus loves and forgives you." Choose another witness and repeat. Continue several times and give an action to do while they go, such as hop, crawl, or stomp.

- Ideas for Working with Older Kids:
  Lead a Bible Sword Drill. Have everyone hold up a Bible. When you give the reference, everyone recites it back to you, and when you give the signal, they try to be the first to find the verse. When they find the verse, they stand up and start reading it.
  References about witnesses: Acts 1:8, Isaiah 43:10, Matthew 18:16, Hebrews 10:15, Luke 24:48, Isaiah 44:8, John 5:32, Ruth 4:9, Acts 10:39, and 1 Thessalonians 2:10.

Worksheet:

Read the paragraph and assist the children in finding the words in the word search. Point out that the names Simon and James need to be found twice in the puzzle because there were two disciples with each of those names. On the back of their papers, have them draw a picture of them being a witness for Christ.

Affirmation/Declaration:

When I say "yes" to Jesus, I am His witness.
My mission field is wherever my feet take me.
I'm going to talk about God's love and gift of salvation.

Make Connections:

Biblical Worldview Connection:
People argue and try to prove that God doesn't exist. The most powerful witness is a life changed by God's love and redemption. Actions speak louder than words. Encourage the children to talk about all that they see and hear about Jesus and to show the change He has made in their lives.

Missions Connection:
In many countries around the world today, people are beaten, put in prison, or killed because they talk about Jesus. Many of these people rejoice that they suffer for Jesus and keep sharing the gospel message. Lead the children to pray for Jesus' witnesses around the world who face persecution to be bold in sharing and to be protected.

Family Connection:
Look online for videos of missionary kids (MKs) and talk about how their families are witnesses. Pray for the families. Talk about how your family has been and is a witness in your neighborhood and with friends and family that don't know Jesus as their Savior. Write down some of the miracles and ways your family has seen God at work that you can share as a witness of God's love and power. Make a plan to share God with someone this week. After sharing the gospel message with someone, give your child washable markers to draw on their bare feet to create the beautiful feet that Romans 10:14–15 mentions.

Prayer Points:
Commission the children to be Jesus' witnesses this week. Pray for each child by name. Pray that they have opportunities and boldness to talk about Jesus.

Name _____

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Find the 18 ***bold*** *words in the puzzle.*

Jesus trained 12 men to be His **witnesses**: **Simon, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James, Simon, Judas**, and Judas **Iscariot**. Later, **Paul** became a bold witness. All **believers** in **Christ** are His witnesses—even **kids**!

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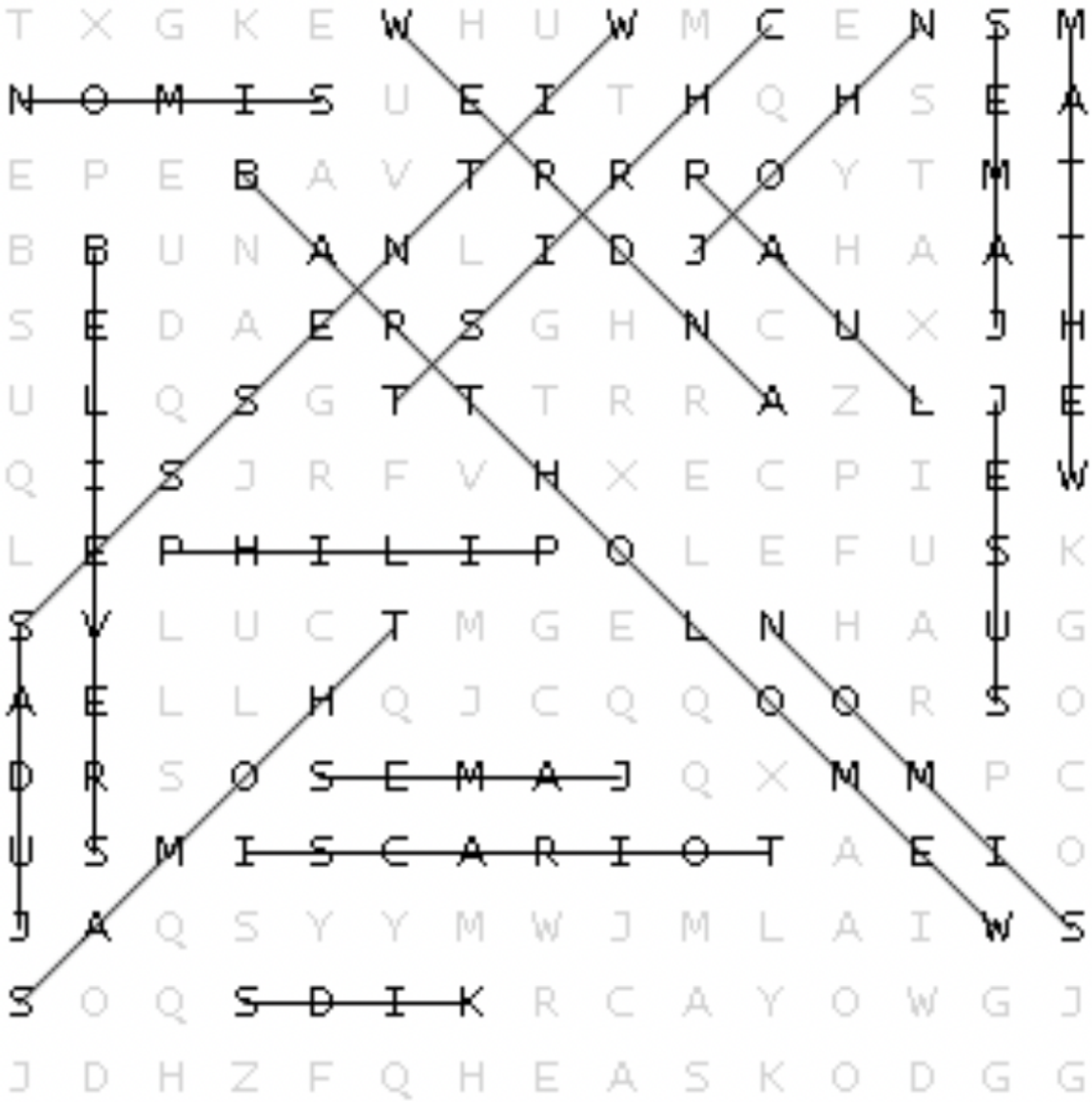
BONUS: *On the back of this page, draw a picture of yourself being a witness for Christ.*

ANSWERS

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