

Jesus Gave the Great Commission

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 28:16-20

MAIN POINT: Jesus gave the disciples the Great Commission.

KEY PASSAGE: 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is our mission as believers? Our mission as believers is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Spirit.

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Leader BIBLE STUDY

After Jesus' death and resurrection, He appeared to His disciples over a 40-day period. At one point, He appeared to more than 500 people. During that time, Jesus taught about the kingdom of God. (Acts 1:3) Some disciples wondered if Jesus was going to restore the kingdom of Israel. (Acts 1:6)

Jesus had a different plan for the disciples. He directed the Eleven to go to a mountain, where He appeared to them again. They worshiped Him, but some still doubted. (Matt. 28:17) On the mountain, Jesus gave His disciples the Great Commission. First, Jesus stated that all authority had been given to Him. Before the resurrection, Jesus had authority as God the Son. Through the resurrection,

however, the Father gave Jesus far more than even Satan had promised. (Matt. 4:8-9) Through Jesus' death and resurrection, God subjected everything to His beloved Son. (See Heb. 2:5-9.)

Because of Jesus' authority, He commanded His disciples to go into the world and preach the gospel, the good news about Him. The Great Commission is not just for missionaries far from home. All believers are called to share the gospel with others, teach them to obey God's commands, and baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Jesus finished His commission with a profound promise: "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20).

Talk to the kids you teach about the importance of living out the Great Commission. Because Jesus has authority over all places and all people at all times, we can take the good news about Jesus to all places and all people at all times. God has given us a mission and gives us power through the Holy Spirit to obey this calling.

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Additional resources for each session are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.

The BIBLE STORY

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Elevate Jesus' words:** Each time you read words Jesus said, stand on a platform or low chair to emphasize Jesus' commands to the disciples.
- **Make eye contact:** Engage kids by making eye contact with boys and girls as you tell the story.

Jesus Gave the Great Commission

Matthew 28:16-20

After Jesus had been raised from the dead, He met with His disciples over the next 40 days. During that time, Jesus told them even more about God's kingdom. Then Jesus' eleven disciples went to a mountain in Galilee.

Jesus had told them to go there. When the disciples saw Jesus, some of them worshiped Him. But some of the disciples still doubted.

Then Jesus went up to them and said, "**All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.**" Jesus is God the Son; He always had authority. But after Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, God gave Him all authority in heaven and on earth. Jesus is the King over all creation, and He rules over God's kingdom.

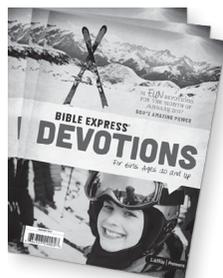
Jesus gave the disciples—and everyone who follows Him—a job to do. He said, "**Go into all the world and preach the gospel. Make disciples of people from every nation.**" A *disciple* is a follower. Jesus wants His followers to tell people all over the world how to be rescued from sin and death by trusting in Jesus' death and resurrection. Then those people who believe would become disciples of Jesus too.

Jesus also said, "**Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.**" New disciples are cleansed from sin by Jesus' blood. When believers are baptized, they show the world that they have turned away from sin and trusted in Jesus as their Savior.

Jesus continued, "**Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you.**" Disciples who love Jesus will want to obey Him. Then Jesus said, "**Remember this: I am**

always with you, until the very end of the age.”

Christ Connection: The good news about what Jesus has done to rescue us from our sins is too great to keep to ourselves. Before Jesus went back to heaven, He gave the disciples a job to do. Jesus wants His followers to teach people everywhere about Jesus so they will trust in Him as their Lord and Savior.



**WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD'S WORD?
GET
BIBLE EXPRESS!**

Invite kids to check out this week's devotionals to discover how God's Word can help them grow in the gospel. Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

Introduce the STORY

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BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 28:16-20

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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is our mission as believers? Our mission as believers is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Spirit.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to share if they have ever been given a job to do. What was it? Did they do the job?

Activity page (5 minutes)

- “Let’s Do This!” activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete “Let’s Do This!” on the activity page. Kids will cross out the letters *B*, *F*, *H*, *P*, *U*, and *Y* to discover what Jesus gave to His followers. (*Great Commission*)

SAY • Raise your hand if you know what the Great Commission is. If you don’t know, that’s OK. We are going to find out!

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Mirror game

Form groups of three kids. Number the kids in each group 1, 2, and 3. Kid 2 and kid 3 should stand back-to-back. Kid 1 will face kid 2. Prompt kid 2 to strike a pose. (Example: Smile and raise arms in the air.)

LOW PREP

- timer (optional)

Kid 1 should study the pose for 10 seconds. Then instruct kid 1 to move around and face kid 3. Kid 1 should describe the pose, instructing kid 3 to move in a specific way. After kids have posed, guide kid 2 and kid 3 to face each other and compare their poses. How similar are they? Allow kids to switch roles, strike new poses, and play again.

SAY • Nice job, everyone! Was it hard to describe to someone else about what you saw? Today we are going to hear a Bible story about instructions Jesus gave to His disciples. Jesus told them to go and tell others about something very important.

OPTION 2: A job to do

Form groups of four or five kids. Give each kid an index card and pencil. Instruct kids to write the name of an occupation on their cards. (*doctor, firefighter*, and so forth)

- index cards
- pencils
- double-sided tape

Provide a piece of double-sided tape for the back of each card. Guide each kid to pass his card facedown to the player on his left. Players should stick the cards to their foreheads and then take turns asking yes-or-no questions to figure out the job on their cards.

When kids all figure out their jobs, give the following descriptions and challenge them to guess the job:

- Go and make disciples of all nations.
- Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- Teach them to observe everything Jesus commanded.

SAY • The job I described is *follower of Jesus*. Jesus told His followers that they had a special job to do. We will hear more in today's Bible story.

Transition to teach the story

Teach the STORY

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Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

• leader attire

[Leader enters carrying a Bible and a paper megaphone. Leader is wearing a hat labeled Go and Tell!]

LEADER • Hello, boys and girls! I'm [*your name*]. Are you ready to ... [*Point to your hat; then shout into the megaphone.*] ... *Go and Tell?* I really appreciate you joining me for this campaign to learn about Jesus and tell others about Him. Before we get started today, I want to emphasize that there are two parts to this campaign: go ... and tell! So you can't just sit there, and you can't stay quiet. Everybody stand up for me.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Now, the stories we've heard were about people Jesus met with after His resurrection. Jesus wanted to make it clear that just because He had died and rose from the dead didn't mean that His followers were done with their work. In fact, their mission was

only beginning! *What is our mission as believers? Our mission as believers is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Spirit.* Say it again! *What is our mission as believers?* [Pause for kids to respond.] *Our mission as believers is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Spirit.*

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline or big story circle.

LEADER • Take a look back at all of these stories we have heard from the Bible. All of these shorter stories fit together to tell one greater story. Can anyone tell me what the Bible is about? [*Call for responses.*] That's right! The Bible is about God's plan to send His Son into the world to rescue people from sin.

The Old Testament tells us about God's promises to His people. The people waited so long for God to send a Savior, and then He finally did! Jesus came into the world as a baby. He grew up and taught people about God. He died on the cross for our sins, and then rose from the dead on the third day!

Then Jesus appeared to His disciples and to many other people. Today's Bible story is about what Jesus told His followers to do. Let's check it out.

- Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Matthew 28:16-20. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Jesus Gave the Great Commission."

LEADER • **Jesus gave the disciples the Great Commission** after He had died on the cross and been raised

- Bibles
- "Jesus Gave the Great Commission" video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster

back to life. For 40 days, Jesus appeared to people, including His disciples, and proved that He is alive.

Jesus met with His disciples and explained that He is ruler over everything. Then He gave them a job to do. Jesus told the disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel.

The gospel is the good news about Jesus and what He has done for us. Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins. When we trust in Him, God forgives our sins and gives us eternal life.

It would not always be easy for the disciples to tell the world about Jesus. People would hate them because of their message, and people would even try to stop them from telling others about Jesus. But they did not need to be afraid because Jesus promised to be with them. One of Jesus' names is Immanuel, which means "God with us."

The Great Commission wasn't just for Jesus' disciples. It is a command for everyone who believes in Him. We can share the gospel, the good news about Jesus. Everyone needs to hear the gospel. God calls some people to travel to faraway places to share the gospel, and sometimes He calls people to stay where they are and share the gospel with their neighbors. God wants believers to share the gospel with everyone in the whole world! That sounds like a huge task—and it is!—but we are not on our own. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus is always with us.

What is our mission as believers? Our mission as believers is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Spirit.

Christ connection

LEADER • The good news about what Jesus has done to rescue us from our sins is too great to keep to ourselves. Before Jesus went back to heaven, He gave the disciples a job to do. Jesus wants His followers to teach people everywhere about Jesus so they will trust in Him as their Lord and Savior.

One day, Jesus will return and believers will be reunited with Jesus forever.

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together 1 Corinthians 15:3-4.

LEADER • If you haven't yet memorized our key passage, keep working on it. This message is so important; it is the gospel—the good news about Jesus. Jesus died on the cross for our sin. Now, that wouldn't be good news unless Jesus came back to life, and He did! Jesus rose from the dead on the third day. We can tell others the good news about Jesus and pray that they would believe. Let's sing.

Lead boys and girls in singing "On the Third Day."

- Key Passage Poster
- "On the Third Day" song

Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

LEADER • We heard today about how **Jesus gave the disciples the Great Commission**. Watch this.

Show the "Unit 27, Session 4" discussion starter video.

Guide kids to discuss these questions:

1. What was Nell talking about?
2. What kind of mission does Jesus have for believers?
3. Why did Jesus command us to tell others about Him?

- "Unit 27, Session 4" discussion starter video

4. Whom can you tell about Jesus?

LEADER • We can tell people everywhere about Jesus and show them His love. Telling the whole world about Jesus might sound like a big job—and it is! But we are not on our own. God gives us His power through the Holy Spirit to help us do His plan.

Sing (4 minutes)

• “The Glory” song

LEADER • We know the gospel, the good news that Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Jesus commanded us to go and tell the whole world about Him. Let’s sing.

Sing together “The Glory.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Lord God, we want to be obedient to You. Help us love people of all nations, and give us power through the Holy Spirit to share the gospel everywhere we go. We love You. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

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



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



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



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



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



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

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

Apply the STORY

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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is our mission as believers? Our mission as believers is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Spirit.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- paper
- pencils

Instruct kids to sit around a table or in a circle on the floor. Show the key passage poster and lead kids to read it aloud two or three times. Then distribute paper and pencils.

Instruct kids to write their names on the back of the paper. Tell kids to write the first word of the key passage on the front of their paper. Then kids should pass their papers to the right.

Call for kids to write the next two words and then pass the papers. Now, kids should write the next three words. Kids should continue writing and passing until they complete the key passage.

SAY • This is the message Paul took to the people in Corinth, where he started a church. This is the gospel—the message Jesus calls us to take into all the world. The gospel is the good news that Christ has died for sinners!

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Main Point Poster

Distribute Bibles and guide kids to find the Book of Matthew. Ask kids what division of the Bible the Book of Matthew is in. (*Gospels*) Challenge kids to name the five

divisions of the New Testament. (*Gospels, New Testament History, Paul's Letters, General Letters, Prophecy*)

Ask the following review questions. Encourage kids to read Matthew 28:16-20 to check their answers.

1. How many disciples traveled to Galilee? (*11 disciples, Matt. 28:16*)
2. Where in Galilee did the disciples go? (*to the mountain, Matt. 28:16*)
3. What did the disciples do when they saw Jesus? (*They worshiped Him, but some doubted; Matt. 28:17*)
4. What did Jesus say He has in heaven and on earth? (*all authority, Matt. 28:18*)
5. Jesus told His followers to make disciples of whom? (*all nations, Matt. 28:19*)
6. Jesus told His followers to baptize in the name of whom? (*the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; Matt. 28:19*)
7. Jesus said He is with His followers for how long? (*always, to the end of the age; Matt. 28:20*)

Now guide kids to discuss these questions:

- Why do you think Jesus commanded us to tell others about Him?
- What does it mean to make disciples?
- Think about the unique place God has put you—in your specific city, school, or neighborhood. Who do you see every day that you could tell about Jesus?

SAY • Jesus gave the disciples the Great Commission.

Jesus calls all believers to this mission of making disciples. The word *disciple* means “learner” or “pupil.” The people Jesus called to follow Him during His earthly ministry are called disciples.

As believers, we can share the gospel with others

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

and invite them to follow Jesus. Jesus wants people from every nation to know and love Him.

LOW PREP

• world map or globe

Activity choice (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Take the gospel

Post a world map where kids can see it. Invite kids to sit in a circle with you. Start the game by saying, “Let’s take the gospel to ...” and then say the name of a country. (For example, “Let’s take the gospel to Bolivia.”)

The kid to your right should say, “Let’s take the gospel to ...” and then name another country and the country you chose. (“Let’s take the gospel to Algeria and Bolivia.”)

Continue “traveling” around the circle, adding to the list of countries. When kids can’t recall all the countries, encourage previous players to remind them of the countries they chose. You may also choose to start again.

SAY • Everyone in the world needs to hear the good news about Jesus. **Jesus gave the disciples the Great Commission**, and Jesus calls all believers to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. More than 7 billion people live on earth. That’s a big job!

Some of us might travel as missionaries, and others of us might support missionaries or share the gospel right in our own neighborhoods. That might sound overwhelming, but Jesus gives us the Holy Spirit to help us on our mission of making disciples.

OPTION 2: World map shapes

Guide kids to cut a cross or heart shape from the world maps. Kids may use glue and ribbon to create a hanger for their art. Kids may also cut a small cross or heart that can be used as a bookmark.

• world maps
• scissors
• tape or glue
• ribbon

Lead kids to read John 3:16 and Matthew 28:19-20. Talk about ways kids can be involved in spreading the good news about Jesus throughout the world: by praying, giving time or money, telling others the gospel, and so forth.

SAY • Jesus’ death and resurrection paid the penalty for sins and gave us the promise of new life. Jesus calls all believers to make disciples of all nations.

Guide kids to discuss these questions:

- If a friend asked you to explain why Jesus died, what would you say?
- If a friend asked you why Jesus’ death and resurrection paid for your sin, what would you say?

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

While kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then lead kids in prayer. Pray that the gospel would be received.

As time allows, lead kids to complete “Our Mission” on the activity page. Guide kids to use the code to fill in the missing vowels and complete the secret message: *What is our mission as believers? (Our mission as believers is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Spirit.)*

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

- pencils
- Journal Page
- “Our Mission” activity page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week’s *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.