

## Jesus Invites Us to Work With Him

### FOR THE TEACHER:

This week's lesson focuses on Jesus' ministry to proclaim the Kingdom of God and how he invites others to join with him in that ministry. In the ultimate sense the Kingdom of God is the Triune Life of the Father, Son, and Spirit, so when Jesus says the Kingdom has come near he is really talking about himself. In him the Life of God has been revealed to be close to humanity, not far away. This is good news because it means we are not separated from God but rather, in Jesus, we are close to him. This news requires repentance (literally in Greek, "a change of mind,") because we have believed that God was far away and now we have to change our minds and believe the truth that he is near to us in Jesus. This good news message needs to go to everyone, because all are included, so Jesus invites us to help him spread the word.

Questions marked with an asterisk (\*) are part of the Trinitarian Catechism.

**FIRST ACTIVITY:** Telling others about Jesus. Jesus wants each of us to help him spread the good news of our adoption. Have the kids stand in a circle. Give one child a ball. Have that child say one fact they know about Jesus that they could share with someone else. (The kids could talk about a miracle Jesus performed, where he was born, how he is the Son of God, etc.). Once the child says the fact, he/she can throw the ball to anyone in the circle who can share their fact. Keep going around a couple of times until everyone has had a chance to hold the ball and share.

**SCRIPTURE LESSON:** Ask for a helper to pass out a bible to each child. Have them all turn to Mark 1:14-20. For older kids, have them take turns reading.

*1:14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, 1:15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."*

*\*Why did the Father create us? So that he could adopt us as his children*

*\*How did the Father adopt us as his children? By sending the Son to become human as the man Jesus*

The Kingdom of God is the relationship the Father has with all of us as his children. The good news is the message that Jesus brings us that we have been adopted as children of the Father.

To repent means to change what you think. Jesus tells us to change our minds and start believing the truth that we are adopted children of the Father.

*1:16 As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea--for they were fishermen.*

*1:17 And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people."*

*1:18 And immediately they left their nets and followed him.*

*1:19 As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets.*

*1:20 Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.*

Jesus decided to invite other people to help him spread the good news that we have been adopted as children of the Father. Jesus also invites us, just like Simon, Andrew, James, and John, to help spread the good news.

**PRIMARY LESSON:** Jesus is telling everyone the good news of how we have all been adopted as children of the Father and he invites us to work with him in telling people this good news.

**SECOND ACTIVITY:** Party Invitations. Before class mark off a portion of the classroom with rope or chairs so that there is a distinct area for the "party". Blow up balloons and put them on the floor in the special "room". Depending on the age group, you will want to have a party item for each kid - party hat, small gift bag, etc. Once you know how many kids you will have in your class, cut small square piece of paper for each child. Divide the pieces of paper in half. On the first set of squares, put a large green dot. Then fold them up and put them in a cup or hat. On the second set of squares, put a large red dot. Then fold them and add it to the cup or hat. Have each child pick a piece of paper (there should be enough for only one for each child.) Tell them that we are having a party and only the people who get a green dot are invited. Once each child picks their papers, have them open their paper up and if they have a red dot, they have to stay where they are. If they have a green dot they can proceed to the special "room" for the party. Give the child their special party item as they enter. Once all the kids are where they are supposed to be ask them - How does it feel do be at the party? (Feels great! It's fun.) How does it feel to be left out of the party? (Makes me sad. It's not fair.) Jesus tells us that we have all been adopted as children of the Father so do you think we should all be at the party? (Yes!). Have the other children who were left out of the party come into the special "room" and give them each a party item. Remind the kids that because of Jesus, we have all been invited to the party and that is some great news we can share with others!

**PRAYER:** For older kids, have one of them pray this prayer (or come up with their own). For younger kids, have them repeat after you as you read the prayer.

Father in heaven, thank you for sending Jesus to adopt us as your children and to tell us this good news. Thank you, Jesus, inviting us to help you spread the word to everyone. Holy Spirit, help us to tell others the truth about how much their Father in heaven loves them. In Jesus' name, Amen.