

The Early Church

Bible Story: The Early Church • *John 13:34-35; Acts 2:42-47, 3:32-37*

Memory Verse: “I have come so they may have life. I want them to have it in the fullest possible way.” *John 10:10b, NIV*

Bottom Line: Live like people matter.

Key Question: How can you live like people matter?

Opening activity (10-15 minutes)

1. Take a Snapshot

[Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Create: an activity that explores spiritual ideas through the process of drawing, building, and designing

What You Need: paper, markers, stop watch or timing device

What You Do:

- **Give** the students a sheet of paper and set out markers within reach of each person.
- **Instruct** them to draw a picture of or write down what they think it means to be thoughtful.
- **Explain** the rules.
 - They must complete their picture in one minute.
 - They must use at least 4 different colors.
 - And since it's about being “THOUGHTful,” they must draw by placing the paper on top of their heads.
- **Start** the timer and signal everyone to begin.
- After one minute, **ask** everyone to stop then **let** them take turns sharing their pictures and what the story they tell.
- **Ask** kids:
 - What do you want God to say someday about the way you treated others?
 - What gets in the way and keeps us from being thoughtful and treating others like they matter to us and to God?

Wrap Up and Say:

“Thoughtfulness is one way we can show people that they matter to God. People—all people—matter to Him. They matter to God not because they’re nice, smart, talented, rich, cool, or beautiful. They matter because they’re created by Him and made in His image. We can’t love God and not care about the things He cares about. We can’t say we love God and treat people like they don’t matter.”

Catch on activity (10-15 Minutes)

2. Bible Story Extension

[Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

Made to Explore: an activity that extends learning through hands on experimentation and discovery

What You Need: Bible, yardstick, string or yarn

What You Do:

- **Read** John 13:34-35.
- **Ask**, “What does Jesus say is the most obvious way to tell if a person is one of His followers?”
- **Form** a tight circle, everyone facing the middle.
- **Read** Acts 2:42-47, pausing after each sentence for students to take a small step backwards every time they hear evidence of the Early Church spreading out, reaching out, and following Jesus as described in John 13:34-35.
- **Invite** the group to do an experiment and then make some observations and comparisons.
 - **Give** each person a length of string.
 - **Tell** students to tie each of their strings just above the halfway point at one end of the yardstick.
 - **Place** the yardstick on the floor in the middle of the group.
 - **Ask** all but one person to let go of their strings, and then see if that person can raise the yardstick to an upright position by pulling on the string. (It won’t work.) Let others try taking a turn.
 - Next, ask two students to each pick up a string and try to raise the stick. (It might work.) Again, let others take turns trying.
 - Finally, ask all the kids to pick up a string.
 - **Instruct** them to gently pull together with even tension. If they work together, they should be able to raise the yardstick to an upright position.
- **Discuss:**
 - How did working together to lift the yardstick remind you of the Early Church?
 - What are some ways we can lift others up and make them feel like they matter to us and to God?

Wrap Up and Say:

“When we live like people matter, we show them respect and treat them the way we want to be treated. We help them when they need it. We encourage or lift them up when they are hurting or going through a tough time. Showing someone that they matter can be as simple as smiling and asking them how things are going. It can be as easy as talking to a kid everyone else overlooks. Doing something nice for someone we don’t normally do things for might feel awkward or scary. But that’s okay. Ask God for courage to do a hard thing like that. He won’t let you down.”

If time allows

3. Discussion Questions

[Talk about God | Application Activity]

Made to Connect: an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

Ask:

- Do you think someone can ever be too nice to people? Explain.
- Picture Jesus at your age. How might He have treated others? Do you think He'd be one of the popular kids? Why?
- Acts 2 doesn't mention any kids, but they were obviously there. How do you think someone your age may have participated in the things the Early Church did for one another?
- As great as the Early Church was, no doubt some people were easier to love than others. When you meet someone you don't like, how can you show that person she matters and not be fake about it?
- Is it okay if some people matter MORE to you than others? Why?
- What are you going to do, starting now, to show the people around you that they matter?

Pray and Dismiss