

"I Am the Way"



Theme: Jesus is the Way to the Father - Fifth Sunday of Easter

Object: A map and a portable GPS

Scripture: Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6 (NIV)

There was a time when a person going on a trip wouldn't think of beginning their journey without a road map. (Hold up the map for the children to see.) The map was very helpful to the traveler in finding the way to where they were going. Today we seldom ever use a road map. Do you know why? Most of us who own a car also have a GPS in our car. (Hold up the GPS.) How does the GPS work? When you are ready to go somewhere, you type in the address where you want to go and the GPS connects to a satellite up above the earth and computes the path to your destination. As soon as you start driving, a map appears on the screen and a voice from the GPS gives you turn by turn directions. "Turn right on Main Street in one mile, turn right in one half mile, turn right in 150 feet, turn right." What happens if you miss your turn? The GPS says, "Recalculating" and immediately computes a new route to get you back on the right path to your destination.

When we are trying to follow Jesus in our daily life, it would be nice to have a GPS to lead us in the right direction, wouldn't it? It would be nice to have something to keep us on the right path and keep us from getting lost...something that would help us get back on the right track when we made a wrong decision.

That is the way Jesus' disciples must have felt when Jesus told them that he was going to leave them. Jesus said to them, "I am going to prepare a place for you and when everything is ready, I will come and get you so that you will always be with me. You know the way to where I am going."

One of the disciples whose name was Thomas answered Jesus, "No, we don't, Lord. We don't even know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

Jesus answered him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."

Another disciple named Philip joined in, "Lord, show us the Father and we will be satisfied."

"Philip," Jesus answered, "Have you been with me all this time and you still don't know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show you the Father? Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Anyone who believes in me will do the same things I have done."

That was all the disciples needed to know to get them on the right path to the Father.

So, how do you and I find our way to the place where Jesus has gone to be with the Father? We have not seen Jesus as Thomas and Philip had, but we can follow the teachings that he has given to us in the Bible -- God's Holy Word. That is our GPS and it will keep us on the right path!

Heavenly Father, we thank you for sending your Son to provide the way to eternal life. Thank you for your Holy Word which will keep us on the right path in our journey through life. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

Note: Throughout our lesson activities today, we'll tell the children that GPS can stand for GOD'S POSITIONING SAINTS or GOD'S POWER SUPREME!

GPS TRAIL: Children can divide into teams (A,B, and C teams). Send each team on a different GPS trail to see who can run to the end of the trail and back. Make sure that each trail is the same length and children will run one at a time, tagging the next team player when they return to the team. If there is no space large enough for each team to go in different directions, then children can just run a relay line back and forth.

RECALCULATING JUBILEE: Children can spread out in a designated area and run to whatever side of the room or area that the teacher points or shouts out. When the teacher/leader shouts... RECALCULATING... Children must turn and run to the side of the room that the teacher tells them. When the designated time is up, children can shout... JUBILEE which means JOY. The teacher can add other ways of running to each side or area of the room as well, such as hopping, skipping, etc. If there is a possibility of playing this outside - children can run around trees and other obstacles, if desired.

GPS HOPSCOTCH: Children can play hopscotch in the usual way, but will read a word from today's lesson in each hopscotch square that they jump on, such as JESUS, THE WAY, THE TRUTH, THE LIFE, JOURNEY, LORD, GOD'S WORD, etc. REMIND children that the GPS stands for GOD'S POSITIONING SAINTS or GOD'S POWER SUPREME and these words need to stick in our hearts and minds throughout the week!

MAP IT OUT: Divide the children into groups and give each group a simple map to find a "treasure" which will be a BIBLE at the end of the MAP COURSE. The map can be to a table, bookcase, church pew, tree or flower garden if outside, etc. The children will have to go to each area and get a candy or small treat from that area to show that they actually went to all the places on the map! When they have completed the "course" and have found the Bible treasure, they will return to the classroom. Each group can have a different map if the teacher is able to have that large of a space, OR the teacher can send one group out at a time while the rest of the class is in another room so they can't watch where the group has gone, until it is their team's turn.

TRAIL VERSE HUNT: Let children go in groups or individually, as teacher chooses, to find all the words of today's Bible verse in a designated area and bring back to the room to tape onto a poster board that will have GOD'S POSITIONING SAINTS title at the top. The teacher can also have one child go out at a time to get one word of the verse, in the correct order... so the teacher would tell the first child to HUNT on the TRAIL for the word "I".. the next child will find "AM" on the trail, next child will find "the", etc.

HOLY WORD PATH: Give children paper and crayons and pencils to write today's Bible verse in a path around their sheet of paper - as in a circle or a squiggly path, etc. Then they will hand the paper to the child on their right and everyone will have their turn at reading the Bible Verse PATH if they can follow the words in order. Tell children the words have to be in the right order but the path can go anywhere on the paper.

BIBLE SWORD DRILL: All the children can "follow the teachings" as they look up one Bible verse after another, as the teacher calls the verses out. Choose all verses that are easy to find if for younger children and ALL verses that have a teaching in them, such as the ten commandments, doing all things without murmurings and disputings (Phil 2:14); obeying parents (Eph 6:-14); reading God's Word (Matt4:4, Ps 119:105, II Tim 3:16-17), etc.

Finding the Way



Theme: Jesus is the Way - Fifth Sunday of Easter Yr. A

Object: A map and a compass

Scripture: Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6 (NIV)

If you are going on a trip, you need to know where you are going and how to go to get there. I have a two things with me this morning that you might use to help you to find your way when you are traveling. I have a map and a compass. I'm sure all of you have seen a map, but perhaps some of you have never seen a compass. The map will show you where you want to go, and the compass will point you in the right direction. The compass shows you whether you are going north, south, east, or west.

I heard about a lady who was taking a group of children to a soccer game in another city. She knew the right road to take, but she became confused and turned east instead of west. They had traveled for almost an hour before one of the children told her that they were going the wrong direction.

When we are trying to find your way through the journey of life, we need some help in finding the right way to go, don't we? Each day we face many difficult decisions and it is sometimes hard to know which way to turn. Some people use their feelings to make decisions. They say, "I'm going to do this, because it just feels like the right thing to do." That's no good. Our feelings may change from day to day, and just because we feel good about something doesn't mean that it is the right thing to do.

Some people make choices by what's popular. Have you ever tried to convince your parents to let you do something by saying, "Everybody's doing it"? Just because everyone else is doing it doesn't mean that it is the right thing to do, does it? Besides, tomorrow everyone might be doing something else.

There is one sure way to know if we are going in the right direction in life—and that is to follow Jesus. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." We know where we want to go, we want to go to heaven. And now, we know the way. Jesus is the way. If we follow him, we know we are on the right path and headed in the right direction.

Dear Father, help us each day as we journey through life to follow Jesus, because we know he is the way, the only way. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

BIBLE VERSE PUZZLE: Have the Bible verse John 14:6 written on card stock and cut in several pieces to create a puzzle and placed into envelopes for children to put together. After all of the children have completed their puzzles, have them read the verse out loud together!

WHERE ARE "YOU" GOING GAME: Tell the children that they are to run and find something but the teacher won't tell the children what they are looking for. The children will be told, "You will know what they're looking for WHEN they find it, but if you can't find it, come to me and I will help you." When the children can't find the hidden object, they will return to the teacher and the teacher will lead them to the item they're looking for! Suggested ideas: A Bible with a book marker in John 14:6,

or a Bible verse written on a book marker, or a piece of candy with the Bible verse wrapped around it, etc), children and teacher can sit down and talk about the Bible story today!

MAZE BIBLE VERSE: Have the children draw a squiggly line around a piece of paper and write today's Bible verse (John 14:6) on the squiggly line. Color in the little shapes where the lines come together for an "added effect" for their maze poster! For extra fun, have the children hand someone else their verse maze and see if they can read it and follow the verse along the lines!

"WAY, TRUTH AND LIFE" POSTER: Give the children a piece of construction paper and some very colorful neon markers (if available) to use their imaginations in drawing WAY, TRUTH, LIFE on their poster! Children can title their poster with JESUS IS THE WAY! Have the children recite the Bible verse when their poster is completed!

PATH FUN: The teacher will prepare several different paths around the church or a designated area. These paths could be marked with different colored feet (a different color for each path) and at the end of each path would be a sign that says, "DEAD END." Then the teacher will tell the children to follow the RED FEET down a path that will end in a big sign that will say HEAVEN! Let children write their name on that HEAVEN SIGN when they reach that destination! The "red feet" can represent the blood of Jesus that washes our sins away!

PLAY DOUGH ART: Have the children work together to roll various colors of play dough to form the words, "WAY, TRUTH, LIFE". Ask the children a question about the story and when they answer, let them add a letter to the above word list until all the words are in place.

SHOE PATH: Divide the children into two teams. All the children on each team will take their shoes off and use the shoes to make a path to a special object that they will hide at the end of the path. After the paths have been made, the opposite team will walk the path and find the secret object that has something to do with our lesson today, such as a map, or compass, or a Bible.

MAP QUEST: Divide the children into teams or work together as a whole group to form a map around their designated area. Let children practice following their maps and discuss how hard it is to find an object or an area without a detailed map. The children will enjoy drawing the objects along a path....grass, trees, table, building, etc.

FOLLOWING FEET: Give the children supplies to trace their feet and decorate them by writing words from today's lesson on them. They will then tape these cut out feet to form a "path" on a wall where others can see the feet path and words that tell today's story.