

**OPENING:** Last week we celebrated Easter, when Jesus rose from the dead. Shout this with me; “1,2,3,4,5 – Jesus, Jesus is alive!”

**BIBLE VERSE/SONG:** ***Sing “The B-I-B-L-E”***

*The B-I-B-L-E
Yes, that’s the book for me!
I stand alone on the Word of God,
The B-I-B-L-E*

“Here is my Bible. I will open it wide, to read about Jesus from the words inside.” (*Open to 1 John 3:16)* In 1 John chapter 3 verse 16 it says: “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.” Jesus never sinned, but He died on the cross for our sins, so that we can be forgiven and live with Him in Heaven. Jesus chose to lay down His life for us because He loves us so much. That is amazing love! There is no greater love than that!

Repeat the verse after me and do these actions:

This is how we know *(point to head) Children repeat*what love is *(cross arms over chest) Children repeat*Jesus Christ *(point up) Children repeat*
laid down His life *(make cross with fingers) Children repeat*for us *(point to self) Children repeat*

*(Do this several times. You can start softly and get louder each time; or use different voices each time.)*

**BIBLE STORY:** It is time to hear our Bible story. Listen carefully because when the story is finished, I will ask you some questions. Before we begin our story, let’s pray: Our hands we fold, our heads we bow, so we can talk to God right now.

 Dear God, thank You for Your true words in the Bible. Help us to listen carefully so we can learn about You today. Amen.

*(Have* ***blanket*** *ready as a fishing net prop. Sit on a chair to tell the story.)*

*Show John 21:1-19. Leave your Bible open while telling the story.*

Today’s story takes place after Jesus has risen from the dead. He appeared to His disciple friends to show them He was alive, then He disappeared from their sight. I’m sure the disciples were hoping Jesus would appear and talk with them again, because they loved Jesus so much.

Peter was probably a little sad, so he decided to do something he loved to do to take his mind off of missing Jesus. “I’m going fishing,” Peter said. Some of the other disciples said, “We’ll go with you,” so off they went.

The disciples fished and fished. Soon it grew dark but, since nighttime was usually a good time to catch fish, they decided to keep fishing. They would cast their net over one side of the boat and wait. *(Cast the “net”)* No fish. Then they would cast it over the other side. *(Cast “net”)* No fish. They tried all night long to catch fish, but never caught a thing.

Soon morning came. As they drifted along, they saw a man standing on the shore watching them. He called out to them, “Friends, haven’t you any fish?” “No,” they answered. The man said, “Throw your net on the other side of the boat and you will find some!”

Oh brother! They had been fishing all night without catching a thing! But somehow they felt like they should listen to that man, so they cast their net on the other side of the boat and… (*Cast “net” over the heads of the children to “catch” some of them!)* WOW! Look at all those fish! There were suddenly so many fish in their net that they couldn’t even haul it in! They thought the net might break because it was so heavy with fish! Then the disciple John realized who the man on the shore was. “It is the Lord!” he said. When Peter heard that, he jumped right into the water and swam as fast as he could to Jesus. The other disciples were excited too! Suddenly they had enough strength to row the boat with the net full of fish all the way to shore.

There stood Jesus, smiling at them! He had a campfire burning and was cooking fish. He had a basket of yummy bread waiting. “Bring some of the fish you have just caught,” He said. Peter helped his friends haul in the net full of large fish. It was the biggest catch they ever had, and it was a miracle that the net didn’t break! They counted 153 fish!!

Jesus said, “Come and have breakfast!” So they all gathered around the campfire on the beach with Jesus. Jesus served the yummy fish and bread to His friends. They talked and ate and laughed together. It was so good to be with their friend, Jesus! Jesus loved His friends, and he loved spending time with them too.

**QUESTIONS: Who helped the disciples catch an amazing number of fish?** *Jesus*

**How did Jesus show love to His friends?** *He helped them catch 153 fish, He didn’t let the net break, He cooked breakfast and served them, He spent time with them*

**Who is the best friend anyone could ever have?** *Jesus!*

I love that Jesus wants to be our Forever friend! Jesus wants us to spend time with Him! Isn’t that the coolest thing? The more time you spend with Jesus, the more your friendship with Him will grow**. Jesus is our friend and He wants us to be His friend, too.**

**KEY CONCEPT:** *(Have children stand)* **Jesus** *(point up)* **is our friend** *(cover heart with hand)* **and He wants us** *(hold arms out)* **to be His friend, too** *(cover heart with hand). Repeat verse several times with motions, beginning with a whisper and getting a little louder each time, or repeat with different voices.*

Jesus loves us and wants us to be His friend and spend time with Him!

If you like to play at the park with your friends, raise your hands and wiggle your fingers.
If you like to watch movies with your friends, jump up and down 5 times.
If you like enjoying treats with your friends, pat your head and rub your tummy…at the same time!

Well, since Jesus wants to be our friend, we can spend time with Him, too! Think in your head about ways you can spend time with Jesus. What can you do to be friends with Him?

*(Print the* ***Friendship Matching Activity Page****)*

I will read you a story. Then you will find the two pictures that match and draw a line connecting them. These pictures will help us learn ways we can be friends with Jesus.

**Child Sitting**:
Jamie is sitting at home in her family room. She really wants to learn more about Jesus. She wants to learn some more stories about Him. What could help her? *(Bible)* Draw a line from Jamie sitting in her chair to the Bible.

We can be friends with Jesus when we learn about Him in the Bible. What is your favorite Bible story?

**Child Kneeling:**Johnny is getting ready for bed. He had a great day and wants to talk to Jesus about the day. When we want to talk to Jesus, what can we do? *(Pray)* Draw a line from the picture of Johnny praying to the picture of his bed.

We can be friends with Jesus when we talk to Him. What is something you want to tell Jesus?

**Child Singing:**Suzy loves to dance and sing to Jesus. Her favorite song to sing is “Jesus Loves Me.” What could Suzy use to help her dance and sing to Jesus? *(CD player)* Draw a line from the picture of Suzy dancing and singing to the picture of the CD player.

We can be a friend with Jesus when we sing to Him and worship Him. What is your favorite song to sing to Jesus?

**Blank:**Draw a picture of yourself in the blank box. Now on the other side, draw something you would like to have or use to spend time with Jesus. Draw a line from that box to the picture of you.

Tell me about how you want to be friends with Jesus.

**SONG:** *“Jesus Loves Me, This I Know” verses 1 & 2.*

*Jesus laves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to Him belong. They are weak, but He is strong!*

*Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.*

*Jesus loves me! He who died, Heavens gates to open wide,
He will wash away my sin; let His little child come in.*

*Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.*

**PRAYER:** Let’s kneel and talk to Jesus. God is listening, God is listening to each word I say. He will hear me, He will hear me every time I pray. Let's fold our hands, close our eyes, and talk to Jesus. You can repeat these words to Him :  **Dear Jesus,/ thank You for loving me so much./I am glad you want to be my friend forever./ You’re the best friend/ anyone can ever have!/ Help me spend more time with You/ so we can become best friends!/ Amen.**

Remember that Jesus loves you and He wants to be your Forever Friend!

***A note to parents/guardians:***

Today you taught the basic concept that Jesus wants to be a Forever Friend with each of us. As you and your child read Bible stories and discuss questions, he or she might be ready to make a personal decision to become Jesus’ Forever Friend. Included is a Discussion Planning Guide to help you prepare for the potentially life-changing conversation that might take place.

Please remember a child’s decision to follow Jesus happens in God’s timing, so remain open to the possibility that it could occur this week, next month, or in the years to come. That said, make sure you are ready at any moment.

If you have any questions, please contact the church. We are excited to be partnering with you in sharing Jesus with your child.







