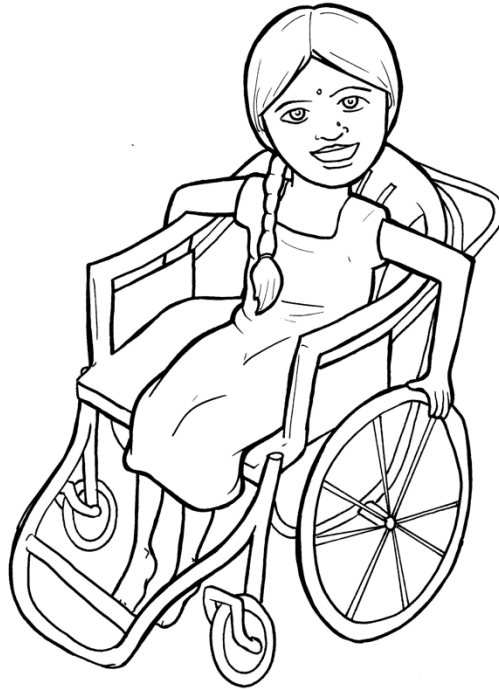


54. I am Alive: Loving My World

Acts 2-4



All the believers were one in heart and mind. They shared everything they had.

Acts 4:32

I am Alive: Loving my World

The early church was full of love. That love spilled over to everyone they met.

The new believers sold their land. With the money, they helped the poor. They gave food to women whose husbands had died. Peter healed a man who could not walk.

The Christians obeyed the words of Jesus. He said, "Whatever you do to the least of these, you are doing it for me." They remembered the hurting, the lost, and the lonely.

In the book of Acts, we read: "The believers were one in heart and mind. They shared everything they had. With great power, they told about Jesus coming back to life."

Today, we call this "missions." Our mission – our work – is to love the world and tell about Jesus. As you grow closer to God, you will start to think and feel like him.

He loves the hurting, the lost, and the lonely. He cares about hungry children. He sees those without clean water, and it hurts his heart.

He wants you to help the poor get shoes, clothes, or food. God wants you to open your eyes and your heart. Will you put God's love into action in your world?

Questions

1. How did the early believers share the love of God?
2. How do we Christians share the love of God today?
3. Who do you know that is hurting, lost, or alone?
4. What can you do to help those people?

Pray this prayer:

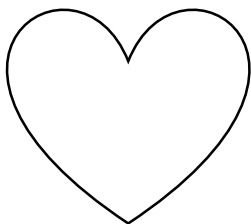
Dear Lord Jesus,

Please make my heart as soft as yours. Open my eyes to see those around me who are hurt, lost, and alone. Use me to bring the love of Jesus to my hurting world.

Amen

Color these pictures while you say the prayer.

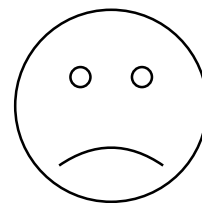
Open the eyes
of my heart...



to see, love,
share with, give,
and serve ...



those who are
hurt, poor, lost,
or alone.



Show students where the story is in the Bible. Use the Bible references above the illustration.

Before you read:

Activate Prior Knowledge

- a) How can a little child love a huge world?
- b) Have you ever loved someone so much that you helped that person? Who?
- c) How does God love this world of ours?

After you read:

Missions Mondays

If you make this a yearly tradition, your family members will treasure the memory and carry it on to the next generation. We are so blessed in the USA to have a huge variety of delicious food on our plates. For most of us, it's every day. In poor nations, they are lucky to have enough food and hardly ever get variety. Set aside the month of March. Every Monday night is Missions Monday. Eat a super simple dinner to save money and in solidarity with the poor. In Honduras, children might eat a tortilla filled with beans ten times a week. That is a rather healthy and low-cost dinner. You might save \$5 if you serve it every Monday. You do the math and put the grocery money you save in your Missions Monday jar. This jar sits by the door. People drop their change in it year-round. On the last Monday of March, count all your Missions Monday money and decide who to bless. Go to page 8 and explore those missions throughout the month. Pray for the missionaries in your church and the new project you support.

Sponsor a Child

One of the best ways to impact the life of a needy child is through monthly sponsorship. The child's family can count on your \$30 a month, which makes their education possible and helps them stay healthy and well fed. If you sponsor through World Help, you can choose a child by country, gender, age, or even by birthday! What a blessing for your child to be able to have a "twin" to write to, care about, donate to, and pray for while they grow up together. <https://worldhelp.net/sponsor/>

Plug into the Power

We can do a lot of good in the world...and we should! But if we don't start, continue, and end with prayer, our mission work will not have the full fruit that God intends. Sit in a dark room and go around in a circle, stating how you would like to obey God by going out with the gospel or to help meet people's needs. Now, plug in a lamp and say a prayer for those very same goals.

Thankful Heart... Giving Heart

Nothing makes us want to give more than being grateful for the many blessings we have. Deuteronomy 8:10 tells us: "When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you." Before you leave the dinner table, praise God, specifically for your food and for the good land you live in. Ask him how you can bless others who are not as satisfied as you are.

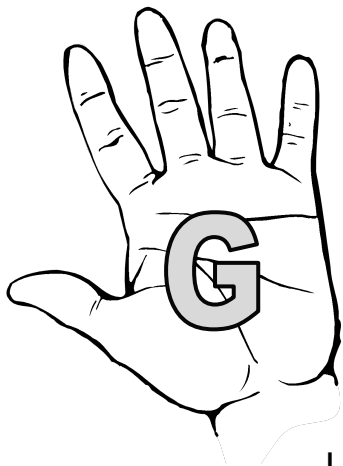
G-O

Everywhere Jesus went, he preached and healed the people. He met needs of their souls for God and needs of their bodies for healing and food. The apostles did the same when the church was born. They boldly proclaimed the gospel. They gave, share, healed, and helped those inside and outside the church. We need to do the same: **GO** with the gospel in one hand. **GO** to help with an open hand. Using washable markers, write a **G** on one hand and an **O** on the other hand. Put your hands together and ask God to help you **GO**.

Practice and Prepare to GO

Practice this by filling a baggie with homemade cookies and band aids. That bag is for the **O**pen to their needs hand. For the **G**ospel hand, go to the previous story (53. Tell the World). Make a Booklet of Belief (or give a Bible or encouraging Bible verses). Go to a housebound person, nursing home, children's wing at the hospital, or homeless shelter with both hands full, prepared to empty.

GO



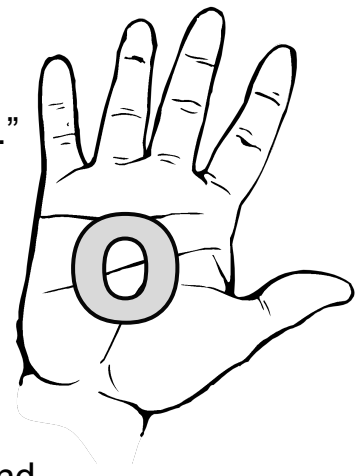
Jesus said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."

Mark 16:15

Give freely to those who are poor and needy in your land.

Open your hands to them.

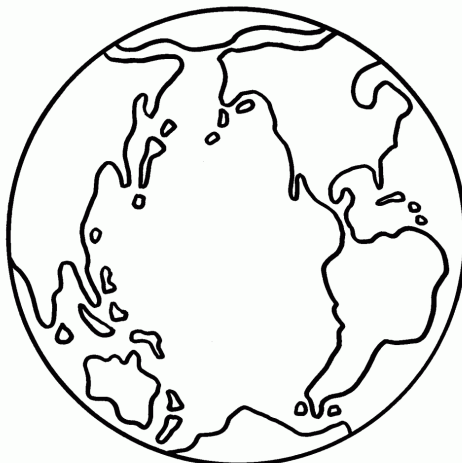
Deuteronomy 15:11



I will **go** with the gospel through the land.

I will **go** to help with an open hand.

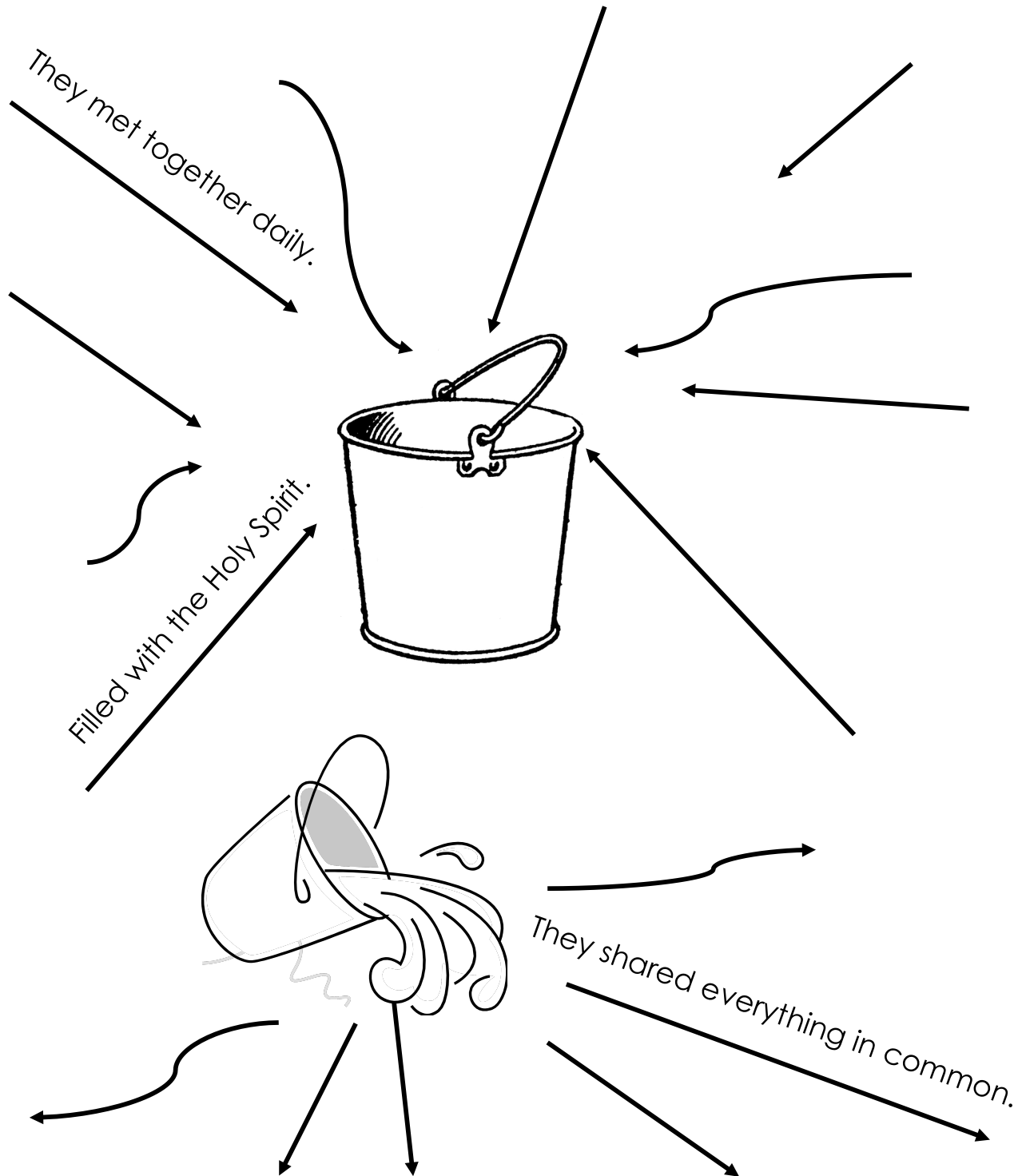
I will **go** with the gospel through the land.



I will **go** to help with an open hand.

Blessings In and Out

To be in Jerusalem at that point in time, would have been beyond thrilling. The early, infant church was so filled with blessings that their love spilled over to everyone. Go through Acts 2, 3, and 4:1-31. Have the kids write down on the lines all the exciting acts that energized that first church (a few have been done for you). Then, read Acts 4:32-35 and Acts 5:12-16 and record the overflow as above. When finished, get a real pitcher and have the kids name the same as they ladle water into the pitcher. Sweeten with lemon and sugar and pour out the "blessings" into cups. Drink and enjoy the "flavor."



Green for GO

Love is an action more than a feeling. The person not close to God usually does not care as much about hurting people or those who are lost – without Christ. But, as you grow closer to God, you will start to think and feel like him. Soon, your eyes will open and you will care like God cares.

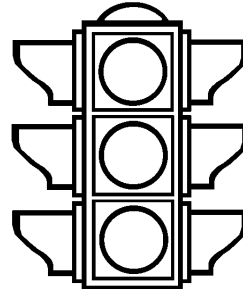
Play this game with index cards and red, green, and yellow markers. On index cards, write phrases in red that show someone is not growing close to God: not reading their Bible, not meeting with Christians, not praying, etc. Now write phrases that show someone growing close to God. Underline these words in yellow: praying, singing songs of praise, going to church, obeying, etc. Use green marker to write action words from the story: sold land, gave food, etc.

Mix up the pile and distribute evenly among the kids. You might want to create a poster board stoplight and post it at one side of the room. On the opposite side, the kids line up. They hold their stack of cards in their hand and turn their cards over one at a time. Follow the code below to race to the other side.

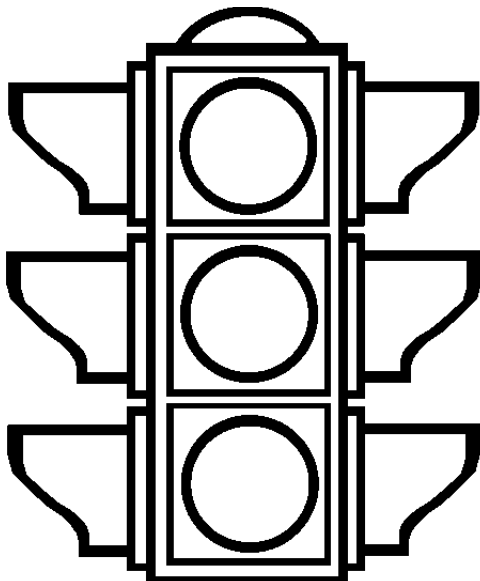
Red: Stop, no steps.

Yellow: Slow, take a baby step.

Green: Take a giant step.



Color and cut out this traffic light. Put it in your car. When you are at a stoplight, say this Help Me Care Prayer.



Dear Lord,

STOP me when I don't care.

Help me draw close to you.
When I do, I know my heart is
ABOUT TO CHANGE.

I want to **GO** help and serve
others. Show me how.

Amen

Loving the Least (Part 1)

Jesus said that when you help the needy, you're helping Christ himself – what an honor! Read Matthew 25:31- 46. See how the trusted mission agencies below fulfill the command of Christ to take care of the hungry, thirsty, strangers, sick, and those in prison or without clothes. Choose a few mission projects to support. Find information and giving opportunities at the links below. Go to Part 2 for a fund-raising tool.

Hungry: You can provide fruit through seeds for \$25. Give eggs (chickens) for \$22. <https://worldhelp.net/gifts/sustainability-and-education/>

Remember the forgotten children of Sudan. They are some of the poorest kids on our planet. A \$53 kid (baby goat) provides them with milk, yogurt, and a way to earn money: <http://www.kidsforkids.org.uk/shop/buy-an-animal/goat/>
Donate from the USA at: <https://www.globalgiving.org/microprojects/kids-for-kids-gift-goats-in-darfur-sudan-refugee/>

Thirsty: Clean, safe water is one of the most important ways to transform a child's health and life. The cost of one life-giving water filter in Honduras is \$35. <http://hishands.ws/>

Stranger: This can be your local mission. Teach kids how to welcome new students at school or in class. Your church or area churches will most likely already have venues for your kids to visit the lonely in nursing homes. Teach them some songs and go with cookies and hugs.

Clothes: In some poor countries, a child is not allowed to attend school if they don't have shoes on. Imagine growing up not able to read or have an education for lack of shoes, that cost about \$1 a pair. You can donate your shoes or money: <https://soles4souls.org/get-involved/give-money/>

For only \$6, you can wrap a cold child in a cozy blanket. <https://www.samaritanspurse.org/our-ministry/gift-catalog/?item=16>

Sick: More than 70 million people around the globe still need a wheelchair. Without one, they have a miserable life, often shut in a back room and not able to work or go to school or go anywhere. An \$80 wheelchair completely changes their lives! <https://www.freewheelchairmission.org/>

Just two doses of Vitamin A in a baby's eyes will make sure she does not go blind. It can take only \$1 to give the gift of sight! <https://www.vitaminangels.org/vitamin-a-deficiency>

Malaria kills more than 1,000 children a day. Stop malaria with a \$10 mosquito net for African children. <https://www.nothingbutnets.net/>

Prison: You may not be able to go into a prison to visit, but you can send the love of Jesus there. Write a letter to a Christian who is in prison simply because of their faith. Read the directions carefully first. <https://www.prisoneralert.com/>

Loving the Least (Part 2)

The early believers sold their land and gave to those in need, freely and joyfully. Let your students experience the same joy. Have them bring in some of their own toys to sell. Hold a yard sale or bake sale. Choose a mission to support and spend time learning about the needs and cure.

When you set up your table to sell items, give the customers one of the thank you cards below that you have photocopied and folded. While the kids are at the sales table, they can color the illustrations.

