



CHILDREN

In Church History

Youth Lesson Plan Edition

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LISTEN TO THE CHILDREN OF THE PAST HEAR THE LESSONS FOR TODAY

Community of Christ youth have made an impact throughout the history of our faith community. From a young teenage boy kneeling in a grove searching for answers to life's most difficult questions, to an elementary school student fighting to support his Polish friends in Germany during World War II, we have much to learn from the youth of the past.

We invite you to explore this expanded edition of "Children in Church History," including lesson plans, and discover new ways of sharing with our youth the powerful lessons from Community of Christ's past. By looking through the lens of history, we encourage adults and children alike to discover the connections between our shared past and today's Mission Initiatives and Enduring Principles.

It is also our hope that as you and your students read the stories of the past, and explore the lesson plans, you will hear the voices of our youth teaching us about improving the world, healing broken relationships, and pursuing peace. May the youth of the past open our hearts and minds to listen more intently to what the youth of today's Community of Christ have to teach our faith community.

*Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them,
for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.*

~ Matthew 19:13-14

GRACE AND GENEROSITY



Mansion House in Nauvoo, Illinois.

Joseph Smith III and the Nauvoo Boys

Peter Schenk arrived in Nauvoo as a curious boy in 1848. The young German immigrant resided in the small river town for more than fifty years and was considered one of the more influential and highly respected citizens of Nauvoo. When the local newspaper, *The Independent*, prepared to celebrate its 50th anniversary, Peter wrote a letter to the editor. Of all the memories and experiences shared during his time in Illinois, he chose to share a story from his childhood that involved a memorable interaction with Joseph Smith III that left a lasting impression.

One day, while walking home from school with his friends, Peter noticed some delicious-looking apples on the ground in the Smith family yard. The boys quietly sneaked to the trees and began filling their arms and pockets with apples. Just as they collected their fill and prepared to leave, they were surprised to see Joseph Smith III walking toward them. Knowing he was caught red-handed, Peter quickly emptied his pockets and dropped all of the apples in his arms, except for the one he was eating. Even more surprising than Joseph Smith III's sudden



Portrait of Joseph Smith III.

appearance was his response to the boys. He said to the young apple thieves, “Those apples are no good, throw them away, and come back to the house with me, and I’ll give you some good ones.” Peter and his friends followed Joseph into the house where they found Joseph’s mother, Emma, and received several very good apples. The boys then continued on their journey home “feeling mighty happy at being left off so easy.” Peter Schenk and his friends experienced Grace and Generosity at the Smith house that day.

Thoughts to Consider:

- Do you think Joseph Smith III did the right thing by forgiving the boys and offering them better apples from inside Emma’s house?
- Has there ever been a time when you were caught disobeying, like the boys stealing apples from Joseph and Emma’s orchard? How did you feel when that happened?
- Do you remember a time when you forgave someone like Joseph Smith III forgave the boys stealing his apples?

~ YOUTH ACTIVITY ~

Materials Needed:

- Standard paper
- Pens or pencils (for writing)

Welcome

Gather the youth together and welcome them to today's session.

Opening Discussion

Consider engaging the youth with one or two of the following questions:

- What do you think the word “grace” means?
- What do you think the word “generosity” means?

Share the Story “Grace and Generosity”

Note to instructor: Share the story in a way that will be engaging to the age group(s) you are teaching.

Class Discussion

- Do you think Joseph Smith III did the right thing by forgiving the boys?
- Why do you think Joseph chose not to punish the boys, but instead gave them good apples?
- How do you think Jesus would respond to this situation? How would you respond to someone stealing from you?
- Do you remember a time when you forgave someone, like Joseph Smith III forgave the boys stealing his apples?
- Joseph Smith III showed grace by forgiving the boys. Did the boys do anything to earn that grace?
- When has someone showed you grace and generosity? How did it make you feel to receive grace and generosity from others?

Group Activity

Invite the youth to gather at a table where paper and writing utensils are available and within reach.

Invite each individual to write about a situation where someone is in need or has done something wrong.

Note to instructor: Examples of situations could be a classmate always borrowing pencils from you, a sibling taking your tablet to play games, a homeless person on the street.

When the students have finished writing their experiences, collect all of the papers and read the examples one at a time. Following the end of each individual reading, ask the students how they could respond with grace or generosity to the individual situation. When you have finished reading the last example and discussed responses, ask the students, “Why do we need grace from others and from God?”

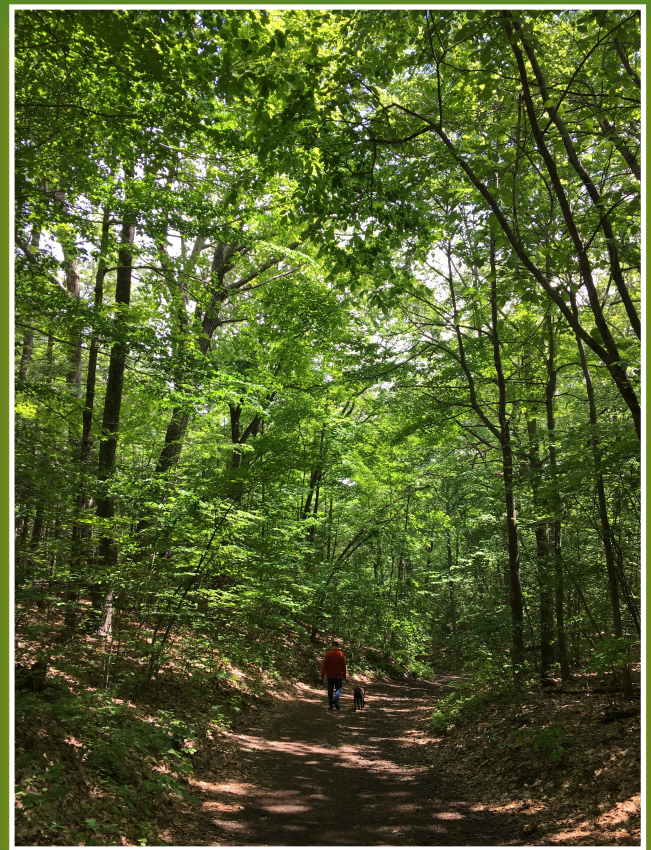
Closing Thoughts

Gather the students together, whether sitting in a circle or at their work tables. Invite those gathered to sing the hymn, “From You I Receive,” in *Community of Christ Sings*, Hymn #611.

Note to instructor: Sing the song several times so the class can learn it.

End the activity by encouraging the students to look for ways this week to be gracious and generous towards someone in their life. Close with the Mission Prayer.

SACREDNESS OF CREATION



Young Joseph and Emma in Prayer

Generations of church members have been drawn to the natural environment when searching for answers to life's most difficult questions. As a teenager, Joseph Smith, Jr. retired to a grove behind his boyhood home at a time when he was wrestling with questions about his personal salvation.

At a young age, Emma Smith went to a forested area near her home to pray for her father, Isaac Hale. Emma was worried about his relationship with God. While she prayed, Isaac happened to be walking through the woods nearby and overheard Emma's heartfelt prayer on his behalf. He was so touched by his daughter's compassion and concern that he later joined his family's Methodist faith.

Joseph and Emma each had an experience with God while on their knees in prayer and surrounded by the beauty of creation. In the same way, church members today seek guidance and understanding by finding a quiet place surrounded by nature at church campgrounds and reunions around the world. In nature we find the Peace of Christ.

Thoughts to Consider:

- Is there a special place that you really enjoy? Is it at the reunion grounds, in the forest, near a lake, or a dusty sand dune? Share with your friend, or with the class, a description of this special place and why it is significant to you.
- For Joseph and Emma, they went to nature to feel close to God. Is there a special place where you feel God's presence?

~ YOUTH ACTIVITY ~

Materials Needed:

- Construction paper
- Tools for drawing (colored pencils, markers, crayons, and/or paint)

Welcome

Gather the youth together and welcome them to the activity. While the group is settling down, consider singing the hymn, “This is God’s Wondrous World” (CCS #136).

Opening Discussion

Consider engaging the youth with one or two of the following questions:

- The hymn we sang included lots of examples of God’s creation. What were some of the examples of nature that you remember singing about?
- The hymn writer talks about nature as sacred. What does the word “sacred” mean to you?
- What are some examples of sacred places?

Share the Story “Sacredness of Creation”

Note to instructor: Share the story in a way that will be engaging to the age group(s) you are teaching.

Class Discussion

- How does being in nature make you feel?
- Is there a special place in nature that you really enjoy? Is it at the reunion grounds, in the forest, near a lake, or a dusty sand dune? Share with the class what that special place is like for you.
- In our story today, Joseph and Emma went to nature to feel close to God. Is there a special place where you feel close to God?

Group Activity

Invite the youth to gather at a table where construction paper and art supplies are available and within reach of the students.

Invite each individual to draw or paint a picture of a place in nature where they feel close to God. This can be a real place/location or an imaginary place. If the students do not wish to draw, encourage them to consider writing a poem or song.

While the youth are working on their art pieces, take the time to encourage them in their activity. Share ideas with those who are struggling to identify a place that connects with the Enduring Principle, “Sacredness of Creation.”

Note to instructor: If the weather is nice, consider taking the class outside to explore the nature surrounding your location. Draw their eyes to the sacredness of God’s creation in their world. When your exploratory time is over, gather the students together to share in the closing activity.

Closing Thoughts

Gather the students together, whether sitting in a circle or at their work tables. Invite those gathered to share their drawing and the meaning behind the place/object featured in the drawing. If the student did not create a drawing, encourage them to share an experience they had in a place where they felt closer to God.

Note to instructor: Draw your own picture (prior to the start of the class) and share your art piece first to help assist those who are feeling shy or anxious about sharing with the group.

End the activity with the Mission Prayer.

CONTINUING REVELATION

The first few years of Elbert Smith's life were spent in Nauvoo and Plano. Both communities were at the heart of church life. However, Elbert didn't live in Illinois long as most of his youth was lived in a rural area of northwestern Iowa with his mother and grandparents. There was no congregation and only one church family in the area. Elbert described their situation as "isolated saints," feeling forgotten by the larger church at times.

This absence of a structured church life did not prevent Elbert from having an active spiritual life on the plains of Iowa. Some of his earliest spiritual experiences were received in Iowa's vast and wide prairie land. It was while walking in a field of bright pink, purple and white wild flowers at six years of age that Elbert encountered an experience with God that he would long remember. He shares the story:

"Perhaps it was the things my mother had told me, or there may have been some subconscious memory of days in Nauvoo—memories of my father. At least I was thinking of him. And then there came upon me unmistakably the testimony of the Spirit: when I grew up to manhood, I was to go out and preach the same message that father had preached - I was to take up the same work and carry it on. I was too young to understand all the implications of that testimony to me, but I never forgot it. It remained to stabilize my life. From then on, increasingly I endeavored under difficulties to make preparation. I did not know it, but spiritually my face had been turned back toward Zion."

Years later, Elbert lived out the revelation he received among the wildflowers. He served as a missionary throughout the United States

and in the very areas where his father had served decades earlier. Like his father, Elbert served as an editor for the *Saints' Herald* and in the First Presidency. Elbert's final ministry was serving as the presiding evangelist.

Thoughts to Consider:

- Elbert referred to his family as the "isolated saints" because of their geographical distance from an active church community.
- Besides geography, are there additional ways we isolate ourselves from God or our faith community?
- Elbert's experience with the Divine happened when surrounded by nature. Is there a connection between the Enduring Principles: Continuing Revelation and Sacredness of Creation?



Elbert A. Smith

~ YOUTH ACTIVITY ~

Materials Needed:

- Community of Christ Doctrine & Covenants

Welcome

Gather the youth together and welcome them to the activity.

Opening Discussion

Consider engaging the youth with one or two of the following questions:

- What does Revelation mean? Do you ever have a lightbulb moment, or an idea that would help someone?
- Who do you think God communicates with and how? Do you think God helps us find ways to help others?

Share the Story “Continuing Revelation”

Note to instructor: Share the story in a way that will be engaging to the age group(s) you are teaching.

Class Discussion

- How have you felt God with you?
- When has God answered a question for you or made you feel you were not alone?
- What is something that you have had revealed to you? Possible examples include the moment you learned you were moving or you were going to have a new sibling.
- Show the class the *Doctrine and Covenants*. *Note to instructor: Ask the class if they know what the Doctrine and Covenants is and how it is expanded with new sections. If the students are not familiar with the Doctrine and Covenants, briefly talk about the open canon of scripture and the role of the Community of Christ prophet/president.*

Group Activity

Invite the youth to gather to a shared place where everyone can hear.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 163: 3a-b to the class. Invite the students to create short skits where they act out what they think this scripture is talking about. Before the class creates their skits, ask the class what Zion means.

Note to instructor: Have a brief discussion on Zion, but devote most of the time to the children creating their unique skits. If there are enough kids have them divide into more than one group for the skits.

Elbert Smith’s revelation as a young boy refocused him on Zion and made him feel less alone. Why do you think many revelations are about Zion? What does Zion or the peaceable Kingdom of God look like?

Other possible discussions to consider are answers to the questions: “What does a peaceful world look like?” Discuss the role of peacekeepers in the world and ways we create Zion in our own community (by being a peacekeeper).

Closing Thoughts

Gather the students together, whether sitting in a circle or at their work tables. Ask the question, “How do we listen to God’s voice?”

Encourage the students to be aware of how God may be trying to speak to them this week. End the activity with the Mission Prayer.

WORTH OF ALL PERSONS

After the State of Illinois revoked the Nauvoo charter, the community attempted to keep peace and order through various policing measures. During this period the “Whistling and Whittling Brigade,” made of teenage boys, was used to intimidate strangers who appeared to be threats to the community. The brigade’s goal literally was to chase offenders out of town.

In 1845, young Joseph Smith III saw the brigade intimidating Austin Cowles, an old family friend and former member of the church. Cowles was a former member of the high council, a counselor in William Marks’ Nauvoo Stake Presidency, and a later dissenter. Because Cowles had left the church, for many church members they viewed him as a threat to the church and no longer a friend.

Cowles had returned to Nauvoo, likely in the fall of 1845, and soon found himself surrounded by thirty young men and boys “whistling, and whittling towards him with wicked looking knives,” and following him wherever he went throughout the day. Joseph saw Cowles about 4:00 p.m. as he headed toward the ferry to make his departure and spoke to him briefly. On cue, “his escort struck up their din of whistling and whittling, hustling the poor old man with the ends of broken boards and the sticks they were whittling.”

Though thirteen-year-old Joseph attempted to stop the harassment, his intervention seemed only to intensify their efforts. He found it especially troubling that church members who had long complained of the “intolerance of bigotry” had themselves become bigots. The persecuted had become persecutors. Joseph wrapped up his story with a plea that God would “soon send the day when the curse of intolerance may be known no more in the land.”

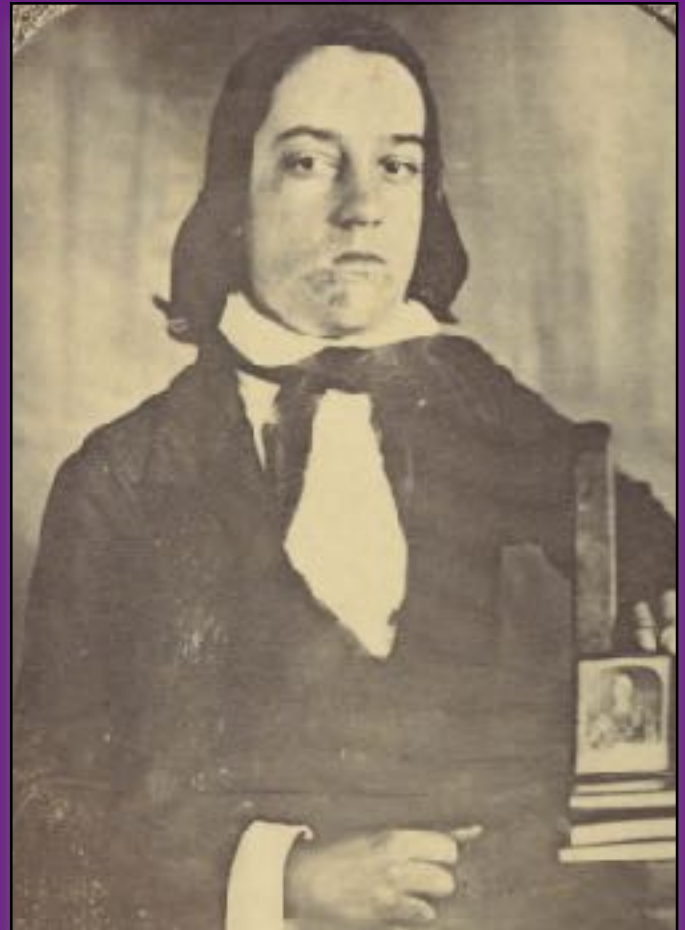


Image of young Joseph Smith III

Joseph stood up to the bullies in Nauvoo and it taught him that intolerance was unacceptable no matter who the persecutor may be.

Thoughts to Consider:

- Has there been a time in your life when you felt bullied, similar to how Joseph’s friend, Austin, was feeling?
- Was there someone in your life who stood up for you, like Joseph did for Austin?
- Have you ever stood up to a bully to protect yourself or a good friend?

~ YOUTH ACTIVITY ~

Materials Needed:

- Construction paper or a white board
- Tools for drawing (colored pencils, pens, markers, crayons, etc.)

Welcome

Gather the youth together and welcome them to the activity.

Opening Discussion

Consider engaging the youth with one or both of the following questions:

- What do you think it means for a person to have worth?
- How is having worth the same or different from being worthy?

Share the Story “Worth of All Persons”

Note to instructor: Share the story in a way that will be engaging to the age group(s) you are teaching.

Class Discussion

- How do you think God felt about the bullies in this story? Does God love everyone even when they do hurtful things to others?
- Why do you think some people bully others?
- Have you or someone you know ever thought they were not worthy?
- Have you or someone you know ever felt that they were not accepted by others?
- Has there been a time in your life when you felt bullied, similar to how Joseph’s friend, Austin, was feeling? Was there someone in your life that stood up for you, like Joseph did for Austin?
- Have you ever stood up to a bully to protect yourself or others?
- How can we remind people that they are loved by God and all have worth to God?

Group Activity

Invite the youth to gather around so all can hear and participate.

Have the class come up with affirmations to remind themselves and others that they are loved by God and precious to God. Give each student paper so they can brain-storm affirmations. Write the class affirmations on the chart paper or white board for the whole class to see.

Note to instructor: Examples of affirmations are “God loves me, God loves you, God loves everyone” or “We are all God’s children.”

Create actions to go with the class’s favorite affirmations to make them easier to remember.

Next have the class practice standing up to a bully. First practice a scenario where only one student stands up to the bully. Repeat exercise, except now have the rest of the class support the person standing up to the bully.

Closing Thoughts

Gather the students together, whether sitting in a circle or at their work tables. Invite each student to choose an affirmation they really like. Encourage them to share this affirmation with someone else this week. In closing, prompt the young people to realize everyone they meet and talk to in the coming week deserves to be treated fairly and that everyone sees things from their own unique perspective.

End the activity with the Mission Prayer.

ALL ARE CALLED

In 1958, at age eleven, Bruce Crockett returned to Shriners Hospital in San Francisco for more surgery to help offset the residual effects of having had polio in 1948. He had already had three muscle transplant surgeries in 1954-55 and 1957. Bruce was not looking forward to being in the hospital again, especially during an era when parents were not allowed to visit their children in person, to hug, to touch, to kiss. The patients visited their parents on Sunday afternoon through a second story window, yelling back and forth.

Bruce soon became aware of the need for community amongst the patients. The children went to school together, lived together on the ward, but did not have moments to slow down, worship, pray, or respond to uplifting music. Bruce felt an urge to hold church on the ward. He shared, *“I felt it was important for us to be connected in this setting. I wrote my parents and asked them to contact Reverend Kessel, my Pastor at the Methodist church where I attended with my family. Reverend Kessel came to the hospital and brought my Bible. The Hospital allowed my Pastor to visit me in person only once.”*

With the help of the head nurse, a small room and phonograph were reserved for a weekly service and Tennessee Ernie Ford Gospel Music was offered for the music. On Saturday, Bruce went around the ward and invited the other kids to come to church on Sunday in the room. The Custodian took the bed and

furniture out of the room while Bruce set up the record player.

The guests arrived on crutches, in wheel chairs, and some on gurneys. It was standing room only. Bruce began the service by reciting the 23rd Psalm and then invited the kids to pray the Lord’s prayer. A segment of the story of Jesus came next from one of the gospels. After Bruce read a story about Jesus, he asked his fellow patients if they wanted to hear some gospel music. They all enthusiastically agreed. Bruce described what happened next, *“I put on the most upbeat gospel song on the recording and to my surprise the kids started bouncing up and down in their wheelchairs and on their gurneys and those on crutches started hopping on one foot. The Head Nurse was smiling in the doorway but when we put on another upbeat song she intervened to slow things down because we were all sweating from dancing.”*

Bruce continued as worship leader until he was released from the hospital. The church services were very popular – especially the dancing. The ministry begun at the Shriners Hospital in 1958 continued long into Bruce’s adulthood as an appointee minister and spiritual formation coordinator in Community of Christ.

Thoughts to Consider:

- What lessons do we learn from Bruce Crockett’s story?
- How does this story reflect the Enduring Principle, All Are Called?



Image of Bruce Crockett at age 11.

~ YOUTH ACTIVITY ~

Materials Needed:

- Hymnal: *Community of Christ Sings!*

Welcome

Gather the youth together and invite them to sing with you, “Jesus is Calling” in *Community of Christ Sings*, hymn #578.

Note to instructor: If the students are not old enough to read well or are unfamiliar with this hymn, just sing one verse three times so the students can learn the song and absorb the meaning.

Opening Discussion

Consider engaging the youth with one or both of the following questions:

- What do you think it means to have a calling from God?
- What type of people do you think God calls?

Share the Story “All Are Called”

Note to instructor: Share the story in a way that will be engaging to the age group(s) you are teaching.

Class Discussion

- Bruce felt called to organize church services, what are examples of a calling in the Bible? Some examples include Jonah, Samuel, the twelve disciples.
- What are examples of a calling in your congregation? *Note to instructor: If the students need to be prompted, talk about people who visit the sick, organize church events, also priesthood members and how they are called for specific roles, or the pastor.*
- What do you think God is calling you to do? Does God have a call for you at school or in your neighborhood?

Group Activity

Invite the youth to gather around so all can hear and participate.

The activity for today is the “Calling Game.” Pick one student to be the “caller.” Have the rest of the class gather on the opposite side of the room from the caller. Have the caller shout out a direction of how each person should cross the room. Have each student respond to the prompt, but cross the room in a different/alternative way. For example, the caller may say cross the room down low. The first student may crawl across the floor, the second student might decide to roll, another may crab walk.

Note to instructor: The goal is for the students to be creative and each uniquely answer/respond to the call.

Repeat the activity a few times allowing each of the students an opportunity to be the caller.

Discuss how the activity and how each person achieved the same goal, but in their own way. Explore how each person has unique talents and skills and therefore can help God in different ways.

Closing Thoughts

Gather the students together, whether sitting in a circle or at their work tables. Encourage them to be alert to how God is calling them as individuals. Ask them to consider how they can share their abilities and talents with their friends, family, neighbors, and school.

End the activity with the Mission Prayer.

RESPONSIBLE CHOICES

Throughout World War II, church members were forced to make responsible choices. Wilhem Kreisle of Nuremberg, Germany, gave a pair of shoes to a slave laborer struggling to survive. For his act of compassion, Kreisle was arrested, tried, and sentenced to the Dachau extermination camp. During the next four years, he endured the threat of being ushered into a camp death chamber.

Youth in the church also were making difficult choices during World War II to help those who were suffering. Georg Sofke, an 11-year-old child in Germany, was forced to make Responsible Choices when it came to his friendship with a young Polish couple. In 1942, the couple moved into the same house where the Sofke family lived. While Georg's mother was at work during the day, Georg would spend time with the couple. Shortly after their arrival, the young wife had her first baby. When the child was about a year old it became gravely ill and died. Georg's mother was unable to take time off work to attend the funeral. However, Georg chose to support his friends by attending. Fortunately, the funeral was held in the morning hours, which allowed Georg to go to the service before school.



Image of Georg Sofke

While Georg walked to the funeral service that morning, he bumped into his school teacher who also was a former major in the army and a member of the Nazi party. The teacher was made aware of Georg's plans to attend the funeral and did not approve.

When Georg arrived in class, the teacher singled him out and said, "Look at Sofke there. He calls himself a German. I don't suppose he's noticed we are in the fifth year of the war, for it seems he attends the funeral services of his enemies."

Georg knew personally about the tragedy of war as his older brother had been killed during the conflict. Choosing to support the young couple, despite being persecuted by the teacher in front of his classmates, might have been a difficult choice for most 11-year-olds. However, it wasn't difficult for Georg. As an adult, he reflected on his decision and said, "I had learned the commandment of the Lord, 'Love your enemies,' and in my home the word of God was held in greatest esteem."

Thoughts to Consider:

- Do you think it took courage for Georg to stand up for his neighbors?
- Do you think Georg did the right thing?
- Was there ever a time when you had the courage to defend someone who needed help and support?

~ YOUTH ACTIVITY ~

Materials Needed:

- A ball of yarn or string

Welcome

Gather the youth together and welcome them to today's session.

Opening Discussion

Consider engaging the youth with one or both of the following questions:

- What kind of choices do you make every day? Write or talk to the person next to you about each step of your morning before school.
- What are examples of irresponsible choices? What are examples of responsible choices? Are there rules you need to follow at home and at school?

Share the Story “Responsible Choices”

Note to instructor: Share the story in a way that will be engaging to the age group(s) you are teaching.

Class Discussion

- The choices we make affect our lives but also the lives of the people around us. How did Georg's choice to attend the funeral and be friends with the Polish family affect him? How did it affect the grieving parents? What about his classmates?
- What makes it hard to make responsible choices? What makes it easy?

Group Activity

Invite the youth to gather around in a circle so all can hear and participate.

Invite the class to pass the ball of yarn across the circle while holding onto the end of the yarn. Before passing the yarn, have the student say a choice that they can make this week.

Note to the instructor: Go first stating a choice and pass the string to give the students an example to follow. A variation for older students would be to have them start with very small choices (example: what to eat for lunch), and then list bigger choices when they get the string later (example: riding a bike without a helmet).

Have the student who receives the yarn answer how the choice will affect the person who had the string, their friends, family, neighbors, etc., or ask them if their choice will help or hurt the people around the student? Activity example: Student #1: “I’ll ride my bike without a helmet.” Teacher: “How will this affect Student #1’s family? Does this choice help or hurt people around them?” Student #2: “Student #1 could get badly hurt and have to go to the hospital. This choice could cause Student #1’s family to worry and maybe have to spend a lot of money to heal Student #1.” Depending on the size of the class, have each student get the ball of yarn 3-5 times to ensure a nicely tangled web.

After the web is complete have the class look at the web and talk about how this web represents how we are all connected to each other and how the choices we make affect one another. How difficult would it be to untangle the yarn now that we have passed it around? We listed choices while we made the web. How do irresponsible choices affect our relationships? How do responsible choices impact our relationships?

Closing Thoughts

Encourage the students to consider Worth of All Persons during the week ahead and how our choices affect everyone around us. Remind them that everyone deserves to be treated fairly and all have worth.

PURSUIT OF PEACE

As a young boy, Perce Judd looked forward to the weekly church gatherings at Sister Cole's home. His pastor, Edwin Davies, would roll out a large map of Palestine and share stories from the scriptures. Perce was fascinated by the wars, captures, and prophecies, but what he remembered most was the passion of his pastor as he shouted, "And they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Decades later, Perce would discover these words written on the United Nations building in New York City.

Raised in southern Australia, Perce traveled the world promoting peace among nations most of his life. He was in London in 1946 when the UN General Assembly met for the first time. He was invited to serve on the newly formed UN Secretariat. Over the next three decades, he traveled the world on behalf of the United Nations, working for better trade practices, equitable sharing of resources, and the pursuit of justice for the poor and developing countries. World leaders hailed him for his perseverance, honesty, integrity, and skillful "diplomacy of quiet negotiation."

He later reflected on his unique heritage and calling:

"A sister who made a brief statement at the time when I was called to the office of teacher in the church stressed the importance of 'peacemakers.' This thought became a basis for my life, and particularly later when I joined the UN. I deem it a

great privilege to have worked so long for the UN as well as for a church whose very symbol and motto is 'peace' which stresses the need to spread the message of Christ, namely Peace on Earth."

The lessons learned as a child sitting on the floor in the Cole family living room made a significant impact on Perce. He worked for the United Nations for over 30 years as a literal peacemaker among nations.

Thoughts to Consider:

- Perce's story reveals the timeless impact a class or home visit can have on a child. What examples can you think of that are similar in impact to what Perce experienced with his congregation?
- Perce's story shows how important personal relationships can be when a child is exploring their calling and purpose. How do you see the Enduring Principles of Pursuit of Peace, Blessings of Community, and All Are Called working together? Are there times when these Enduring Principles are in conflict with one another?



Youth gathered for Sunday School in Southern Australia, circa 1924.

~ YOUTH ACTIVITY ~

Materials Needed:

- Construction paper
- Tools for drawing (colored pencils, markers, crayons, and/or paint)
- Image of the *Swords into Plowshares* Peace Monument located at the World Plaza in Independence, Missouri

Welcome

Gather the youth together and welcome them to the activity. Once everyone is gathered, direct their attention to a picture of the *Swords into Plowshares* statue. Invite the youth to listen as you read Isaiah 2:4:

“They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”

Opening Discussion

Using the statue as a visual, explain to the group what a plowshare and pruning hook were used for.

- Why do you think the Bible talks about turning swords into farming tools?

Share the Story “Pursuit of Peace”

Note to instructor: Share the story in a way that will be engaging to the age group(s) you are teaching.

Class Discussion

- Today we learned the story of Perce Judd, a person who pursued peace all over the world. What are the actions of a peacemaker? Can anyone serve as a peacemaker?
- What do you have to do to become a peacemaker?

Group Activity

Invite the youth to gather at a table where construction paper and art supplies are available for the students.

Invite each individual to draw or paint a picture that features ways that weapons of war could be reused or remade for peaceful purposes, like the sword into a plowshare, or a spear into a pruning hook.

Note to instructor: The website below features an organization that turns guns into garden tools. This website may provide inspiration for ways to repurpose weapons: <https://rawtools.org/swords-to-plowshares>

Gather the students together and invite them to share their drawing of a weapon turned into an object of peace. Give the students time to share about what the object means to them. If the student did not create a drawing, encourage them to share about an object that could be used for peace.

Note to instructor: Draw your own picture of a weapon that could be turned into an object of peace (prior to the start of the class). Share your art piece with the group to help those who are feeling shy or anxious about sharing with the group.

Closing Thoughts

After the group has shared their drawings, explore ways to pursue peace. Ask, “What are non-peaceful things that you see in your own life?” *Examples include: fighting with siblings or arguments with classmates at school.* “What can you do to be a peacemaker at home and in your school?” *Examples include: not listening to hurtful words about others or inviting new kids to play with them at school.* If time remains, have children role play peacemaking in action. End the activity with the Mission Prayer.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

This story takes us back to the winter of 1843 where a group of teenagers gathered at Heber C. Kimball's home in Nauvoo, Illinois. The topic of conversation that evening revolved around the young men and women's concerns that they were spending too much time at parties and not enough time helping improve and strengthen their community. Kimball suggested they meet again in a more formal atmosphere to create an organization specifically for the needs of the youth and Nauvoo. Attendance continued to grow as the organization met several times in a variety of places including the Mansion House and Red Brick Store. The youth chose the name "The Young Gentlemen and Ladies' Relief Society of Nauvoo," elected officers, and adopted a charter. The mission of the society was the "correction of the follies of youth, to guard against temptations to which they are exposed, and to aid in charitable enterprises."

Joseph Smith, Jr. attended a society meeting in the spring and praised the youth for their remarkable conduct. The group was encouraged to dedicate their service to the relief of the poor in Nauvoo. To promote their good works, Joseph gave the youth a petition from Brother Maudsley, an English convert who recently had moved to Nauvoo and needed help building a home. The group agreed to raise funds and support for Maudsley. A newspaper praised the group as a model society:

"If the youth throughout our land would follow this good example and form themselves into such societies, ...there would not be as many suffering poor, neither would there be as much immorality among the people. But on the contrary, peace, good order,

happiness, cheerfulness and plenty, would reign in the land, the Lord would look down from his holy habitation and smile upon us, and bless us all."

Thoughts to Consider:

- The teenagers and adults of Nauvoo were united under the cause of improving their community and helping those in need. What cause have you witnessed unite people?
- The Nauvoo community was a diverse community of people gathered along the Mississippi River. Thousands of immigrants from Great Britain called Nauvoo home in addition to people from New England, the Midwest, and the South. When have you experienced diversity? What did you learn from the experience?
- Within our congregations, we often find diverse views among our members. What do you think unites everyone in Community of Christ?



Red Brick Store in Nauvoo, Illinois

~ YOUTH ACTIVITY ~

Materials Needed:

- White board or chart paper
- Ingredients for a snack mix
- Individual bowls for each ingredient in the snack mix

Welcome

Gather the youth together and welcome them to the activity. Once everyone is gathered, share in the opening discussion.

Opening Discussion

- What does “unity” mean to you?
- What are groups of people that have unity? *Examples include unity in a sports team, educational unity among teachers and students at school, etc.*
- What does “diversity” mean to you?

Note to instructor: prompt the students to consider ideological differences, life experiences, cultural differences, etc.

Share the Story “Unity in Diversity”

Note to instructor: Share the story in a way that will be engaging to the age group(s) you are teaching.

Class Discussion

Brainstorm examples of communities in which the young people participate. Write their suggestions on a white board or chart paper for all to see. *Examples include: Athletic teams, theater groups, clubs, neighborhoods, etc.*

- Can you identify diversity within these communities? What creates unity in a community?
- In today’s story, the teenagers of Nauvoo were united under the cause of improving their community and helping those in need. What cause have you witnessed that united people?

Group Activity

Give each child a bowl containing one ingredient for the snack mix. Talk about how we are each different, but when we come together and combine our different experiences, we create something new and amazing. Have each student try one piece from each bowl. After they have tried each ingredient, have each student pour their ingredient into a large bowl. Mix the ingredients together and give each child a portion of the complete snack mix.

Note to instructor: As an example, one student receives a bowl of raisins, a second receives raisins, a third pretzel sticks, and a fourth child receives mini marshmallows or chocolate chips.

Invite the children to talk about how the snack was different after all the ingredients were mixed together. Encourage the group to compare the snack with what they experience when a group of diverse people come together.

Closing Thoughts

In today’s story, we learned that the Nauvoo community was a diverse community of people gathered along the Mississippi River. Thousands of immigrants traveled from Great Britain to the United States and called Nauvoo their new home in addition to people from New England, the Midwest, and the South. When have you experienced diversity in your life? What did you learn from the experience?

Within our faith community and our congregations we often experience diverse views among church members. What do you think unites everyone in Community of Christ? End the activity/discussion with the Mission Prayer.

BLESSINGS OF COMMUNITY

Minnie Blair Nicholson, daughter of Elizabeth and W. W. Blair, once shared this story about how the women in the Sandwich community supported her mother during a difficult time while Minnie's father was away on a mission. Minnie's mother, Elizabeth, was pregnant and chose not to tell Minnie's father that she was expecting a child as she feared it would prevent him from serving in his missionary responsibilities. Minnie tells the story:

“Had it not been for the kind and efficient help of a member of the Sandwich Branch in planning and looking after the finishing up on the home so the family could be moved in before winter, it would indeed have been a serious time for us. About the time we moved to Sandwich, Charlie, the oldest of the family, had a low fever; and all the younger children had the whooping cough. The youngest boy, David, about three years old, had it so seriously that it seemed that we would have to give him up.

Then the new baby, Frederick, was born. Had it not been for the loving care of Sisters Eliza Cox and Emmeline Banta, we would have been in a deplorable condition. But day by day one or the other would come to care for Mother and wash the baby. It was Sister Marietta Faulconer (now Walker) who wrote to tell Father of the arrival of the new boy.

Just about that time, Brother Fred Hartshorn happened to pass our house and saw me, then a girl of 13, struggling with a big washing out in the unfinished part of the house. He did not stop, but hurried home; and soon his sister, Clara, was there helping me.

It was thus that the Saints assisted in the life of the family of the early missionary. Such



Marietta Walker and her daughter, Lucy, attended the Sandwich, Illinois, Branch along with Marietta's mother and sister.

was the life of those who were struggling to raise a family on very limited income.”

Minnie's story about the women of the Sandwich Branch supporting her family in their time of need is a wonderful example of compassionate ministries and building community.

Thoughts to Consider:

- Where do you witness the Blessings of Community in Minnie's story?
- When Minnie's family was in desperate need, the members of the Sandwich Branch were quick to respond. Has there been a time in your life when others offered you help without your having to ask for the assistance?

~ YOUTH ACTIVITY ~

Materials Needed:

- Construction paper and glue sticks
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- Envelopes and stamps
- Craft materials for card making

Welcome

Gather the youth together and welcome them to the activity. Once everyone is gathered, share in the opening discussion.

Opening Discussion

- Describe a group of people coming together (examples include a student classroom, sports arena, concert, etc.)
- How do you define a community?
- How is a community different from a large concert or football arena crowd?
- What actions or activities make people a community? For example, what does your teacher at school do to make the classroom a community? What do we do as a congregation to create community?

Share the Story “Blessings of Community”

Note to instructor: Share the story in a way that will be engaging to the age group(s) you are teaching.

Class Discussion

Take a moment to reflect on the story.

- Where do you witness the “Blessings of Community” in Minnie’s story? What actions in the story were community building actions?
- When Minnie’s family was in desperate need, the members of the Sandwich congregation were quick to respond. Has there been a time in your life when others offered you help without you having to ask for their assistance?

Group Activity

Gather the youth in an area with tables and chairs. Place craft making materials at each of the tables. Card making materials include construction paper, scissors, glue sticks, markers (crayons, colored pencils, paint and brushes work, too), envelopes, stamps, etc.

Encourage the youth to create cards to send to people on their prayer list. Be sure to save extra cards to send to future people in need of encouragement.

Note to instructor: It’s always good to have a few samples made and on display before class begins. Pass the samples around to help inspire the students’ creativity and unique approaches for making their own unique cards.

After the craft session draws to a close and the students are finished with their cards, gather the children in a circle to share. Consider asking one or more of the following questions:

- How did our activity of making cards work to build our community?
- How did you feel knowing you were doing something that will help someone in need, or make them smile?
- What are other actions we can take this week to build community?

Closing Thoughts

In today’s story, we learned about the people in the Sandwich congregation helping those in need. As you begin your week, be aware of those in need around you and consider how you can help them. End the activity with the Mission Prayer.

INVITE PEOPLE TO CHRIST

On a cold Thanksgiving morning in 1887, Alexander Hale Smith took Anna Hartshorn's hand as she entered the waters of baptism. When they arrived at Pickerel Lake, they discovered a frozen body of water. They chopped through six inches of ice and lowered a ladder into the water. Five people, including Anna, braved the frigid water to be baptized on that cold November day.



Youth group gathered for a lesson alongside the Mississippi River in Nauvoo

Although Alexander Smith was a fine missionary, it was not his evangelism efforts that inspired Anna to be baptized that day. It was her young son who encouraged her to join the church in 1887. When Anna married his father, Fred Hartshorn, she knew Fred's family was associated with the RLDS church and she wanted nothing to do with his church. In fact, she made Fred promise that he wouldn't be baptized into the church without her permission, knowing she would never give permission.

Fred and Anna welcomed a baby boy into their family and as the boy grew he became more acquainted with his father's faith community. One day, Anna overheard her son playing with the family dog when he asked the pet, "Are you a Latter Day Saint?" Anna was stunned by her son's question and feared that he would one day ask her the same question.

Anna immediately began to read all she could about the RLDS Church and the Book of Mormon, searching for reasons why she would never join such a church. The more she read and attended meetings with the

missionaries in preparation for her young son's question, the more she connected the scriptures with her husband's faith community. The more inviting the RLDS Church appeared.

Elbert A. Smith was baptized the same day as Anna Hartshorn, or as he called her "Aunt Anna." He said she literally dragged her husband, Fred, into the waters with her. Years later, Elbert reflected on his Aunt's journey to baptism:

Sometimes the Lord goes before and opens the way for the truth to enter honest hearts. In this case the very childish question of a little boy opened the door. This woman became a true Latter Day Saint, and so taught her children that they and their children after them have been church members."

Thoughts to Consider:

- Anna's son's innocent question prompted a much deeper faith journey for Anna. How have the questions you have encountered deepened your spiritual life?
- How have you witnessed children modeling the call of a disciple?

~ YOUTH ACTIVITY ~

Materials Needed:

- White board or chart paper
- Tools for drawing (colored pencils, pens, markers, crayons, etc.)

Welcome

Gather the youth together and invite them to sing “Jesus Loves Me.” Include verses “Jesus loves you” and “Jesus loves us.”

Opening Discussion

Consider engaging the youth with one or both of the following questions:

- What is an invitation? Have you or your family ever been invited to a wedding or a birthday party?
- What does the phrase “Invite People to Christ” mean to you?
- Why do we want to invite people to Christ?

Share the Story “Invite People to Christ”

Note to instructor: Share the story in a way that will be engaging to the age group(s) you are teaching.

Class Discussion

- How did Anna learn about the church? How can we teach people about Christ?
- How do you connect with Jesus?

Group Activity

Have the class create a mind map about Jesus.

Note to instructor: To create a mind map, you draw a circle in the middle of the paper and write the main topic. From the central circle you draw lines leading to smaller circles with sub-topics written in them.

From the smaller circles more lines and circles branch off to further expand the main topic. If the class needs inspiration for the mind map suggest categories such as “Stories about Jesus,” “Characteristics of Jesus,” and “Jesus’s friends.”

Engage the class with one or all of the following discussion questions:

- What are three things about Jesus you want people to know?”
- What positive things did Jesus do that we can also do?
- Consider the campfire song, “Pass it on.” What do you think the lyrics mean? For example, what does it mean when we sing, “I wish for you my friend this happiness that I’ve found?”

Closing Thoughts

In today’s story, we learned how a simple question to a family pet had a profound impact on someone’s life and relationship with Christ. In our activity today, we explored Jesus’ life and how he impacted the lives of people who surrounded him.

Consider what was shared today about Jesus and how you can share these things respectfully with other people. Don’t forget that Jesus’ actions were just as important as the words he spoke. The same is true for you, your Christ-like actions are as important as the words you share with others.

Close the class session by asking the students to create a circle. Once everyone has found their place in the circle, join your voices together in the hymn, “We Are One in the Spirit,” Hymn #359 in *Community of Christ Sings!*

ABOLISH POVERTY, END SUFFERING

Born in 1922, Charles Neff spent the first couple years of his life living near Hardin, Missouri. At the age of 5, his family relocated to Kansas where his father was employed by an oil company and later by the Missouri-Kansas Pipeline Company. While living in Stillwell, Kansas, the stock market crashed, the National economy plummeted, and soon the United States entered into the Great Depression.

Like many families during this historic period, the Neff family struggled to pay their bills. Charles's father's job was cut to a part-time position. The family supplemented the loss of income with a "big truck garden," a small business where the entire family, including young Charles, worked in the garden and sold home grown produce.

The Neff family never owned land of their own. To own or not to own private property was not a decision of their choosing, rather the family was not able to afford a down payment to acquire their own property. Struggling for food and other family essentials was an experience Charles knew well as a child. Years later he reflected on this period in his life:

"I can remember that during the days when the government program gave away surplus food, my father was too proud to stand in line, so he sent me... Our being spared physical hunger meant accepting charity. I

learned then, and have been reminded many times since as I traveled the poor countries of the world, that being hungry means humiliation."

Charles's childhood experience greatly impacted his ministry as an adult. Ordained to the Council of Twelve Apostles in 1958,

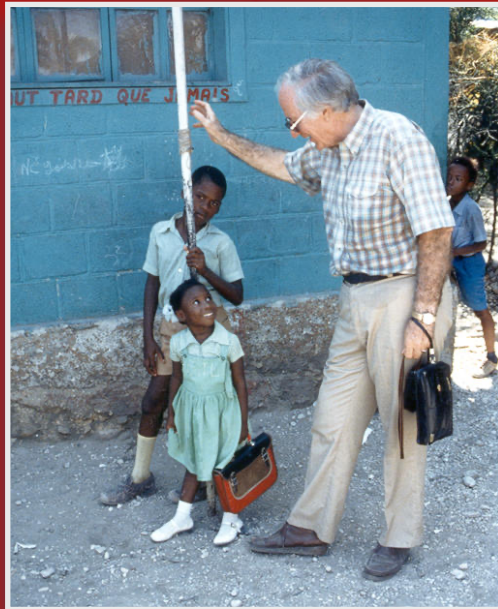
Charles Neff shared compassionate ministry for the poor in the Philippines, India, Nigeria, and Kenya. He worked tirelessly to restore the dignity of others through programs that enabled people to help themselves. In 1972, Neff helped found Outreach International, an organization that helps organize community work among the poor around the world. Neff said, *"When I think of the mission of the Church, I recall the face of the poorest person and ask:*

Will it restore the dignity that every man should enjoy? Will it set him free? Will it heal his broken heart?"

Neff dedicated his life to bringing relief and dignity to those who suffered. It was this conviction that led to his nickname, "Apostle of the Poor."

Thoughts to Consider:

- What lessons can we learn from Charles Neff's story? How did Neff's childhood experience shape his ministry as an adult?
- What Enduring Principles do you see within Charles Neff's story and ministry?



Charles Neff with children in Haiti.

~ YOUTH ACTIVITY ~

Materials Needed:

- A snack that can easily be distributed and redistributed among those in the class
- Bowl for each of the students

Welcome

Gather the youth together and welcome them to the activity. Once everyone is gathered, share in the opening discussion.

Opening Discussion

- Today's Mission Initiative is "Abolish Poverty, End Suffering." What does the word "poverty" mean to you? Can you think of examples of poverty?
- What does the word "humiliation" mean to you? How about the word "dignity?"

Note to instructor: Be prepared with examples to share with the students if they struggle to name examples.

Share the Story "Abolish Poverty, End Suffering"

Note to instructor: Share the story in a way that will be engaging to the age group(s) you are teaching.

Class Discussion

Invite the students to think about the story they just heard. Help them dig deeper into the story with these discussion questions:

- How do you feel when you are hungry? Explore beyond hunger pains alone.
- In today's story, we learned about Charles Neff's childhood. How did his experience growing up in poverty shape how he helped others in need as an adult?
- Think about what you are learning now as a young person. What have you experienced that makes you want to show compassion for others?

Group Activity

Gather the group together and provide each student with an empty bowl. Distribute the snack unfairly or unevenly into each of the bowls. Give some students a large portion, another group of students a small portion, and the final group no snacks.

Invite the students to look at their bowl and compare it to the others. Discuss with the students if the portioning of the snack was fair and what should be done. How do you think Charles Neff would approach this snack situation if he was here?

Note for instructor: The goal of this activity is for the students to see the unfairness of the snack portions and to practice compassion and generosity with others. We want to encourage those with lots of snacks to share with those who have none, or very little. Help them relate the activity with today's Mission Initiative as they learn to share with others in the group.

Closing Thoughts

After the group has finished their activity, gather the students for a closing reflection on what they have learned today. Here are a few questions to help prompt the group reflection/discussion:

- How did our snacks today represent the Mission Initiative "Abolish Poverty, End Needless Suffering?"
- Do you have to become an adult before you can show compassion for others?
- What is one way you can show compassion today for others?

End the time together with the Mission Prayer.

PURSUE PEACE ON EARTH

Tucked in a corner office of the Red Brick Store is a wooden writing desk. It carries a story that impacted Joseph Smith III's life. The desk was a gift from Newel K. Whitney, a family friend and former bishop in Kirtland and Nauvoo. While many of Joseph's neighbors were planning to leave Nauvoo in 1846, a few friends and relatives gave Joseph gifts. Much to his mother's dismay, among those gifts given were a bowie knife and a small pistol.

As Newel and his family prepared to depart Nauvoo, he shared with Joseph a gift to remember him by: a writing desk. Newel compared his desk to the other gifts Joseph received and shared that the pistol and knife were weapons of war. Joseph later reflected that Newel:

"...wished to impress upon me the sentiment that 'the pen is mightier than the sword.' I seemed to feel at the time that his intention was to foster within me a spirit of peace rather than one of conflict... The gift of Bishop Whitney led to the reflection that the spirit and weapons of war were among the evanescent things of life and would necessarily perish with the using but that the pen, mightier than they, would

produce permanent things upon which the judgment of men would be based in the great hereafter. At all events these were the effects they produced upon me, for I did not imbibe the spirit of war, and had little use for its dangerous weapons."

Newel K. Whitney's desk was not only a wonderful gift, but a powerful lesson of peace that Joseph carried with him the rest of his life.

The historic desk was eventually donated to the Community of Christ historic sites by members of the Smith family. The desk is on display in Newel K. Whitney's office at the Red Brick Store where visitors hear the story of Newel K. Whitney's generous gift and life-long lesson to Joseph Smith III.



The Whitney desk on display at the Red Brick Store in Nauvoo, Illinois

Thoughts to Consider:

- For Newel K. Whitney and Joseph Smith III, the desk was something much more than a piece of furniture. Do you have an object that carries a deeper meaning or lesson for you?
- Joseph Smith III felt that Newel's intent was to "foster within me a spirit of peace rather than one of conflict." How can we foster a spirit of peace in our community today?

~ YOUTH ACTIVITY ~

Materials Needed:

- No special materials needed

Welcome

Gather the youth together and welcome them to today's session.

Opening Discussion

Consider engaging the youth with one or more of the following questions:

- What does peace mean to you?
- What does peace feel like to you?
- What actions symbolize the presence or creation of peace?

Share the Story “Pursue Peace on Earth”

Note to instructor: Share the story in a way that will be engaging to the age group(s) you are teaching.

Class Discussion

- Think about gifts you have given or received. Do any of the gifts promote peace or promote conflict when you think deeply about them? Can you share examples?
- Are there gifts you would like to give that you believe would promote peace?
- Has a wise person in your life taught you something that “fostered within you a spirit of peace rather than conflict?” Perhaps a teacher, neighbor, parent, or grandparent has taught you something about avoiding or resolving conflict.

Group Activity

Guide the students through the following meditation.

Note to the instructor: Do not rush through the meditation. Give time for the students to imagine each part.

Invite the students to get comfortable in their seats, close their eyes, and take a few deep breaths. Guide them through the following mediation:

Imagine a place where you feel peaceful. What does it look like? What sounds do you hear in this peaceful place?

Is anyone else there in the peaceful place with you? If so, who do you see?

Now imagine a person that you are not at peace with, maybe someone you had a fight with recently. Imagine inviting them to your peaceful place and making peace.

Imagine a place that is not peaceful. What is happening to break the peace in this place? Now imagine this place has turned peaceful. What has changed?

Go back in your mind to your peaceful place. Sit in that peace for a couple of minutes. Imagine bringing that peaceful place with you for the rest of the week.

Open your eyes when you are ready.

Closing Thoughts

Give the students time to become aware of their surroundings. If time permits, invite the students to share what they experienced during the meditation. What was their peaceful place like, who did they see, etc.

Close the class session by singing the familiar campfire song, “I’ve Got Peace Like a River.” Consider teaching the motions to the song if the students don’t already know them.

DEVELOP DISCIPLES TO SERVE

Francis Cole knew an education was crucial for the future of her son, Clifford, but there simply were no valid options in her rural community. A Presbyterian minister named Elbert Nash heard of Francis' concerns and invited Clifford to move in with his family in Moorcroft, Wyoming, 35 miles away. The Coles accepted the hospitable offer, and Clifford felt like a member of the Nash family throughout his high school years. Each night following dinner, the Reverend Nash would pull out the scriptures, and the family would read and discuss. While sitting at the dinner table, Elbert and Clifford would carry on long conversations about Clifford's RLDS roots, spanning theology to Restoration history. It was during this time that Clifford discovered there were faithfully devoted Christians outside his own denomination and that "genuine religious experiences" could happen outside an RLDS church.

His experience of being welcomed into the Nash family inspired him to devote his life to the ministry of Christ. Clifford entered church appointment in 1946, when the traditional faith of the church was undergoing one of the

most rigorous self-examinations in its history. Faith often was measured by one's ability to defend the "one true church." Clifford set out to change this mentality by working with others to reform church education. In 1954 he was named the new Director of Religious Education. In this role Clifford published new materials for youth from primary to senior high. In addition, he widely published materials for adults that included the historical context surrounding the scriptures. For the first time the works of several major biblical scholars were cited, and teachers were urged to use these in the congregation. Clifford worked on church-wide curriculum for 25 years. His impact is still felt in the church today.

Thoughts to Consider:

- One family bravely opening their home to a young teenager in need led to extraordinary things within our faith community. What are some of the lessons you have experienced when moving out of your comfort zone?
- When have you experienced a lesson outside of the classroom?



Youth and adults gathered at the Children's Home in Lamoni.



Clifford Cole

~ YOUTH ACTIVITY ~

Materials Needed:

- Blank note cards or thank you cards
- Pens, pencils, or markers

Welcome

Gather the youth together and invite them to sing “We Are Companions on the Journey,” Hymn #552 in *Community of Christ Sings!*

Opening Discussion

Consider engaging the youth with one or more of the following questions:

- Who were the disciples, or early followers of Jesus in the Bible?
- What are the characteristics or qualities of the early disciples?

Share the Story “Develop Disciples to Serve”

Note to instructor: Share the story in a way that will be engaging to the age group(s) you are teaching.

Class Discussion

- What did Clifford Cole learn by living with the Nash family?
- What are some lessons you have learned outside of your classroom?
- Who are some people that have taught you to be like Jesus? *Note to instructor: Encourage the class to think beyond people at church. For example, maybe a school teacher taught them how to share, or a kind neighbor modeled for them how to help people.*

Group Activity

Have each student write a thank you note to someone who has taught them or demonstrated for them how to be a better disciple of Jesus Christ.

When the students have finished writing their thank you notes, gather the group in a circle. Invite each of the students to share about the person who will receive their unique thank you note. Encourage the youth to talk about what they have learned from the person who will receive their note of appreciation.

Closing Thoughts

After the group has finished sharing, gather the students for a closing reflection on what they have learned today.

- People learn not just from our words but also from watching our actions. Now that we have written thank you notes to people who have helped us, what are actions we can take to be good role models for other disciples this week?
- How can we introduce people to positive actions that are Christ like?

End the time together with the Mission Prayer.



Portrait of Clifford Cole

EXPERIENCE

CONGREGATIONS IN MISSION



Image features early church members living in Germany.

Following WWII, Rosie Sellars and her family struggled to survive in Germany. Her father was killed during the war, and the responsibilities of providing for the family were in her young mother's hands. Everywhere Rosie looked she saw homelessness and food scarcity. She remembered food being rationed. Some nights, there wasn't enough bread on the table to feed her family. She described their desperation, "Many times some of my family went on an all-day bike trip out to beg for a piece of bread from a farmer or, if really lucky, an egg."

During this time Rosie relied on the support of the local congregation and those abroad to help her family survive. She explained:

"...In 1947 my mother was thrown off her bicycle when hit by a truck. The doctors

thought she would die that night, but I trusted in Jesus and prayed all night. The next day I went to an elder and asked him to go and see Mother in the hospital to administer to her. She remained in the hospital for four months before she came home. It was during these four months that we received several CARE packages from church members in Independence, Missouri. They meant a lot to us, especially the food. They were an answer to prayer."

Thoughts to Consider:

- Rosie's story is one of many stories where we see people helping others in need. How is your congregation practicing mission?
- Rosie's family benefited from the generosity of people overseas. In what ways has your congregation experienced mission as a global community?

~ YOUTH ACTIVITY ~

Materials Needed:

- Large cardboard box
- Construction paper
- Crayons, colored pencils, or markers
- Materials needed for a service project

Welcome

Gather the youth together and welcome them to today's session.

Opening Discussion

Consider engaging the youth with one or more of the following questions:

- What does mission mean? Have you ever gone on an adventure or a vacation? Where did you go? Were you nervous or excited?
- What is mission in the context of church?

Share the Story “Experience Congregations in Mission”

Note to instructor: Share the story in a way that will be engaging to the age group(s) you are teaching.

Class Discussion

- Rosie and her family were helped by people she had never met. How can we help people that we don't know? Have the class make two lists on chart paper: actions they/their family can take to live out mission, and actions for the congregation. Examples might be helping neighbors with yard work, volunteering at a food bank, donating gently used items to shelters.
- Rosie's story is one of many stories where we see people helping others in need. How is your congregation practicing mission?
Note to instructor: If your congregation has a service committee, ask a committee

member to talk to the class. If there isn't a service committee, consult the Community of Christ website for stories on how Abolish Poverty, End Suffering funds are used.

- Is there a difference in how you feel about being helped by someone you know versus someone you will never meet? What are the advantages of both types of giving?

Group Activity

This week's class activity comes with two options for you to consider what activity best serves your youth group.

Option A: Have the class make something to donate to an organization. Examples include: tied fleece blanket to donate to a homeless shelter or toiletry bags.

Option B: Have the class decorate a donation box for an organization to have at the church. Invite the class to create a list of items for people to donate. Examples include: donations to a food pantry, items for a shelter, school supplies for the school district.
Note to instructor: Research local charities ahead of time so you have options available for the class.

Closing Thoughts

As you draw the class to a close, discuss with the students how today's mission activity will help people in the community.

Go back to the list made earlier in the class. Have the class pick a project or action to suggest to the congregation. Have each child select an activity or two to suggest to their family.

End your time together with the Mission Prayer.

STORIES FROM MY CHILDHOOD

PERSONAL NOTES

For more information about preserving and sharing Community of Christ heritage, go to:
www.HistoricSitesFoundation.org

