

"LET CHILDREN HEAR THE MIGHTY DEEDS"
A Brief History of Children's Sermons
Within Three American Lutheran Church Bodies

Including

JESUS, MY SAVIOR

A Pericope For Children's Sermons
To God's Glory!

by

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"Many things are exciting when seen through the eyes of children--Christmans trees, pups, carnivals, ice cream cones, birthday cakes, and the Bible. The Bible is not a children's book any more than it is an adult book. The Bible is a people book." 1 Those words by Eldon Weisheit introduce one of his many books of object lessons for children. This particular book was copyrighted in 1981. It is a relatively recent arrival on the Lutheran scene. Unfortunately, so is the whole idea of children's sermons in American Lutheranism.

In the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, the idea of children's sermons is something that might be even more recent than Weisheit's books. When asked if there were any historical resources for children's sermons in the WELS, Professor David P. Kuske of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, who is a leader in the Seminary's educational department, stated that he really couldn't think of many people who could serve as historical resources because the whole idea behind children's sermons is so new the synod.

There are, however, various congregations providing children's sermons within WELS Lutheranism. During Advent, Pastor Ronald Muetzel of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bay City, Michigan, provided children's sermons. They

are not provided weekly, but they are provided at various times.

Pastor Mark Hannemann of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Crivitz Wisconsin also provides children's sermons, but again, not on a regular basis.

One WELS congregation is providing children's sermons on a weekly basis. That congregation is Zebaoth Evangelical Lutheran Church on N. 6th Street in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Jon Kuske, a member of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary class of 1988, who served as Senior Assistant to Pastor Philip W. Merten, stated that children's sermons were held every Sunday. The sermons were provided after the "Prayer For the Church" and before the Benediction. All of the children are called to the front of the church and a 5 minute "sermon" is given to them. Jon Kuske also stated that children's sermons at Zebaoth began with the Pastorate of Philip Merten.

The current status of children's sermons in the WELS can be summarized as follows: It's beginning. Most of those churches providing them are currently doing so at irregular intervals. God-willing more congregations will begin offering them, and will follow the path that Zebaoth has blazed by making them a part of their weekly worship service.

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod had an earlier start in preparing material suitable for children's sermons. One of the earlier leaders of children's sermons in that church body appears to be Donald J. Poganski. Two of his works entitled 40 Object Lessons, and 50 Object Lessons, were published by Concordia Publishing House in 1973. His work was not specifically geared for sermons, however, as Poganski himself states, "This volume of visual sermonettes includes a wide variety of object visuals applied to numerous Bible texts and accounts. Some of the lessons have been given as children's talks in Sunday services. Some were visual sermons that have been condensed. Some were given as devotions at Sunday School and Vacation Bible School..." 2

Another of the earlier leaders in children's sermons in the LC-MS is Eldon Weisheit. He wrote a three-volume set of chapel talks entitled To the Kid in the Pew and another work entitled The Gospel For Kids. These books were published by Concordia in the mid 1970's. Even though his later work entitled God's Promise for Children was published by Augsburg Publishing House, Concordia considered his earlier works well worth publishing. Weisheit has based his work on the pericope formed by the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship. His works may very well be the most complete work on children's sermons available today.

So it would seem that the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has at least a two-decade head start on the WELS in children's sermons as far as time is concerned, and a lead in available materials available as well.

The ALC (which is now a part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) also had a head start of sorts on children's sermons. Harold J. Uhl produced a work published by Augsburg Publishing House in 1975. The work is entitled The Gospel For Children. In the introduction to this work Uhl makes an interesting and noteworthy point. He says, "The adults at a worship service listen as intently as the children to a brief, colorful message. In speaking to the children one can be far more free and lighthearted even in a congregation that prefers formality, for everyone unbends for the sake of children, and enjoys it." 3

As was stated before, Augsburg Publishing House also prints work by Eldon Weisheit early in the 1980's. So the ALC (ELCA) like the LC-MS has a lead in time and available materials as well.

The slogan used by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod for its Vacation Bible School Program is "Precious is the Child." Indeed they are. Perhaps it's time for the WELS to consider them more often in their regular Sunday worship services by providing sermons that they can understand more easily. What follows is a "pericope" of sorts which is

intended to help instruct precious children about the truths
of Jesus Christ their Savior.

JESUS, MY SAVIOR

A Pericope For Children's Sermons To God's Glory!

by
Kevin Lisk
1988

Introduction: In formulating this series I learned that it's difficult to stay on a level that is easy to understand. Seminary instruction is filled with the words "justification, sanctification, redemption, atonement," and so on. Teaching the importance of these words to young children is as important as teaching it to adults. So the simpler the illustrations, the better little children can learn. After all, it's more important for a little child to know, "Jesus died for me so that I can go to heaven," and understand what it means than to walk away hearing something about the "vicarious atoning sacrifice of Jesus which gives eternal life," and not understand what it means.

The Pericope (or perhaps it might better be described as a series of texts for children's sermons) follows the basic idea behind the church year. Consideration was given for smooth transition in thought from Sunday to Sunday. With each text some suggestions have been given for illustrations. If you have other suggestions, I would be happy to hear them, because children are precious to God, and anything that improves our delivery of God's message to them is well worth it.

COMMENTS ON ADVENT: Advent is the time when Christians traditionally remember the coming of Jesus, the first coming and the second coming on the Last Day. This series emphasizes who Jesus is when He came to earth the first time. The second coming will be covered on the last Sunday's of Pentecost.

WHO IS COMING?

1. Advent 1-He is the One Who Speaks God's Word!

Deuteronomy 18:17-19 "The LORD said to me, 'What they say is good. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will hold him to account.'"

Comments: (Find an object with many parts that you know how to put together, blindfold a child and ask him to put the parts together. He won't be able to. Help the child to do the job. Emphasize that the child couldn't do anything right without help) God has a plan for us. But people can't understand God's plan without help. Someone is coming who tells how God's plan fits together. Who is coming? Jesus is coming. God sent Jesus, His only Son, to tell all people how they can be saved and have eternal life. That's God's plan, and Jesus tells everyone all about it.

2. Advent 2-He is the One Who Does God's Work!

Micah 5:4-5a "He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth. And he will be their peace."

Comments: A sheep feels secure when it's by his shepherd. A sheep is protected (Details of a sheep's behavior and vulnerability makes the picture even more complete) Also, those who own little dogs know that when the dog is being chased by a larger, meaner dog it will run into the arms of it's owner because it knows the owner will protect it. Christians are like sheep or like a little dog. They need protection too. Who is coming? Our shepherd is coming. Jesus is that shepherd. He takes care of his people. He died for them so that they can go to heaven.

3. Advent 3-He is the One Who Rules Over Everything!

2 Samuel 7:11b-13 "The Lord declares to you that the Lord Himself will establish a house for you: When your days are

over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever!"

Comments: (Introduce with the question: What's a king? What does a king do? How many of you would like to be king or queen?) Few people ever get to be king or queen. There have been many kings before. (After this describe how there are good kings and bad kings.) Good kings helped their people and they were happy. Bad kings made their people unhappy.(specific examples would help here) God's people have a king too. Who is coming? A king is coming. That king is Jesus. He is a very good King. He is the best King there is. Because he died on the cross he's going to be king forever and ever.

4. Advent 4-He is the Savior of the World!

Jeremiah 33:15-16 "In those days and at that time I will make a righteous branch sprout from David's line; he will do what is just and right in the land. In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord our Righteousness."

Comments: (Have a worthless rock and a twenty dollar bill available. Set this situation up. One child owns the rock, you offer twenty dollars for it.) Then ask, "would you offer twenty dollars for a worthless rock?" That doesn't sound like a good deal. The only person who benefits is the one who took twenty dollars for the rock. Someone is coming who made a trade like that. Who is that? Jesus is coming. (Then compare how Jesus never did anything wrong, and always

did what was right.) People do things that are wrong (give examples that children can relate to). Jesus traded the sinful lives of all people for his good life. That's like buying this worthless rock for twenty dollars. Jesus traded with all people because he loved them. He wanted them to have his good life so that they can go to heaven.

COMMENTS ON CHRISTMAS: Christmas focuses our attention of the Christ-child. In this series Christians want to impress upon the children that Jesus is God's present to us, and He's the best present we can ever receive.

WHY DID HE COME THIS WAY?

5. Christmas Day-That's What God Promised!

Genesis 3:15 "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

Comments: Many people make promises. When children get into trouble they tell their mom or dad, "I promise I won't ever do that again!" (specific examples here). When someone makes a promise like they don't keep it. (when parents were children they didn't keep promises like that, and they know their children don't keep promises like that either.)

People keep getting into trouble, don't they? Because they keep getting into trouble and do things God doesn't like, God made a promise. He promised long, long ago to send Jesus. Today, on Christmas day, Christians celebrate the fact that God kept his promise to send Jesus. Why did Jesus come this way? That's what God promised to do. God always keeps his promises.

6. Christmas 1 -That's What God Planned!

Matthew 1:20-23 "But after he had considered this an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.' All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through Micah the prophet: 'The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel--which means God with us.'"

Comments: (Take a wrapped package and comment on how the children received presents like this.) Parents planned to give their children the presents they received from them. (specific examples would be good i.e. a bicycle etc.) That means they thought about giving presents to their children long time before they were opened. Just recently all Christians celebrated Jesus' birth. Jesus was God's present to the whole world. God planned to send Jesus long before He was born. God planned to send Jesus because he had many more presents to give. Jesus is the one who gives God's presents. He died for so that it's possible for people to go to heaven. That's God's present.

7. Christmas 2 -That's What God Wanted!

Galatians 4:4-5 "But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons."

Comments: Remember this present from last week? (Have the children want think of a present they wanted, and actually received from their parents.) When that present was opened, people are really happy if it's the one they really wanted. There's something more. Parents really wanted

their children to have that present, otherwise they wouldn't have given it. They really wanted their children to have it. God really wants his people to have his present. Jesus is God's present. Why did Jesus come this way? Because God really wanted people to have Jesus. If God didn't want people to have him, Jesus would never have been sent.

COMMENTS ON EPIPHANY: Epiphany is a time of year which puts added emphasis on our Savior shown to us. We want to get across to children what Jesus is like too. That's why this section is entitled, "What is He like?"

WHAT IS HE LIKE?

8. Epiphany—He the light of our lives!

Luke 2:29-32 "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, so now dismiss your servant in peace. for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

Comments: How many of you have been in a room so dark, you can't see a thing? Let's say there's many chairs and tables in that room. If people try to walk through a room like that when it's very dark, they will stumble and fall.

People need light to see. A long time ago, when Jesus was a little baby, a man named Simeon saw Jesus in his mother's arms, and he said the words that were just read from the Bible. Jesus is called a "light" for all people. Without Jesus, nobody would know what God is really like. Without Jesus, knowing about God would be like walking in a very dark room. What is Jesus like? Jesus is like a light,

because he is the one who tells everyone about God. He "lights up" God by telling people about him.

9. Epiphany 1-He is God!

John 1:1-5, 14 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it...The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

Comments: (Use a nativity scene. Point out Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. It looks like a typical family--a mother, a father, and a baby.) This family is different. There is a mother, Mary. There's a baby, Jesus, but Joseph isn't the father. Not the real father. Joseph was Jesus' stepfather. (explain the concept more fully). Jesus' real Father was God. Our reading speaks about Jesus before He was born. It tells how Jesus was there when God made the world. Jesus helped make the world too. What is Jesus like? He is the Son of God. He is God!

10. Epiphany 2-He is human, like you and me!

Luke 2:41-52 "Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. Thinking he was in their company they travelled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, 'Son, why

have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.' 'Why were you searching for me?' he asked. 'Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?' But they did not understand what he was saying to them. Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."

Comments: (Have pictures available of a person at various stages from infancy to adulthood.) Jesus grew up like this person too. He grew up just like all children grow up. He went to worship just like all of God's people do. He was obedient to Mary and Joseph like other children are. But Jesus wasn't exactly like other people. He went about His Father's business. Remember last week the Bible said that God was his Father, and that Jesus Himself was God. That's what Jesus is saying here. But this week the Bible also says this about what Jesus was like. He knows what it's like to grow up. He know's because He did it Himself. Although he is God, he is also a person, like any other person. The only other difference between Jesus and other people is that Jesus never did anything wrong. He did all this--becoming a person, growing up, and never doing anything wrong--so that He could make it possible for all people to go to heaven.

11. Epiphany 3--His appearance was like yours and mine!

Isaiah 53:2 "He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him."

Comments: People often wonder what Jesus looked like.

(Have a picture of Jesus) Nobody can know if this is what

Jesus looked like. This is just what an artist thinks Jesus looked like. Most of the pictures people see of Jesus look something like this. Another way to remember Jesus is by this picture. This is a picture of picture showing a classroom full of students (any composite could do). The Bible reading for today says that Jesus didn't look different from any other person. If Jesus would have had a picture taken with a group of other people, Noone would be able to pick out which one Jesus was with any degree of certainty. What was Jesus like? He looked like an average person. He was an average person, but He was different too. He was God's Son, the Savior of the world!

12. Epiphany 4-He is a man of action!

Matthew 21:12-13 "Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money-changers and the benches of those selling doves. 'It is written,' he said to them, 'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a den of robbers.'"

Comments: (Pick a child) If a child gets caught with his hand in the cookie jar when his mother tells him not to take any cookies, he knows what's coming doesn't he? His mother is going to take action isn't she? She might scold him, she might send him to his room. She's going to take some kind of action because he did something wrong. Jesus took action when he had to. He saw a bunch of people in the temple selling things. These people weren't honest. They cheated so that they could get more money than they should have. They did something wrong, so Jesus took action. He threw

them out of the temple. Jesus told them that the temple is a place of worship, not a place to cheat people. That's what Jesus is like. He is a man who takes action when it is needed. If something has to be done, Jesus does it. All people needed to be saved. Jesus did that to.

13. Epiphany 5-He never does anything wrong!

1 Peter 2:22-23 "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth. When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly."

Comments: (Ask how many watch figure skating on TV) The judges use numbers to score the skating. If a skater does perfectly, the score is seven. (Pick some children, give them numbers--all short of seven). If people were to score our lives like this, noone would get a seven. God wants people to be good all the time. If they were, then they would get a seven. But people do bad things called sins, so the scores would be like the ones in your hands (have them show their numbers). In order for people to go to heaven, their lives have to be a seven. One person did score a seven in life. That was Jesus. What was He like? He never did anything wrong. He scored a perfect seven. He wants to take all people to heaven, so he took their imperfect lives, and gave us his perfect life. (take the children's scores and give them all sevens) That's how we get to heaven!

14. Epiphany 6-He has great power!

Mark 4:35-41 "That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, 'Let us go over to the other side.' Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the

boat. There were also other boats with him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples awoke him and said to him, 'Teacher, don't you care if we drown?' He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, 'Quiet, Be still!' Then the wind died down, and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, 'Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?' They were terrified and asked each other, 'Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!'"

Comments: People often say, "Rain, Rain, go away. Come again some other day?" They usually do that when it's raining and they want to go outside. Whenever they say that, it doesn't happen. It just keeps on raining and raining. Nobody here has the power to stop the rain, but somebody does. Jesus has that power. One time it was raining so hard that the disciples were afraid that their boat was going to sink. They really didn't have to be afraid though. Jesus was there. He simply said, "Rain and wind, go away, and they did." What is Jesus like? He is very powerful. He can do anything he wants to. He could make the rain go away. That's not all Jesus can do. He can also save us and take us to heaven. He can do that because He is God's Son and He has power.

15. Epiphany 7-He has great knowledge!

John 1:43-51 "The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, 'Follow me.' Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. Philip found Nathanael and told him, 'We have found the one Moses wrote about in the law, and about whom the prophets wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.' 'Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?' Nathanael asked. 'Come and see,' said Philip. When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching he said of him, 'Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false.' 'How do you know me?' Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, 'I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.'

Then Nathanael declared, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel.' Jesus answered, 'You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that.' He then added, 'I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.'

Comments: (have a sealed envelope with a picture inside, give it to a child). Look at this envelope. Without opening the envelope Nobody is able to say what is inside. Nobody can do that because they can't see inside. No matter how hard they try they can't tell what's in the envelope. Nobody can-- except Jesus. He did something like that in the Bible reading for today. He "saw" what a man named Nathaniel was doing, even though Jesus was nowhere near Nathaniel. What is Jesus like? He knows everything that is going on. He has great knowledge. He knows all people. He knows that they need to be saved, and that's what he did.

16. Epiphany 8-He has proof of his identity.

Matthew 17:1-8 "After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus. Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters--one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.' While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, 'This is My Son, whom I love; with him I am well-pleased. Listen to Him!' When the disciples heard this, they fell face down to the ground, terrified. But Jesus came and touched them. 'Get up,' he said, 'don't be afraid.' When they looked up they saw no one except Jesus.

Comments: Have a rose plant (or any other flowering plant without a bud) and have one with a flower. Not everything is as it appears to be. If the average person didn't know

anything about plants, he would think (the plant without a bud) was just another plant. But this plant can produce this (the rose). The Bible talks about how Jesus looked like any other average person. That's true. He was a person and looked like the average person. But He was also God. In the reading for today Jesus showed a glimpse, a little look, at what He's like as true God. That is called his transfiguration. Transfiguration means that Jesus changed what He looked like. When Peter, James, and John saw this, they were afraid. That's understandable because they saw something amazing. Jesus did this to assure people of something. He assures all people that He is the Son of God, who came to this earth to His job, to make it possible for people to go to heaven.

COMMENTS ON LENT: Lent traditionally emphasizes contrition and repentance. Since lent also focuses attention of the work of Christ, that is what this series will do.

WHAT WAS HIS JOB?

17. Lent 1 -To Do what God had planned!

Isaiah 53:6-10 "We all like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment, he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand."

Comments: (Have some blueprints of a building.) When a building is built, people don't start nailing boards together and pouring concrete without making plans like these. These are blueprints. A man called an architect draws these blueprints to plan what a building will look like. The people who build a building follow these blueprints very closely. God is like an architect. He planned how to save people even before Jesus came into this world. He planned for Jesus to come and suffer and die and rise again so that it's possible for everyone to be saved and go to heaven. What was Jesus' job? Jesus is like the people who build a building. He came to this world to follow God's plan to save the world. That's just what he did too.

18. Lent 2 -To live a perfect life!

Mark 14:55-59 "The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus, so that they could put him to death, but they did not find any. Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree. Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against him: 'We heard him say I will destroy this man-made temple and in three days will build another, not made by man.' Yet even then their testimony did not agree."

Comments: (Ask the children how many have gotten into trouble for doing something wrong? Have them raise their hands.) Everybody's hand is up, OK. That's true, all people have done things that God and their parents aren't happy about. Every person who ever lived would have to say the same thing, except one--Jesus. He never did anything wrong. In the Bible reading for today, some people tried to

accuse Jesus of doing something wrong. They couldn't agree on an accusation. They couldn't agree because they were making up the accusations. They were lying. Jesus never did anything wrong. Noone could accuse Jesus. He always did what was good. What was Jesus' job? he came here to live a perfect life. That perfect life will make it possible for the whole world to be saved.

19. Lent 3 -To take our sins away!

2 Corinthians 5:21 "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

Comments: (Have two sealed envelopes. In one have the words, "All the sins I do" and in the other "Jesus perfect life." Give the envelopes to two children.) Have you ever traded anything? When a trade is made, one person or group of people trade what they have, for what another person or group of people have. That's the way people do business. When a mother goes to the store she trades money for clothes or food. God made a trade too. (Have the two children open their envelopes and read what they say.) This is the trade God made. He traded Jesus perfect life for your sins. That's what the Bible is talking about. What was Jesus' job? He traded his perfect life for our sins!

20. Lent 4 -To take our punishment away!

Isaiah 53:4-5 "Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed."

Comments: Let's say all the children here did something very wrong. Let's say they all took a stone, and threw it through their neighbor's window and broke it, and got caught doing so. What's going to happen next is that their parents are going to either spank them, or ground them, and probably make them pay for the window with their own money. That wouldn't be very fun. Now let's say a friend comes up and says to these parents, "Let me take the punishment instead." That would be amazing. Somebody else is volunteering to take a punishment that he didn't deserve. Few people would do something like that, but Jesus did. People sin against God by doing things he doesn't like. Because they sin, God should have punished them. Here's where Jesus comes in. What was His job? He came to this earth to take the punishment for sin that should have been ours.

21. Lent 5 (Palm)-To make God and me friends again!

2 Corinthians 5:18-19 "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation."

Comments: (Make a comparison between friends who are angry with one another. They usually don't stay angry with one another for a long time.) There was a time when God was angry with the world. He was angry because they did (and still do) things that God isn't pleased with. Jesus came into the world to make God and people friends again. That's what the Bible is saying when it says God was "reconciling" the world to himself. Reconcile means to make people

friends. When Jesus took the sins and punishment of the world on himself, God became friends with us again!

COMMENTS ON EASTER: Easter is the highlight of the church year. Christians remember and celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. This series celebrates the resurrection by remembering all the blessings that come from God because of the resurrection.

WHAT DID HE GIVE TO US?

22. Easter-We are not Guilty Before God!

Romans 4:25 "He was delivered over to death for our sins, and was raised to life for our justification."

Comments: (Compare getting an "A" for a school grade to God's seal of approval for Jesus' work by raising him from the dead.) When students do everything correctly, then the teacher will give them an "A." God did something like that for Jesus when he finished his work. God didn't give him a letter grade like an "A." He showed how he was pleased with Jesus' work by raising him from the dead. That means all the work Jesus did for all people is pleasing to God. So we will get all the benefits God promises!

23. Easter 2-We win over sin!

1 Corinthians 15:17-20 "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep."

Comments: Because Jesus has been raised from the dead, people have all the blessings God promises! The resurrection is really important. (Have a seed and a pot

full of dirt) If this seed is ever to grow into a plant, it would have to first be placed into this soil, and be watered and taken care of so that the seed would grow. If this seed were just placed into the dirt and no water or care was given, then the seed wouldn't do anything. It wouldn't grow nor would it produce anything good. The Bible already says that Jesus came to die for the sins of the world. Today, the reading says that if Jesus had just died and nothing happened after he was buried in the ground, then his work would not have produced anything good. But Christians know that God did raise Jesus from the dead. That was God's approval of Jesus' work. So all believers can be assured that when Jesus took those sins upon himself, his work produced good results. Our sins are forgiven.

24. Easter 3-We win over Death (1)

1 Corinthians 15:55-57 "Where, Oh death, is your victory? Where, Oh death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

Comments: (Have a picture of a tombstone) This is a picture of a tombstone. People normally see these at a cemetery. A cemetery is a place where people are buried after they die. When people are buried, the friends and relatives who are still alive often cry when they are buried because their loved one is no longer with them. The reading for today explains why people die. They die because of sin. But death for people who believe in Jesus isn't so bad. They know that sin causes death, but they also know that

Jesus forgives all of their sins. When Jesus rose from the dead he gave the assurance of forgiveness of sin, but he also assures his people of something else. When Jesus rose from the dead, he showed how all other people are going to rise from the dead too. When one of these tombstones has our name on it, it's not going to be forever. We're going to rise from the dead just like Jesus did! Then we will live forever!

25. Easter 4-We win over Death (2)

Job 19:25-27 "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes--I, and not another."

Comments: Have a piece of clay molded into some discernable form (like a bell or something like that). When this piece of clay is crushed, it can't be restored exactly like it was before. It could come close to being restored to the original shape, but it could never be exactly like it was before it was crushed. The Bible says that the bodies of all people are really nothing but clay and dirt. When they die, their bodies will be returned to the ground. It sounds like a bad thing, but for people who believe in Jesus it's not so bad. Let's say this clay form is the bodies of all believers. When they die, the form will be crushed. But God says in the Bible that He will restore those bodies just like they were before death. In fact, they'll be even better than they are now. God can take the crushed form of the bodies of those who die and make them just like they

were before. Last week the Bible taught how all people would rise from the dead because Jesus did. This week the Bible teaches something more. Because Jesus, the Savior of the world, the one who took away our sins, is alive, we will see him with our own eyes and hear him with our own ears. That's how all believers will see him even after they die.

26. Easter 5-We win over Satan

John 12:31-33 "Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself. He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die."

Comments: Many stories have bad guys in them. Little Red Riding Hood had the big bad wolf. Sleeping Beauty had the wicked Queen. Treasure Island had the evil pirate Long John Silver. All the bad people in these stories tried to hurt the good people. Of course, they are all make believe people. They aren't real. There is a bad guy in the Bible too. He is known as the devil or Satan. Unlike the bad people in story books, the devil is real. He is the worst possible enemy anyone could ever have. He wants to take all people away from Jesus. He's very strong, a lot stronger than anybody, but he isn't stronger than Jesus. Jesus says this in the reading for today. Jesus says that he wins over the devil by the work he does. When Jesus died and rose again, Satan was beaten.

27. Easter 6-We will go to heaven!

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 "Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words."

Comments: (See if any of them have ever been to a funeral)

The words of the reading for today are often spoken at a funeral. Funerals are held when people die. Many people are sad when their loved ones die. They think they won't ever see that person again. But the reading for today says that believers will see each other again, even after they die. The Bible reading speaks about a time when Jesus will take everybody to heaven to live with him forever. Because Jesus rose from the dead, believers in Jesus know that they will too. When they are raised from the dead, then they will see all the other believers who died. So when you a funeral is held, people may still be sad, but it's only for a little while. In heaven there's going to be a big reunion of all believers--even those who die!

28. Easter 7-We now say "Thank-you" to God!

Romans 8:31-32 "What then shall we say in response to all this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but gave him up for us all--How will He not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?"

Comments: Have envelopes for each of the children (or select a group and give them the envelopes). Inside write the words, "Forgiveness of Sins and Eternal Life). Tell them that inside are gifts especially for them. When they receive a gift, they normally say "Thank-you" to the person who gave the gift. When Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, he gave the gifts that were written inside of your envelopes. Forgiveness of Sins and Eternal Life. God gave them to us. The Bible also says that God also gives many more gifts, and people owe God a big "Thank-you." There are many ways of saying "Thank-you" to God for his gifts. The Bible will show how in the weeks to come.

COMMENTS ON PENTECOST: What is known as the "festival" part of the church year usually emphasizes the work of Christ. This series does also. Pentecost emphasizes the sanctified response, but as believers emphasize their response, Christ's work must remain the motivation for this response. That is why the Pentecost section has as its title, "How do we say 'Thank-you' to God for all Jesus has done.

HOW DO WE SAY "THANK-YOU" FOR ALL JESUS HAS DONE?

29. Pentecost -The Holy Spirit is your friend.

Acts 2:1-4 "When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."

Comments: Tell a child to touch an object that is obviously out of reach. It's impossible for the child to touch that

object without any help. But if the child's parent came and picked the child up, then the object could be reached. The Holy Spirit works that way. Without the Holy Spirit it would be impossible to say "Thank-you" to Jesus for all the blessings he has given. But with the Holy Spirit people can say "Thank-you" to God by what they do and what they say. The Holy Spirit is our friend!

30. Pentecost 1 -The Holy Spirit gives you trust in Jesus!

1 Corinthians 12:3 "Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, 'Jesus be cursed.' And no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit."

Comments: (Write the words "Jesus is Lord" in Greek, and ask a child to tell what it says. The child wouldn't know what the Greek words meant.) Without the Holy Spirit, saying "Thank-you" to Jesus for all the blessings he gives is something like the child trying to read Greek. It can't be done. But with the Holy Spirit people can say "Jesus is Lord" and really believe what we're saying.

31. Pentecost 2 -The Holy Spirit gives you a life God likes!

Psalms 51:10-13 "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant a willing spirit to sustain me. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you."

Comments: (Use modelling clay) Unless somebody molds the clay into something useful, the clay by itself doesn't really do any good. Every person without the Holy Spirit is like a lump of clay that doesn't do any good. The Holy Spirit is like a person who molds clay into useful objects.

(a description of a potter would help) He takes people and makes them useful too. He gives the ability to live a life of thanks to Jesus.

32. Pentecost 3 -The Holy Spirit gives you joy in Jesus!

Romans 5:1-5 "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us."

Comments: (Ask the children to name some things that make them happy. Then ask them if they would be happy when they fall down and hurt themselves or when they catch a cold or the flu) Because believers have the blessings of Jesus and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, they can be happy even when things don't go so well. The Bible reading for today teaches that God uses these things to make us believe in Jesus even more.

33. Pentecost 4 -Respond to Jesus with love!

1 John 4:19 "We love because he first loved us."

Comments: (If possible, find a book containing many "Love is..." statements such as: "Love is never saying you're sorry." Read a few of them off) All these statements give some details about what we know as "love." But none of them gives us the reason why Christians love one another. The Bible explains why. It says that people love God and one another, because God loved them first. God loved us them

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much that he sent Jesus to save them. Now our love for God and for one another is the way we say "Thank-you" to God for all His blessings.

34. Pentecost 5 -Watch out for the Devil!

1 Peter 5:8-9 "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings."

Comments: (Have a picture of a lion. Ask some of the children to describe what a lion is like and how a lion acts) A lion is a very ferocious and dangerous animal. It hunts small animals for its food and overpowers them. The reading compares the devil to a lion. He looks for easy prey like a lion does. Believers in Jesus are the people Satan is after. Satan wants Christians no longer to believe in Jesus as their Savior. He'll do whatever it takes to make Christians stop believing in Jesus. Christians want to stay with Jesus because of all the many blessings He has given. So Satan is the enemy, and we have to watch out for him. He's dangerous, but Jesus can protect us. Watching out for Satan is another way of saying "Thank-you" to Jesus.

35. Pentecost 6 -Watch out for the unbelievers!

2 Corinthians 6:14-15 "Don't be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?"

Comments: One young lady went to a Lutheran school from Kindergarten through eighth grade. She was very popular in

her school. She regularly learned about Jesus her Savior. She seemed to be a very strong believer. Later, when she finished grade school, she entered a public high school. That's when problems started happening. It wasn't because she went to a public high school. It was because she made some friends there who were not Christians. Their speech was not God-pleasing. They did bad things, and they put a lot of pressure on this young lady to join them in their wrongdoing. She finally did. There are people in the world today who don't love Jesus like believers do. They are used by the devil to lead people away from Jesus. Christians have to watch out for them too. That's another way believers can say "Thank-you" to Jesus for all he has done.

36. Pentecost 7 -Watch out for yourselves!

Romans 7:18-19, 24-25 "I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing...What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

Comments: Use the cartoon illustration of a conscience. (The "little devil" on one shoulder, and the "little angel" on the other shoulder) Satan, the enemy of all believers, knows that all people do things God doesn't want them to do. So he uses the tendency people have to do bad things to urge them on to even more sinful things. The "little devil" inside of believers has to be squashed so that Satan can't use him to make Christians stop believing in Jesus as their

Savior from sin. That too is a way of saying "Thank-you" to Jesus.

37. Pentecost 8 -Be like Jesus throughout your life!

Ephesians 4:17-18 "So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts."

Comments: In this world with all its many different nations and nationalities there are really only two types of people wherever you go. The Bible says that there are either people who believe in Jesus or people who do not believe in Jesus. (Choose two children. Blindfold one and not the other.) People who do not believe in Jesus are like a blindfolded person. If a blindfolded person is told to walk to a store that's a long ways away, he or she would probably have many problems along the way and give up. All people are taking a "walk" of sorts. It's a walk to eternal life. Those who believe in Jesus know the way to go. God leads them to heaven in the Bible. Those who do not believe in Jesus are trying "walk" to heaven blindfolded. They can't make the journey unless they come to faith in Jesus. God takes off their "blindfold" by showing them the way to heaven in the Bible. Because Christians know from the Bible that the way to heaven is through Jesus, they will say "thank-you" to him as long as they live. Christians say thank-you because they don't walk through life with a

blindfold on. Christians know the way to heaven because God showed them the way in the Bible.

38. Pentecost 9 -Be like Jesus at home! (1)

Proverbs 6:23 "The corrections of discipline are the way to life."

Comments: Compare the relationship between the word "discipline" and "disciple." When Christian parents "discipline" their children they are helping them become better "disciples" of Jesus. That's the attitude every Christian has when corrective discipline is applied to them. That's another way of saying "Thank-you" to Jesus for all he has done. That's what the Lord had in mind when he had King Solomon write this passage down. "The corrections of discipline are the way to life." That is true because Christian discipline helps a person be a better "disciple" of Jesus who offers salvation to all and has given it to those who believe in him.

39. Pentecost 10-Be like Jesus at home! (2)

Colossians 3:20 "Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord."

Comments: Last week the Bible reading focused on "discipline" and how discipline helps make Christians better "disciples" of Jesus. God provides people to make Christian young people better disciples of Jesus. He provides parents. Parents tell their children to do many things. Parents sometimes have to tell their children to go to their

rooms or spank their children for doing something wrong. That is not something children like to hear or experience, but it is very necessary. It's a blessing from God. When Christian children obey their parents God is pleased. That's another way of saying "Thank-you" to Jesus for all he has done. When Christian children obey their parents, then they are saying "Thank-you" to Jesus.

40. Pentecost 11-Be like Jesus with everyone in authority!

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 "Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other."

Comments: In the Army or Navy there are people who hold a high rank. That means they have the right to tell other people in the service what to do. The armed forces set this up so that things will run smoothly. God has placed people over Christian young people in much the same way. He placed parents over children so that things will run smoothly within Christian families. He placed pastors and teachers over Christian young people to teach them about Jesus. He placed the government there to give protection to people. Last week the Bible reading focused on parents. This week it focuses on the other authorities. Christians can say "Thank-you" to Jesus by giving honor and respect to everyone God has placed over them and and by gladly doing what they say.

41. Pentecost 12-Be like Jesus with your friends!

1 Peter 4:7-8 "The end of all things is near. Therefore, be clear-minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins."

Comments: There are times when Christians and their friends don't get along so well. This ought not to happen, but it does because there is sin in the world. (Specific examples would help here) What should a Christian do if there is a problem with a friend? The reading for this Sunday gives the answer--Love. Love is like a white cloth which covers over a dusty table. When a white cover is placed over a dusty table, the dust isn't seen anymore, only the white cloth is seen. Christians deal with friends in much the same way. When there is a problem. When Christian friends do things which hurt other Christian friends, Love is the answer. God loved Christians so much that He sent Jesus to take away all their sins away. Because that is true, Christians will deal with their friends in the same way--not dwelling on the things which they don't like, but rather covering those things with love. That's another way of saying "Thank-you" to Jesus for all he has done.

42. Pentecost 13-Do your work for Jesus!

1 Peter 4:11 "If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen."

Comments: "Pick up your toys!" "Wash your hands before you eat!" "Clean up your room!" That probably sounds familiar to most Christian young people. There are many things that

parents tell their children to do. The Bible reading for today puts all this in perspective. Christian young people are serving more than their parents by doing what they say. They are serving God too. The reading for today says that whatever is done, it is to be done to the praise and glory of God. That can be done in many more ways than going to church. It can be done when brushing teeth. It can be done when cleaning a room. Anything Christians do is to the glory of God. Another way of saying "Thank-you" to Jesus for all he has done is to look at work and play as a way of giving praise and thanks to God for all the blessings he gives.

43. Pentecost 14-Be a student of Jesus! (1)

Psalm 1 "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers."

Comments: (Have a pot of soil, a seed, and some water)

When a seed is planted in the ground, it needs water to start growing. Without any water the seed will stay in the ground and not grow at all. Christians are a lot like seeds. Like a seed needs water to grow so a Christian needs the word of God to grow too. Christians won't grow any taller or bigger, but their trust in Jesus as their Savior will grow stronger and stronger as they learn more and more about Jesus. Another way Christians can say "Thank-you" to

Jesus for all he has done is to learn more and more about Jesus from the Bible.

44. Pentecost 15-Be a student of Jesus! (2)

Hebrews 10:24-25 "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Comments: (Choose six children, and form two teams. Five on one side and one on the other). If five people were to play against one person in basketball or kickball or some other sport, it wouldn't really be fair. The team with five would win easily. The person who is alone is at a disadvantage. There is strength in numbers. God knows that too. That's why in the reading for today God emphasizes the need for Christians to gather together around the Bible. God knows that Christians are stronger as a team rather than as individuals. That's another way of saying "Thank-you" to Jesus for all he has done. Christians can gather together in church around the Bible so that, as a team, they can learn more about the Savior who loved them enough to save them from their sins.

45. Pentecost 16-Honor God with your bodies! (1)

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body.

Comments: When people have fancy clothes on, they make a special effort to keep them clean. Nobody who has fine clothes will go out and play in the mud and make mud pies,

because they would ruin their good set of clothes.

Christians are much like a good set of clothes. God has made all Christians his very own. The bodies and souls of Christians belong to God and are special to him. Christians can say "Thank-you" to Jesus by using their bodies to God's glory too. When Christians use their bodies to fight with other people or to do things God doesn't want them to do, then it's like they're taking that fine body God has given them and rolling it in the mud of sin. Christians can use their bodies to God's glory by doing the things God is pleased with.

46. Pentecost 17-Honor God with your bodies! (2)

1 Peter 2:5 "You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

Comments: (Have a brick available) One brick by itself isn't very useful. But if many bricks are put together to form a building and held together with cement mortar, then each brick is important. The Bible reading for today says that each Christian is like a brick. It says that Christians are being built up like bricks into God's temple. That's very important for all Christians to remember. God is using Christians to get his work on this earth done. So another way Christians can say "Thank-you" to Jesus for all

he has done is to remember that anything they do, they do as part of God's temple, to God's glory.

47. Pentecost 18-Honor God with your mouths! (1)

Psalms 150 "Praise the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens. Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness. Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute, praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord."

Comments: Many people listen to music on the radio. Music is a pleasant and enjoyable way to relax and pass the time. The Bible reading for today also says that music is a very special way to say "Thank-you" to Jesus for all he has done. Many years ago people would give praise to God with many different types of musical instruments and with singing. Singing can be a lot of fun. Not everybody can play musical instruments, but everybody has a voice. An excellent way to use that voice to God's glory is to sing praises to him in song! It's a fun way to say "Thank-you" to Jesus!

48. Pentecost 19-Honor God with your mouths! (2)

James 3:9-10 "With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be!"

Comments: The human tongue is really amazing! It can taste the difference between types of food and drink. It can help people to speak clearly. Without the tongue people couldn't speak to one another with clear, understandable words. God gave people their tongues as a blessing. But a lot of

people misuse the tongue. They use the tongue to say words that God isn't pleased with. They use the tongues to make fun of other people and call them names. Then some of these same people sing praises and pray to God. The Bible reading for today tells how wrong that really is. The tongue was meant to give praise to God; not to speak in ways that God is not pleased with. Another way Christians can say "Thank-you" to Jesus for all he has done is to avoid using the tongue for sinful talk, and using it for the glory of God.

49. Pentecost 20-Forgive someone who hurts you! (1)

Ephesians 4:31-32 "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ, God forgave you."

Comments: There are certain people known as "bullies."

Bullies are people who make fun of other people and start fights with other people just because they like to do it. Bullies have the characteristics that the Bible reading for today speaks about: bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, and slander. But there are times when everybody has a little "bully" in them. Whenever people get angry with one another and fight with one another then they are being bullies. The Bible tells Christians to get rid of all those characteristics. Instead Christians are to be forgiving of one another. The Bible gives a good reason why. Christians forgive others because God forgave them because of Jesus' work. So another way of saying "Thank-you" to Jesus for all

he has done is to be forgiving when others do us wrong instead of being little "bullies."

50. Pentecost 21-Forgive someone who hurts you! (2)

2 Corinthians 2:5-8 "If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you, to some extent--not to put it too severely. The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient for him. Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him."

Comments: A man was stopped by a police officer and given a ticket. The man paid his fine and thought that was the end of the matter. Later another officer came and took him to jail for receiving a ticket. That's not really fair is it? The man already paid the penalty for his ticket so he shouldn't have had to be punished again. The reading for today speaks about something similar. A man had committed a public sin. He had done something wrong and just about everybody knew about it. The church back then removed him from membership in the church and told the man that unless he repents, he would be going to hell. The man ended up repenting. So the Apostle Paul told that congregation to reinstate the man into the church and assure him of forgiveness. That's how all Christians are to deal with one another. When people do something wrong and aren't sorry for what they have done, then Christians will tell them that they are wrong and need to be sorry for what they have done. When those people say they're sorry for what they have done, then Christians will assure them that they are forgiven.

That's another way of saying "Thank-you" to Jesus for all he has done.

51. Pentecost 22-Come to Jesus in prayer (1)

Matthew 7:7-11 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him?"

Comments: People like to use the telephone. The telephone is really an amazing device. From the average home telephone people can call and talk to somebody all over the world. Of course, the longer a person spends on the phone talking to somebody a long ways away, the more money he or she will have to pay. Christians have a connection to God that is much like a telephone, only better. That "connection" is called prayer. Prayer is a heart to heart talk with God. The reading for today teaches that God hears everything Christians tell him in prayer and will answer every time. Prayer is another of God's many blessings. So a good way Christians can say "Thank-you" to Jesus for all he has done is to make good use of prayer and have heart to heart talks with God.

52. Pentecost 23-Come to Jesus in prayer (2)

James 4:3 "When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with the wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures."

Comments:

Last week our reading spoke about prayer and how God promises to hear and answer all prayers. This week's reading talks about prayer too. This week's reading answers the question, "Why doesn't God give people everything they pray for?" One wintery day a man and a boy were driving home in a car. They came to a fork in the road. Both roads led home, but one of them was shorter. The boy told the man, "Let's take the one on the left, because it's much shorter." The man said, "Yes, it is, but we'll get home faster if we take the road on the right." What the boy didn't realize is that the road on the left went up and down many hills, and the roads were very slippery and dangerous because ice was on them. The road on the right had no hills and was far less dangerous to travel. The boy thought he knew what was best, but really the wiser man knew better. That's how prayer is too. People think they know what's best for them, but that's not true. God is much wiser and he knows what Christians really need. So another way we can say "Thank-you" to Jesus for all he has done is to remember that God does answer all our prayers. He doesn't always give us what we want, but he always gives us what we need. God knows what we need best.

53. Pentecost 24-Be concerned about others

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."

Comments: The word "share" might be one of the most difficult words to teach to people. People tend to think of "sharing" as other people have to "share" their things with me. The difficulty lies in teaching that I have to share my things with others. "Share" is a two-way street. On a one way street cars are only allowed to travel in one direction. On a two-way street cars are allowed to travel in two directions. Real sharing is like a two-way street. The reading for today talks about love as a "sharing" thing. It says that love is not self-seeking. Love is not so concerned about the individual. It is more concerned with other people. A "sharing" kind of love is another way to say "Thank-you" to Jesus for all he has done. Have a "sharing" type of love for one another. Don't be so concerned about what others can give. Be more concerned about what you can "share" with one another. That's what Jesus did for us. He gave us His life to save us.

54. Pentecost 25-Share Jesus with other people! (1)

1 Peter 2:12 "Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us."

Comments: One day at a restaurant, a young child was being very naughty. He was screaming and crying and giving his parents all kinds of trouble. People seated nearby couldn't help but notice the child's behavior, and they all said, "What a naughty child this boy is!" That's what other people thought of this child. They thought he was bad and naughty. Christians don't want to set this kind of example.

Christians, who know that Jesus died to save them from all the bad things they do, want to live in a way that God is pleased with. The Bible gives a reason why. Other people see what Christians do, and they react to it. If the child mentioned earlier was a Christian, the impression other people received was a bad one. What if the young child's behavior was really good? Other people would notice that too. They might even come up to the child's parents and ask how it is that he is so well-behaved. That's an excellent chance for those parents to tell those people about Jesus. Christians want to say "Thank-you" to Jesus for all He has done by living lives that He likes. One reason why is God can use our behavior to get other people interested in knowing what Jesus is all about!

55. Pentecost 26-Share Jesus with other people! (2)

Romans 10:14-15 "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

Comments: One day, one young child who went to a Lutheran grade school was approached by a child who went to a public school. The public school child asked, "Do you go to that Jesus Christ school?" The Lutheran grade school child didn't know what to say. He answered "yes" but shrugged it off as not being all that big a deal. Later on this Lutheran child regretted what he had said. He didn't say enough. He had an opportunity to tell another person what

Jesus is all about, and he failed. The boy knew that Jesus was sent to save everybody from sin and give them eternal life, but that other boy might not have known about Jesus. Because Jesus has done so much for all people, Christians want to tell other people about Jesus. Christians want other people to know the joy of knowing Jesus as their Savior. When somebody asks a question about Christianity, this is the answer to give: "Jesus is the Savior of the world. He came to this world to save all people because he wants them to live forever in heaven."

56. Pentecost 27-Be ready for Jesus to come again! (1)

Matthew 25:1-13 "At the time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight the cry rang out; "Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him! Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out!' 'No,' they replied, 'there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.' but while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. Later the others also came. 'Sir, Sir!' they said, 'Open the door for us!' But he replied, 'I tell you the truth, I don't know you.' Therefore, keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour."

Comments: Be Ready! When a baseball player is up to bat, he has to be ready for the pitcher to throw the baseball, if he isn't, then he will probably miss the ball. In school, if students aren't ready for a test, they will probably not do very well. The Bible teaches that all people have to be

ready for Jesus to come again. Jesus told a story about some young ladies who were waiting for a bridegroom to come. Some were ready, others were not. Those who were ready went with the bridegroom. Those who weren't were left behind. That's what it's going to be like when Jesus comes again. Those people who are ready for him by believing in Him as their Savior will be taken to heaven with Jesus. Those who aren't ready by not believing in Jesus will never get to be with Jesus. They will end up in hell. The Holy Spirit already made Christians ready by giving them faith. Pray that we will always remain ready! Christians want to be with Jesus!

57. Pentecost 28-Be ready for Jesus to come again! (2)

Revelation 22:20-21 "He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming soon.' Amen, come Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen."

Comments: Ask if any of the children are baseball or football fans. The whole reason why teams play baseball is to reach the world series. The whole reason why football teams play football is to reach the Superbowl. Right now Christians are in the middle of their season. The Christian "season" ends when Jesus comes again. That's something that all Christians want to happen soon. When Jesus comes, all believers will go to heaven. That's what believing in Jesus is all about. It's about going to heaven to be with Jesus forever. It's much better than the World Series or Superbowl. In the World Series or Superbowl, only one team can be the champion. When Jesus comes, all believers will

be champions, because all believers will go to heaven. Come
Lord Jesus. All believers are eagerly waiting to be with
you forever!

ENDNOTES

1. Weisheit, Eldon. God's Promise For Children: Object Lessons on Old Testament Texts, Series B. (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House. 1981) p.6.
2. Poganski, Donald J. 40 Object Lessons. (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House. 1973) p. 17.
3. Uhl, Harold J. The Gospel for Children. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House. 1975) p. 6.

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