



STORIES **AND** RITUALS

LESSON 19

Stories & Rituals: The Bible in Broad Strokes

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Writers

Lindsay Barrett-Adler
Jan Berry Schroeder
The Rev. Sarah Hedgis
Victoria Hoppes
Andrew Kellner
Andrew Kuhn

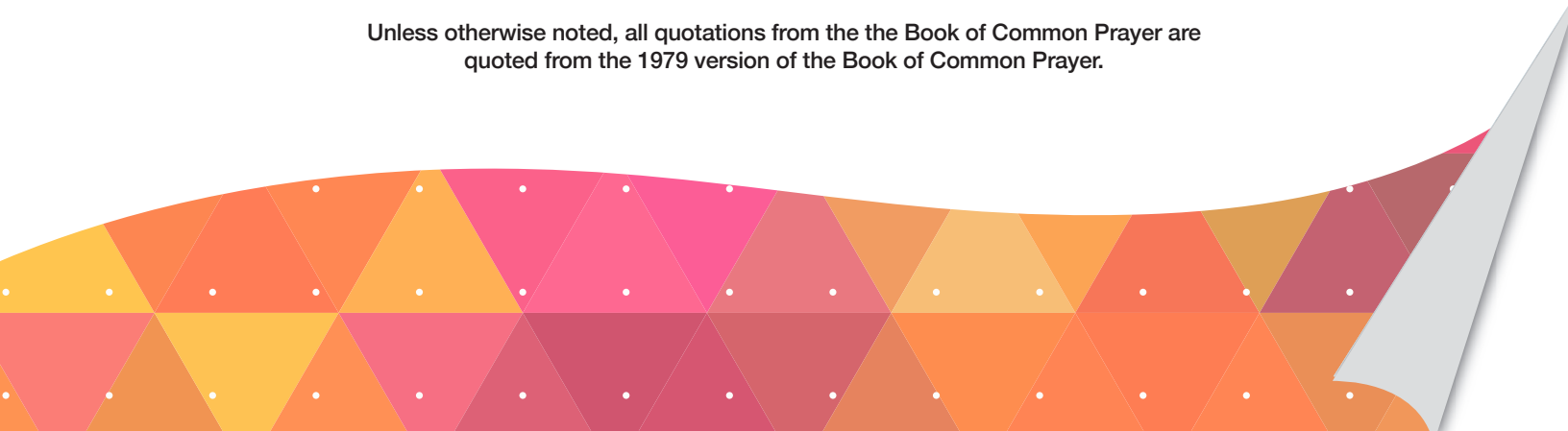
Editor

Victoria Hoppes

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Jesus Preaches in Nazareth

Texts: Luke 4:16-30

Big Idea: Nothing can stop us from sharing the Good News.

Lesson Objectives

Participants will:

1. Conclude that people form opinions based on their own biases by playing a game.
2. Recognize that we risk being rejected by hearing the story of Jesus preaching in Nazareth.
3. Identify the ways in which people face rejection by participating in a prayer ritual.

ACTIVITY (TIME)

Dive In (10 minutes)
Group Check-In

Community Builder (15 minutes)
Two Truths and a Lie

The Story (15 minutes)
Jesus Preaches in Nazareth

The Ritual (15 minutes)
Prophet Time

Dig Deeper (10 minutes)
Stay Strong

Wrap it Up (5 minutes)
Closing Prayer

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Nothing

- Paper • Pens or Pencils
- Bowl

- Copy of Lesson Sheet 19.1

- Soft, instrumental music (optional)
- Method for playing music (optional)
- Scroll with written text
- Candle • Lighter
- Photos of people

- Construction paper • Markers
- Pencils or pens • Scissors
- Method for playing music
- Soft, instrumental music

- Nothing

LESSON OVERVIEW



What's the Story?

Today's story is from Luke 4:16-30. In this passage, the people reject Jesus in his hometown of Nazareth after he reads in the synagogue on the Sabbath. After he is driven out of town, he walks through the crowd and goes on his way.

In this passage, Jesus faces a road block in sharing the good news he has been sent to bring. Jesus is declaring himself as the fulfillment of Scripture to people who have known him his entire life. They have waited 2000 years for this promise to be fulfilled, but when the truth is revealed to them, they find it difficult to believe. It's a letdown in a way, and the people rebel against him.



What's the "Big Idea?"

Today's story focuses on the big idea that *nothing can stop us from sharing the Good News*. Even though his friends and neighbors reject him, Jesus is not deterred. In fact, he is taken to "the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff." (Luke 4:29) But Jesus just walks straight through the angry mob and moves forward on his journey to proclaim the Good News!



What's the Symbol?

The Good News of Christ comes from Scripture. In today's story, this Scripture is proclaimed from a scroll in the synagogue. Find a sheet of paper or parchment that looks like a scroll, and write the words of Luke 4:18-19 on it.



What's the Ritual?

In today's ritual, participants will be invited into the worship area and asked to pick up a photo to show the group. Then, they will read a passage of Scripture and return to their seat with all eyes fixed on them to re-enact and experience what Jesus may have felt. Finally, they will draw parallels to their own lives and the feelings of rejection they experience.



Setting Up Your Space

Create a sacred space by designating a table to use as an "altar." Cover it with a cloth or material. Place a candle and cross on the table, along with the scroll, which you will make in advance. Group photos of people around the scroll. If you are using the Community Builder activity, prep all the materials needed for the game.

DIVE IN (10 MINUTES)

Group Check-In

Materials:

- Nothing

During the session:

- Open your session with a quick prayer. Use this one or a prayer of your own:
Holy Lord, open our eyes, ears, and hearts to see your love and faithfulness in the world around us. Help us see your love for us in your Word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.
- **Let's start our time together by sharing some of the great and not-so-great things that have happened to us this week. What were the high points and low points of your week?** Go around the group and invite everyone to share.

COMMUNITY BUILDER (15 MINUTES)

Two Truths and a Lie

Materials:

- Paper
- Pens or Pencils
- Bowl

During the session:

- Say: **How well do you think we know each other? Let's find out!**
- Hand each participant a sheet of paper and a pencil or pen. Instruct them to write the numbers 1, 2, 3 down the left side of their paper.
- Invite participants to write down two things that are true about them and one thing that is not true. Encourage participants to think of a lie that is believable. It should not be obvious.
- Ask everyone to write their name on their paper, fold it, and put it in the bowl.
- Hand the bowl to a member of the group, and invite them to choose a paper to read. The person's name is read, and then the three items listed are read. The group has to guess which one is a lie.
- After the group has guessed, pass the bowl to another person. Invite them to draw a different paper from the bowl and read it aloud. The group again tries to determine which statement is the lie.

COMMUNITY BUILDER - CONTINUED

- Continue playing the game until all of the papers have been read. After the group has read all of the papers, ask the following questions:
- Was your “lie” guessed? What made it easy or hard to guess someone’s “lie?” *[Answers will vary.]*
- If your lie was guessed correctly, what was it like to have your “truth” so well known that your lie was identified? *[Answers will vary, but may include: surprising, unsurprising, scary, unsettling, etc.]*
- If your lie was not guessed, did you feel that people didn’t know you well? Why or why not? *[Answers will vary.]*



THE STORY

(15 MINUTES)

Jesus Preaches in Nazareth

Materials:

- Copy of Lesson Sheet 19.1

Before the session:

- Make a copy of Lesson Sheet 19.1
- Practice reading through the story several times so you are familiar with it.

During the session:

- Tell the story on Lesson Sheet 19.1.
- After the story ask: **What is this story telling us about God?** *[Answers will vary but may include: God fulfills God's promises; the world is a broken place; sometimes the good news seems too good to be true, etc.]*
- **What is this story telling us about humanity?** *[Answers will vary, but may include: humanity clings to worldly opinions; we cannot always recognize God even when God is starting us in the face, sometimes we face rejection, etc.]*
- **What is the story telling us about the world?** *[Answers will vary, but may include: the world is a broken place; Scripture is fulfilled and revealed whether or not the world recognizes the truth; God is perfect but people do not live in a perfect world, etc.]*
- **Sometimes the truth can be hard for people to hear. Sometimes people face rejection or persecution when talking about the Good News. When we are faced with rejection, we should follow Jesus' lead and not let that stop us. We must learn to walk through the haters and the doubters and stay on the path upon which God has us travel.**

THE RITUAL (15 MINUTES)

Prophet Time

Materials:

- Soft, instrumental music (*optional*)
- Method for playing music (*optional*)
- Candle
- Scroll with written text
- Lighter
- Photos of people

Before the session:

- Use paper or parchment to make a scroll with the text of Luke 4:18-19 written on it.
- Gather photos of people. You may use photos of the group, or photos you find from articles, magazines, etc.

During the session:

- Ask for a volunteer to light the candle. If you are playing music, begin playing it softly.
- What do you think this candle represents? *[Answers will vary, but may include: the light of Christ, a light in the darkness, God's love, etc.]*
- **We all belong to this group and community. But at times things happen in our lives when we feel like we do not belong at all. We have created a sacred space by lighting the candle and inviting God into our midst. One by one you are going to come forward and read from this scroll.**
- Show participants the scroll. **As you read the scroll, think of the story and imagine what it was like for both Jesus and the people who heard him. Consider times when you have felt rejected by others, and times when you have participated in rejecting someone.**
- **We will begin with one person and move to the next person until all have read.**
- Invite participants come forward one at a time. Before they read the scroll, invite them to pick up a photo and show it to the group while they read.
- When each individual has finished reading, invite the group to fix their eyes on the reader and look at them as they walk to their seat and sit down.
- After everyone has read, ask:
 - What did you experience during your reading of the scroll? *[Answers will vary.]*
 - What are examples of when someone might experience rejection in life? *[Answers will vary.]*
 - What are examples of when you might participate, intentionally or unintentionally, rejecting others? *[Answers will vary.]*
- Close this activity with prayer. Use a prayer of confession, or another prayer of your choice.

DIG DEEPER (10 MINUTES)

Stay Strong

Materials:

- 8 ½ x11” sheets of construction paper (one per participant)
- Method for playing music
- Pencils or pens
- Scissors
- Markers
- Tape
- Soft, instrumental music

During the session:

- In today’s story, Jesus experiences rejection by people who have known him all his life. This happens to us too in our schools, homes, churches and communities. It’s a story we can relate to!
- But nothing could stop Jesus from spreading the good news. Sometimes we too must risk rejection or being judged to stand up for what we believe in and live the life of a follower of Jesus.
- Take a piece of paper and pencil, and trace around one of your hands. Then cut it out with a pair of scissors. When you are done, have someone tape your hand tracing to your back.
- Allow 5 minutes for participants to complete the work.
- Pass out a marker to each participant. **We must be strong in our faith, even when we get rejected or looked down upon. So today we are going to build one another up!**
- Think about the people in this room and the many gifts God has distributed among us. Things like being a good listener, being .compassionate and caring, or lifting people’s spirits through acts of kindness and gentle humor.
- I’m going to play some quiet music. While it plays, walk around and write a positive attribute or strength on another person’s hand tracing. **Do this for everyone in the group!**
- Begin playing music. Give participants enough time to write so that everyone has written at least one “gift” on each person’s hand tracing.
- Send the tracings home with participants.

WRAP IT UP (5 MINUTES)

Closing Prayer

Invite the group to share any prayer concerns or requests they may have for the week. Close your time together in prayer. Use the following or pray your own prayer:

Be with us, O Lord, and surround us with your loving protection; let your holy angels dwell with us to preserve us in peace; and let your blessing be upon us always through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lesson Sheet 19.1

Jesus Preaches in Nazareth

A story from Luke:

Jesus went to his hometown of Nazareth in Galilee. By now he was becoming well known and he would teach in the synagogues where everyone liked him. On the Sabbath he went to service as he had been raised to do and stood up to read. He was handed the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, and unrolled it to the place where it is written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

He rolled the scroll back up, handed it to the attendant and sat down. Everyone was looking at him and he said, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” Everyone told each other that he had done a good job. They knew him, and when they asked if he wasn’t Joseph the carpenter’s son, he said: “Surely you will quote the proverb to me, ‘Physician, heal yourself!’ Perform a miracle here like you did in Capernaum.”

He went on to tell them that a prophet is not accepted in his hometown, and used examples of other men who were not recognized as prophets in the towns where they lived. When he said this, it made the people mad! They got up and chased him out of town towards a hill and attempted to throw him down a cliff. But Jesus calmly walked through the crowd and went on his way.