

✍ When done, please return this lesson plan to Church office files ✍

Stepping Stones Lesson Plan — Fall/Winter/Spring

For Lesson #_____

Before the Sunday You Teach

1. Determine from schedule whether you are teaching on:
 - a regular Sunday (approximately 11:25am to 12:05pm),
 - a Communion Sunday on which children are released to their parents during the last hymn before Communion (approximately 11:15am to 11:45am), or
 - a Communion Sunday with extended *Stepping Stones* (approximately 11:15am to 12:10pm).
2. Read through the lesson plan.

Getting Ready

Bring with you:

1. An attitude that expects God to work in the lives of the children today.
2. This *Stepping Stones Lesson Plan*, from Church office files (under “W” for Worship, then “Stepping Stones”)
3. Knowledge of today’s service. Look at today’s order of service in the bulletin. Know which hymn the Worship service is to end with. You do not want to get caught ending *Stepping Stones* at the first organ swell only to wait with the children for the real closing hymn. If you are teaching on Communion Sunday on which children are released to their parents during the last hymn before Communion: know during which hymn the children are to be brought into the service. Arrange to have an usher summon you.
4. An awareness that we are attempting to create a reverent environment, yet keep things moving so that the children do not get bored and start daydreaming or misbehaving. We want the pace of Sesame Street with the quiet mood of Mr. Rogers.

Setting Up the Room

1. Open *Stepping Stones* cabinet so it is flat against the wall, exposing inside shelves
2. From the *Stepping Stones* cabinet, get:
 - Felt Liturgical cloths. Check the Church Year Puzzle to find which color to use.
 - Christ Candle/Candle Snuffer/Plastic Disk/Matches
 - Nativity Set
 - Good Shepherd and sheep
 - CEF flashcard book
 - Bible with bookmark in today’s reading
 - Church Year puzzle
 - Box of lesson materials — if not in cabinet, check church storage closet

- Words of the hymns and basics and, if required, the Salvation Hand posted on file folders and stored in a file box.
3. Place liturgical cloths — one smaller cloth on each end; larger cloth in the center.
 4. From left to right, place the Christ candle on plastic disk with snuffer and matches on small cloth, Nativity set on center cloth, and Good Shepherd with sheep on small cloth. These are the three symbols of Christ.
 5. Place Bible on prayer table.
 6. Remove all extra stuff (tables, etc.) from room, except for one table by the entrance/exit. Use this table to store any items that the children bring (i.e. purses, books, playthings).
 7. Transfer lesson materials from storage box to presentation box (plastic container or, for parables, gold gift box).
 8. Pray for God's blessing of today's *Stepping Stones* time.

Start Out Right (although both the Leader and Greeter should be aware of this, it would best if the Greeter handled this matter, so that the Leader can focus on the lesson.)

As the children come in:

1. Have them place any distractions that they have brought with them on table by the entrance/exit.
2. Watch who is sitting by whom; insist on different seating arrangements if you suspect a possible problem. Possible problems: siblings, same sex and same age children.

Preparing for the Children to Enter

The Greeter waits at the entrance to the room. As the children arrive the Greeter slows them down by lining them single file, outside the room, and greeting each child with:

September to Easter

Greeter: The Lord be with you!
Child: And also with you.

Easter to September

Greeter: Christ is Risen!
Child: Christ is risen indeed.

The leader sits on the floor, waiting for the children to arrive. The leader directs the children to sit in a circle around the leader.

The Leader's Greeting (approximately 2 minutes)

Greet each child as he or she sits down. Talk with the children while the others arrive. When everyone is present, exchange the formal liturgical greeting —

September to Easter

Leader: The Lord be with you!
Children: And also with you.

Easter to September

Leader: Christ is Risen!
Children: Christ is risen indeed.

Church Calendar (approximately 1 minute)

Use the church year puzzle. Show the children where in the year we are.

Opening Songs (approximately 3 minutes)

Come Into His Presence — Most of the children know this. They will sing with you once you begin.

Opening Hymn — See Lesson Schedule — Many of the children will know the hymn. They sang it last year. Review it with them by saying portions and having them echo. Then, singing and echo. The goal is to have the group sing the first verse of the hymn with you.

Learning the Basics (approximately 3 minutes)

See Lesson Schedule. Many or most of the children will be familiar with these basics. Review with them by saying portions and having them echo or by simply saying them as a group. This is meant to be a quick recitation, not a discussion.

The Ten Commandments— September through November, with monthly review beginning in December.

Part 1 — Commandments 1 - 3

Part 2 — Commandments 4 - 7 (with continued rehearsal of 1-3).

Part 3 — Commandments 8 - 10 (with continued rehearsal of 1-7).

The Apostles Creed — November through January, with monthly review beginning in March

Part 1 — “I believe in God ...born of the virgin Mary.”

Part 2 — “He suffered ...God the Father Almighty” (with continued rehearsal of first part).

Part 3 — “From there he will come ...everlasting. Amen” (with continued rehearsal of first and second parts).

The Nicene Creed — February through May

Part 1 — “We believe...all things were made”

Part 2 — “who for us...shall have no end.” (with continued rehearsal of first part).

Part 3 — “And we believe...world to come. Amen.” (with continued rehearsal of first and second parts).

✍ Take a moment here to rearrange children who are distracting each other or to remove toys or other distractions that have appeared.

On those Communion Sundays on which children are released to their parents (see schedule), SKIP THIS ENTIRE PAGE. Add the Salvation Hand before the Closing Song Time.

“Getting ready to listen” song (approximately 1/2 minute) (Eliminate this activity on Communion Sunday on which children are released to their parents)

Be Still and Know — Most of the children know this. They will sing with you once you begin. When you have finished singing, say:

“When we sing these words, we know it is time to get ready to hear the story. So cross your legs — criss-cross applesauce, with your hands in your lap — and listen closely.”

Presentation (approximately 5 minutes) (Eliminate this activity on Communion Sunday on which children are released to their parents)

See Lesson Schedule.

Discussion Time (approximately 5 minutes) (Eliminate this activity on Communion Sunday on which children are released to their parents)

The wondering questions are at the end of each story. When you have finished wondering together, say:

“Watch while I put these materials away .”

Place the materials back in the box in reverse order. Do it slowly, carefully. Be silent, so the children will watch what you do.

Reading the Bible (approximately 4 minutes) (Eliminate this activity on Communion Sunday on which children are released to their parents)

Once the presentation materials are back in the box and the box is back on the shelf or safely to the side, then reach behind you and take a liturgical cloth for the Christ candle and spread it on the floor in front of you. Then place the Christ candle and the Bible on the liturgical cloth. Light the candle and say (Have the children say the scripture with you):

“We light the Christ candle to remind us that Christ is with us and that ‘all scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness so that the Man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.’” (2 Tim 3:16-17)

Look at the Bible and say:

“This is the Bible. The story (parable) or scripture we heard today is in the Bible. Look, our story (parable) is in the Old (New) Testament in the book of _____.”

Begin singing “*Books of the Old Testament*” for Old Testament stories or “*Books of the New Testament*” for New Testament stories (by Susan Nipp.; page 22 or 23 in “*Wee Sing Bible Songs*.” This book and tape are in the *Stepping Stones* cabinet). Open the Bible to the passage for the day (see schedule). Read the words slowly and meaningfully. Put the marker in the Bible and place the Bible back on the cloth. Before you extinguish the candle, say (Have the children say the scripture with you):

“I am going to extinguish the candle now. But Christ is still with us. The Bible tells us, ‘For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.’” (Matt 18:20)

Return the materials to the shelf.

✂ Take a moment here to rearrange children who are distracting each other, or to remove toys or other distractions that have appeared.

CEF MISSIONGRAM Flashcard Stories (approximately 10 minutes)

See Lesson Schedule. Have the children rearrange so that everyone can see the storybook. If you are beginning a new story, say:

“Today we are going to hear about ...” (or something similar)

If you are continuing a story from last week, say:

“Last week, you remember, you learned that ...” (or something similar)

Begin reading the story. Read one section. At the end of the section, there may be printed questions. If there are, review them with the children.

✂ Take a moment here to rearrange children who are distracting each other, or to remove toys or other distractions that have appeared.

We Pray to God (approximately 3 minutes)

Have the children rearrange back into a circle. Begin prayer by saying:

“Now it is time to pray to God. After we open this time of prayer with our special words, then we are going to be very quiet so that each of us can pray, in our hearts, to God. We will finish our prayer time by saying a prayer together. Let’s get ready to pray.”

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

Children: It is right to give thanks and praise.

Leader: Let us pray.”

Allow sufficient time for prayer. Be at home in the silence, giving the children time to pray. When the silent praying is over, say: *“Dear Lord, thank you for our time together today. Teach us, Lord, to hide your word in our hearts that we might not sin against you. Help us, Lord, to live for you and want to be your child. We ask in Jesus name.”* Or something in your own words. Then say:

“Let’s pray together,” and slowly recite:

September - January: Psalm 23.

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul.

He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever. (NIV)

February - June: The Lord’s Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. (NIV)

Communion Sunday with extended Stepping Stones — Extra Activities

Add these three activities on Communion Sunday with extended *Stepping Stones*

How to pray with the praying Elder during Intercessory Prayer. (approximately 4 minutes)

Begin by saying:

“Each Sunday one of our Elders prays the Intercessory Prayer. What should you and I be doing while the Elder prays? Listen to the prayer and agree with the Elder. How do we do that? When the Elder says something, we silently say to God something that shows God we want that to happen too! So Let’s say that the Elder prayed for someone who is sick to feel better, Then we would silently say to God, ‘please make them better Dear God.’ Let’s try praying in this way. I’ll say a prayer and you silently say to God something that shows God we want that to happen, too.”

Pray two or three prayer requests. “Lord be with the pastor as he preaches.” “Lord be with the Elders as they lead our church.” “Lord help us to serve you.” or for a current prayer request. End this time by saying

“Thank you, Lord, for hearing our prayers.”

The Salvation Hand (also add this activity on Communion Sundays when children are released to their parents) (See schedule for which finger to review) (approximately 5 minutes) Show the children the salvation hand. Begin by saying: *Let's pray. Dear Lord, thank you for this time. Help the children to understand the meaning of the salvation hand and that each one would understand what it means to be your child.*

On your own hand review the names for each finger. Have the children say the names with you on their own fingers. Then, review all the material in detail for the finger listed in the schedule.

After you have completed your review say: *Let's pray. Dear Lord, thank you for these children here today. I pray for the children who are your children. You know that they do, say and think things that displease you. They know that those things are sin. They know that Jesus died on the cross to pay for those sins. And they have asked Jesus to forgive give them and make them God's child. For those children, I pray that they would grow in their love for you by learning the Bible and praying to you daily. For the other children who do not know Jesus as Lord and Savior, I pray that the Holy Spirit would help them to understand that they do, say and think things that displease you, and that those things are sin. We all sin and need Jesus. I sin and need Jesus. Please give that child who is not your child the desire to become your child today. Enable that boy or girl to trust in Jesus alone for his or her salvation. Thank you Lord for your love. In your name we pray. Amen.*

The Stepping Stones Quiz (approximately 5 minutes)

You will find this question and answer game in the *Stepping Stones* cabinet. Play it for the allotted time. The quiz questions are from *First Catechism*.

Closing Songs (approximately 3 minutes)

Closing Hymn — See Lesson Schedule — Unlike the opening hymn, most of the children will likely *not* know this hymn. Teach it to them by saying portions and having them echo. Then, singing and echo. The goal is to have the group sing the first verse of the hymn with you.

Sing *Go Now in Peace* — Most of the children know this. They will sing with you once you begin.

Go In God's Name

Say a blessing to the group (Have the children say the scripture with you):

“Remember God's promise to those who love him: ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’” (Hebrews 13:5b)

Say: *“When someone comes for you, (name of greeter) will come and tell you.”*

Greeter: Bless each child as he or she is released to the parents. Say: *“God bless you this week. Thank you for coming to Stepping Stones today.”* Give each child a sticker. Make sure each child leaves with all of his or her belongings.

Other Hymns or Choruses (Sing with the children until their parents arrive)

The words and music for at least one song are provided. You may sing as many songs as you feel appropriate. Use the “Wee Sing Bible Songs” song book in the *Stepping Stones* cabinet if you need song ideas.

Or Play the Stepping Stones Quiz with the children until their parents arrive

You will find this question and answer game in the *Stepping Stones* cabinet. The questions and answers are from the *First Catechism*.

Closing Up

1. Neatly repack materials and return them to the *Stepping Stones* cabinet.
2. Note on lesson plan, CEF Story, or material box any problems that need addressing. Please tape a note directly to the item. Example: Story upset the children - tape a note to the story cover saying the story upset the children. Figures keep falling over - tape a note to materials box saying figures keep falling over. (Tape, paper, and pencils are in the file box.)
3. Close cabinet.

Stepping Stones to Worship
The Fall/Winter/Spring Lesson Plan Outline

Remember: We want the pace of *Sesame Street* with the mood of *Mister Rogers*.

Times

- ◆ Regular Stepping Stones is typically 40 minutes
- ◆ Communion Sunday Stepping Stones is typically 55 minutes
- ◆ Communion Sunday Stepping Stones on which children are returned to their parents is typically 30 minutes

Outline (times shown are Time for Activity / Cumulative Time)

1. (2 / 2 min) **Greeting** the children: “*The Lord be with you!*” or “*Christ is Risen!*”
2. (1 / 3 min) **Church Calendar**
3. (3 / 6 min) **Opening Songs:** *Come into His Presence* and Hymn
4. (3 / 9 min) Learning the **Basics**, rotating between:
The Nicene Creed, The 10 Commandments, and The Apostles Creed.

— **On Communion Sundays on which children are returned to their parents, skip to #9** —

5. (1 / 10 min) **Getting Ready** to Listen. Sing *Be Still and Know*. Say: “*When we sing these words, we know it is time to get ready to hear the story. So cross your legs — criss-cross applesauce, with your hands in your lap — and listen closely.*”
6. (5 / 15 min) **Presentation**
7. (5 / 20 min) **Discussion** Time. End by saying: “*Watch closely how I put these materials away.*”
8. (4 / 24 min) **Reading the Bible**
 - ? Begin by saying: “*We light the Christ candle to remind us that Christ is with us and that ‘all scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness so that the Man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.’*” (2 Tim 3:16-17)
 - ? Light the candle
 - ? Look at the Bible and say: “*This is the Bible. The story (parable) or scripture we heard today is in the Bible. Look, our story (parable) is in the Old (New) Testament in the book of _____*”.
 - ? Sing the Books of the Old or New Testament song (based on whether scripture is from Old or New Testament).
 - ? Read the Bible verse.
 - ? Before you extinguish the candle, say: “*I am going to extinguish the candle now. But Christ is still with us. The Bible tells us, ‘For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.’*” (Matt 18:20)

9. (10 / 34 min) CEF Missiongram Flashcard **Story**

10. (3 / 37 min) **Prayer Time.**

? Begin by saying: “*Now it is time to pray to God. After we open this time with our special words, then we are going to be very quiet so that each of us can pray, in our hearts, to God. We will finish our prayer time by saying a prayer together. Let’s get ready to pray.*”

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

Children: It is right to give thanks and praise.

Leader: Let us pray.”

? End with: “*Dear Lord, thank you for our time together today. Teach us, Lord, to hide your word in our hearts that we might not sin against you. Help us, Lord, to live for you and want to be your child. We ask in Jesus’ name.*”

? Then lead the group prayer of either *The Lord’s Prayer* or *The 23rd Psalm*.

On non-Communion Sundays, skip to #12

11. On Communion Sundays *on which children are returned to their parents, add:*
? (5 min) The Salvation Hand

On Communion Sundays *with extended Stepping Stones, add:*

? (4 min) Reviewing how to pray with the Elder during Intercessory Prayer,

? (5 min) The Salvation Hand, and

? (5 min) The Stepping Stones Quiz

12. Closing **Songs:** Hymn and *Go Now In Peace*.

13. **Dismissal:** Go in God’s Name

? Say the group blessing: “*Remember God’s promise to those who love him: Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.*” (Hebrews 13:5b)

? Say: “*When someone comes for you, (name of Greeter) will come and tell you.*”

? Then sing while waiting for parents or play Stepping Stones quiz.

Greeters’ Duties

Greeters have three duties:

- ◆ greet the children,
- ◆ work with the children to keep order in the room, and
- ◆ bless the children as they leave.