

God's Plan in Action: The Early Church Optional Pre-Club Activities (5-10 minutes)

The purpose of a pre-club activity is to allow the children entering the room for GNC to be engaged immediately into an interactive experience that will engage their thinking with the teaching that is soon to come during the club. It may connect to the memory verse, "word-up" or Bible lesson in a tangible way. This benefits classroom management, student involvement, cooperation and a positive learning experience.

Lesson One

When children enter the room pair them up in twos, giving the partners a card and pencil. At the top of the card it says: What evidence can you find in this room that gives proof of what happened here today or that may typically happen each week? They may make little pictures or symbols if writing is a challenge. They may find desks, a white board, visuals on the wall or other arrangements that indicate how the room is used. There may be trash in the trash can or on the floor that would be a clue as to what happened there.

A couple of minutes before starting the club, gather the students together and let them share the evidence they found that gives proof of what possibly has occurred in the room. Talk about what other evidence they might gather:

- Talk to people who were there?
- Look at a schedule posted in the room?
- Look at the school's marquee or online postings?



This helps students understand more about the concept of recognizing evidence that leads to proof when something isn't "personally" experienced.

On the back side of the card is a list of 4 proofs that the clubbers can check off through the lesson if they can find evidence that Jesus is the Son of God.

1. Did Jesus say that He would die and come alive again? Yes?
Did it happen? Yes?
2. Was Jesus' body found in the open tomb? No?
3. Does the Old testament say that Jesus would die and rise again many years before it happened? Yes?
4. Were there eye witnesses, people who actually saw Jesus and talked with Him after He died and came alive? Yes?

(Pairing up older children who are trustworthy with younger children will allow the younger ones to have a "mentor" in understanding this activity.)

The Big Question: Do you believe that Jesus died for your sin? Yes?

Jesus is the only one who can forgive you? Yes?

That Jesus is more powerful than death? Yes?

That Jesus is the living Son of God? Yes?

Lesson One, page 18 can be turned into a character sketch/skit.

Dress up 4 older boys to be the writers of the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.

One child can use the pointer to point out the book (Gospel) on the Bible chart to introduce and conclude the character sketch. Each “actor” sits at a desk with a pretend scroll and a feather ink pen.

Lights are turned off or down and a light is shone on the Bible character. In his scroll, he has a one paragraph script, the narrative which has been re-written simply from the first person viewpoint as follows: *(the visuals in the resource pack also provide name plates with the corresponding pictures of items typical to each character)*

First we meet Matthew: He can also have a money bag with him at the desk.

I used to be a sinful tax collector. While I was collecting money for the government, I would collect even more and keep that part for myself! This was a very wrong thing to do. But when I met Jesus, my life was changed! I stopped being a dishonest tax collector and I decided to follow Jesus. My life shows that Jesus has power to change lives!

Now, let's meet Mark: He can also have a picture of a ship or toy boat.

My name is actually John Mark. My mother was a follower of Jesus and often Jesus' disciples would meet at our house to pray and worship. I even went with the apostle Paul on one of his journeys (hold up the boat). But, I left before it was over and then Paul didn't want me to come on future journeys. Perhaps Paul wondered how dedicated I was to Jesus. But God worked in my life and I ended up writing the book of Mark in the New Testament! Later Paul even asked me to join him. My life shows that Jesus has power to change lives!

The next writer is Luke:

Can you guess what my job is? (Hold a picture of medical equipment or a toy doctor's kit.) I am a doctor. I traveled with the apostle Paul and helped tell people about Jesus. I am an historian, recording history. I actually wrote two books in the New Testament – the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts, which is what we are learning from in club these next few weeks. I went through many difficult things as I helped tell people about Jesus. My life shows that Jesus has the power to change lives!

Finally, let's meet John: He can be holding a heart shaped toy or picture of a heart.

For about three years, I walked and talked with Jesus and listened to him teach. Later in my life I suffered a lot for Jesus, even being sent to live on an island all by myself. I wrote several books of the New Testament – the Gospel of John, three letters called 1 John, 2 John and 3 John and the book of Revelation. I stayed true to following Jesus until the end. My life shows that Jesus has the power to change lives! Jesus is still changing lives today. How about you?

Lesson Two: The Helper Has Come

When the children enter the room, use the Wonder Time for Lesson 2 of the text to engage them in a discussion about the Trinity as explained on page 22. Four pictures are supplied for you in the Workshop: Tricycle, Triangle, Triple and Trinity. Four phrases are included in your resource pack. To delay the time briefly while children are arriving, ask the clubbers to see how many things come in threes, like: triplets, a three-legged stool, or a triathlon. How many clubbers have 3 children in their family? What are their names? How many are in third grade?

The discussion and presentation explaining the Holy Spirit in the Wonder Time is done very well and will prepare the children's hearts for the Bible Lesson, "The Helper Has Come!" Use the word-up card for lesson two, "The Holy Spirit is the Helper!"

Lesson Three: God the Holy Spirit gives peace and courage through hard times.

When children enter the room, direct them to a leader who is giving the students a challenge.

The challenge is to see how long they can stand on one foot while counting the seconds. Once the lifted foot goes down, have them stand on the other foot to see if they can improve their time. Increase the challenge by having them try again with one eye closed, then both eyes closed. It will be harder to balance. Then with eyes open, have them stand on one foot and pretend there is a strong wind and they begin leaning to one side. How long can they stay on one foot? Then have them pretend there is an earthquake and as they tremble, they try to stay on one foot.



Now the big change: have them stand on two feet at shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent and arms slightly out to the side for the best balance. Have them compare the same scenarios as when they tried standing on one foot. They will experience a big difference even with eyes closed or with an imaginary wind or earthquake.

Have them sit down for an "experience huddle." Talk to them about their experience. What was challenging? What was hard? What did they try to do to adapt? Was it successful? What really made a difference? In what position did they experience stability even through a challenge?

Lesson three is about God, the Holy Spirit who lives in each believer, bringing stability to the person who is totally relying on God's true promises even through the hardest times. The Holy Spirit gives peace and courage. By the power of the Holy Spirit, each person can come to believe on Jesus and receive Him as Savior. By the power of the Holy Spirit, each believer can experience stability.

Jesus explained stability through trusting and obeying Him in this way: (read Matt. 8:24-27) Everyone who hears His words and does them is like someone building their house on a rock. Everyone who hears His words and does NOT do them is like someone building their house on the sand. Rains, floods and wind comes to both. The one on the rock stands. The one on the sand falls.

In order to listen to Jesus' words and not be afraid to trust and obey Him, it is necessary to know that Jesus can be trusted.

Who can a boy or girl or an adult trust to keep their promise?

They typically trust someone that they know: their character and their ability.

The real test of character:

Do they tell the truth all the time?

Do they know what they are promising?

Do they have the power to follow through on their promise?

Are they a friend or not a friend?

Do they care about others or only themselves?

Jesus passes this test and can be trusted.

This helps us to trust Him and have peace and courage through the hard times.

Lesson Four

When the children enter the room invite them to play a game where one sits in a hoop on the floor or a circle marked out with a yarn. In the circle are 6 bean bags with words on them written on tape and stuck to the bean bags: 3 good words: kind, caring, forgiving and 3 not-so-good words: anger, selfish, revenge. Play a GNC song while other children sit around the hoop. Use more than one hoop for larger groups.

While the music plays, the child in the circle checks out the words on the bean bags and gently throws out the bags with the words on them that they do not want in their life. Other children can pick up the bags and gently toss them back into the hoop space, not touching the child. The child in the middle can continue to remove the bags from their circle that they do not want in their life while keeping the bags with the words they do want in their life. After about 30 seconds, pause the music and have the child in the middle choose another student to be in the middle. Start the music and let the game continue as more students are chosen to take a turn in the middle. When it's time to start the class, have a huddle moment: What happens in this game? Sometimes we do not want certain things in our lives like anger or hate, but they

always seem to be tempting us. We have to repeatedly say no and reject them from our lives. But the real victory over sin in our lives is through Jesus, God the Son. The Word-Up is, "God can save anyone." No matter how bad our sin is, God has the power to save us. In today's lesson we are going to meet a man who was very bad to other people, but God changed His life and saved him!

Lesson Five

When the students enter the room let them know that they can take part in an experiment. At a desk or table, have prepared two kinds of paper towels and a water spray bottle. Let the children feel the dry paper towels. One will be thick and one not as thick. Ask them which paper towel they think is the strongest and why?

Then ask them if they are ready to put the paper towels to the test? Let a responsible child spray the centers of the paper towel with one spray while three children or team members hold the towels open between their hands. Have pennies ready for children to place a penny in the center of each towel. Have them continue to place the pennies in the centers until one towel breaks. That will be the weakest towel. Continue until the next towel breaks, leaving one unbroken towel. Have students keep track of how many pennies it took to break the towels and then see how many it will take to break the third towel.

This little experiment is a test of strength. How much weight will the towels hold? Even though some towels are stronger than others, with the right amount of weight even the strongest towel will break.

The Good News is, God is so strong, He will never break! God gives us strength to live for Him! In our Bible lesson today we will learn about a man that God made strong even in the hardest situations. Word Up: "God is strong!"

Special note: Children today think of power in terms of super hero cartoon characters wielding their swords with lightening bolts going in every direction. **In reality, real strength is power under control.** Anyone can throw a tantrum or just go wild throwing things and hitting, pretending to be strong. But a person who is truly strong will show their strength with self-control. True self-control is the fruit of the Holy Spirit living inside the believer. **"God is strong!"**

Lesson Six

When the children enter the room use the Welcome Activities in small groups on page 55 of the text to start conversations about sweet things that they like. This can blend right into the Gospel Spotlight on page 57, starting with the presentation. There are many colorful props for this review lesson that uses the sweet theme for fun games. Remember that every club needs to include the Gospel presentation and an opportunity for the kids to respond. Also, this 6th lesson is a great time to review the memory verses from the last 5 weeks. This is an

opportunity for discipleship, helping the clubbers to treasure God's Word. The memory verse book mark masters are in your resource pack or in the back of the text cover for KJV.

God's Plan in Action: The Early Church **Rhyming Review**

Lesson One

1. How did Jesus tell His disciples He was going to win?
He told them that He would die for their sins and come alive again.
2. What did the angel say to the women at the open tomb by his side? Jesus is alive!
3. If you agree, just nod, that the Bible gives many proofs that Jesus is alive and is the Son of God.
4. Proofs that Jesus is alive? We talked about four.
The more you look into God's Word, you will discover more.
5. Can you share that Jesus is alive with others? Maybe your sisters or your brothers?

Lesson Two

1. Do you know the three persons of the trinity? Let me hear it? Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
2. What does God the Holy Spirit help you to do? Obey God and become more like Jesus because in Jesus you have a life brand new.
3. Understanding the Bible begins with asking God to show you what He wants you to know, then trusting the Holy Spirit to help you to do and go where He wants you to go.
4. Being a witness means telling others what you know to be true. Is that what you want to do?
5. The special Jewish holiday in Jerusalem was called Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came to help the believers witness to the lost.

Lesson Three

1. Persecution is when you are treated badly because of what you believe. But Jesus is like our hiding place or refuge. Our fears He will relieve.
2. John 14:27 reminds us of Jesus' promise during our troubles, of His perfect peace. In His powerful peace, our fears will be released.
3. Knowing God, we can have calm and joy on the inside. This come from trusting Him and walking by His side.
4. When the guards went to get the disciples out of prison, they got a surprise. The empty cell was a mystery to their wondering eyes.
5. God's family is much more than the place where they meet, like a building with a steeple. Of those around the world who follow Jesus, His church is the people.

Lesson Four

1. Romans 5:8 explains that God showed His love for us when we were not winners. Jesus died for us when we were still sinners.
2. There was a Pharisee, an important religious leader of the Jews named Saul. When God opened his eyes to the truth about Jesus, his name was changed to Paul.
3. Why did the Pharisees hate Christians? What was the cause of their sin? The Pharisees didn't believe Jesus was the Messiah or that He rose again.
4. On the road to Damascus, Jesus told Saul that when hurt those who believed in His Name, He was also hurting Jesus. It was the same.
5. On the road to Damascus, after the light disappeared, Saul was blind. But when Ananias when to Saul, he prayed for Saul and was kind.
6. How can you know God's directions for you? They are found in the Bible because it is God's Word and it is true.

Lesson Five

1. Now that Saul (or Paul) belonged to Jesus, the religious leaders did not like what He was preaching. They tried to kill him and stop his teaching.
2. What happens to our relationship with God when we sin? It keeps us apart from Him.
3. Even though Saul was so tall, his friends help him escape by putting him in a basket and letting him down over a wall.
4. Many believers stood strong for God we are told. They got this strength from God to be bold.
5. When the believers heard Saul preaching, they were confused because they didn't know Saul had had a change and was not the same. Then Barnabas explained how he belonged to Jesus now and made it plain.

Lesson Six

Use a selection of rhyming reviews from lessons 1-5.