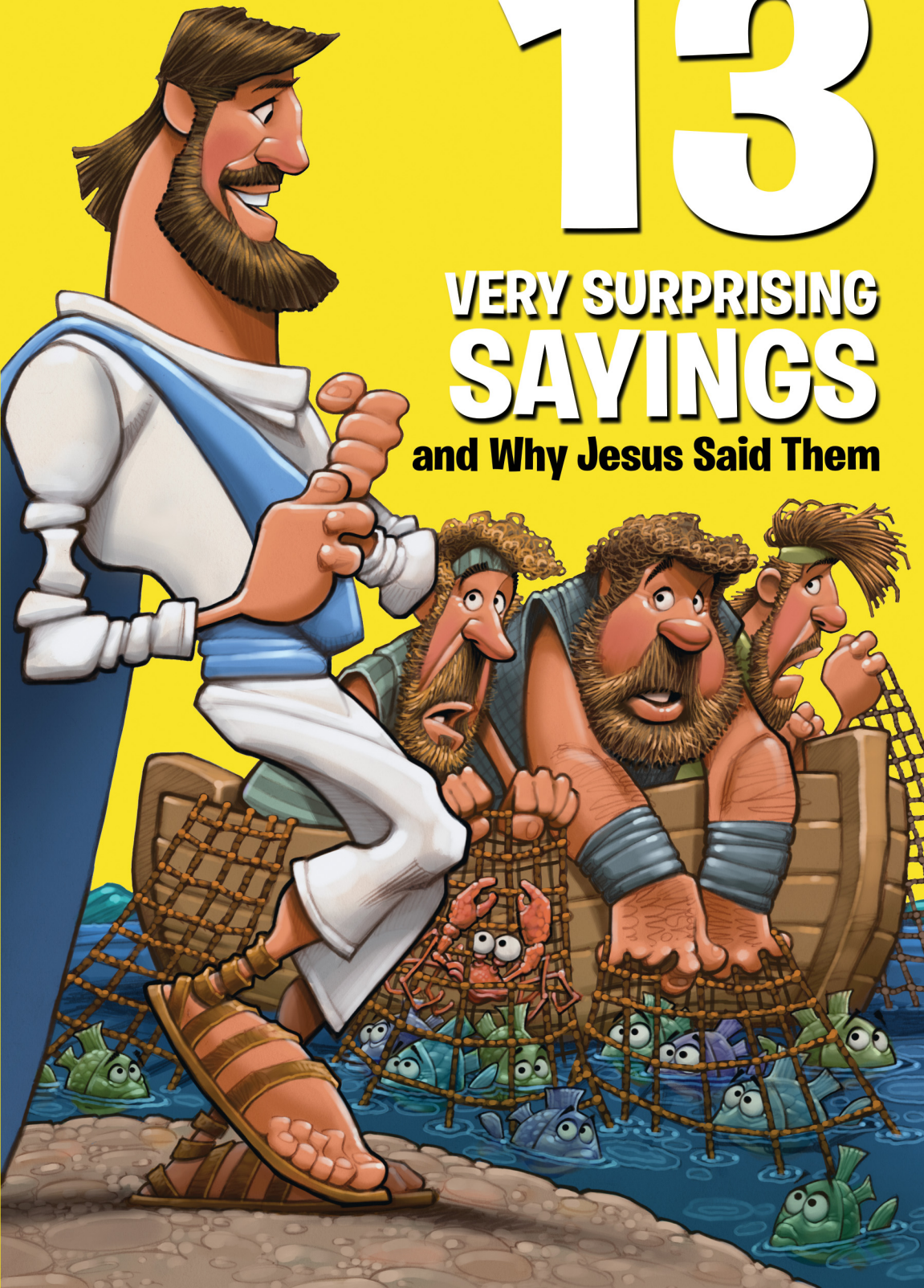


13

VERY SURPRISING SAYINGS

and Why Jesus Said Them



13

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SAYINGS**
and Why Jesus Said Them

13 VERY SURPRISING SAYINGS AND WHY JESUS SAID THEM

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**“Midway through the festival,
Jesus went up to the Temple and
began to teach. The people were
surprised when they heard him.”**

John 7:14-15

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John 3:16; 12:25; 1 John 5:13

How to Use These Sessions

About These Sessions

First, thanks. Thanks for caring about children and for helping them explore the surprising things Jesus said. Because Jesus did say some surprising stuff—stuff that left even his closest friends scratching their heads, wondering if he was serious. The first will be *last*? Start fishing for *people*? Love your *enemies*? Really?

And if some of what Jesus said confuses grown-ups, imagine how confusing it sounds to children. Well, no more. You're about to help kids discover the faith-building, life-changing truths tucked into some of Jesus's most surprising sayings.

Welcome to Easy

These sessions for elementary kids are carefully designed to make your life easier. They're light on supplies, quick to prepare, and long on fun. You'll find most supplies in the church's supply closet or kitchen or at home in your garage, pantry, or junk drawer—no need to spend time ordering materials online.

Because these sessions are created so beginning teachers or mature teenagers can lead them confidently, you won't need highly trained teachers. And the variety of options in each session will snag the attention—and hold it—of first-grade through sixth-grade children, including the boys!

Best of all, you'll see kids grow in their faith as they open their hearts to what God shares with them through these 13 sessions.

Welcome to Simple Learning

Preparation is easy too. Each session, you'll focus on one key Bible truth, which children will explore and apply. You'll drive that point home through Bible exploration, fun discussions, giggle-worthy games, and "Oh, wow!" activities that engage kids in multiple ways through multiple learning styles.

Welcome to Deep Bible Discovery

Each week, your children will actually *experience* a Bible truth. They'll discover it, ponder it, talk about it, pray about it, and apply what they learn. If that's what you're looking for—for your children to *do* God's Word instead of just hear it—you're in exactly the right place. And here's a tip: supersize the learning by using a kid-friendly version of the Bible to make sure Jesus's words are understood by children.

Welcome to Flexibility

We get it: sometimes, you have to punt. A sermon goes long ... or short. Kids are quick to dive into a lesson or need some time to warm up to being together. Older kids might zip through an activity while their younger friends take a little longer.

Relax. We've got you covered.

You can use these sessions with kids in practically any setting: in Sunday school, children's church, evening programs, or while kids' parents are attending an adult class or small group. There's maximum flexibility because each session is written to last 45 minutes and then provides enough extras to fill a full hour. These sessions stretch to fit exactly what you need, when you need it. They're ...

- **multi-aged**—suitable for mixed ages of elementary children;
- **easily adapted**—sessions work for just a couple kids or a packed classroom;
- **relational**—children grow close to Jesus *and* one another;
- **flexible**—brimming with options to fit varying time frames; and
- **fun**—even easily distracted kids will engage, learn, and grow.

So are you ready for some fun? Let's dive in!

Jesus Said ...

Fish for People

The Point: You have good news to share.

Scripture Connect: Matthew 4:18–20

Supplies for all session 9 activities options: paper, scissors, markers, newspaper, masking tape (or painters' tape), stopwatch, Bible, paper plates

The Basics for Leaders

For many Christians, sharing the good news about Jesus is scary. We think it involves reciting Bible verses and defending the faith as hostile critics pepper us with questions. No wonder so many of us keep our heads down and say nothing. Yes, we have good news to share, but people will have to pry it out of us.

But what if our good news is less about Bible facts and more about sharing our own story—about sharing what Jesus has done for us and how we've changed? Our own stories don't require defending because they're *our stories*. We're simply reporting what happened when Jesus touched our lives.

In this session, you'll help the children discover that they have good news to share. It's good news about Jesus but also good news about what Jesus has done for them. You'll help them put their story into words and be ready to go fishin'!

OPENING ACTIVITY-OPTION 1

TELL ME THUMBTHING

Time: about 5 minutes, depending on attendance

Supplies: none

After the kids arrive, say: **When people like a movie, they sometimes give it a thumbs-up.** (demonstrate) **If they really like the movie, they give it two thumbs-up. If they dislike or really dislike the movie, they give it one or two thumbs-down.** (demonstrate)

Say: **Please rate how this past week has gone for you. Was it a one or two thumbs-up week? A one or two thumbs-down week? Or maybe you'd give it one thumbs-up and one thumbs-down—it was a good *and* bad week. Rate your week now.**

After kids rate their weeks, give them 30 seconds each to explain why they rated their weeks as they did. You'll go first, sharing a story that models the sort of brief, personal stories you hope kids will share too.

Children will express themselves more over time, and hearing their stories will help you adapt this session to make it even more relevant to your kids' lives.

OPENING ACTIVITY-OPTION 2

FLYING FISH

Time: about 10 minutes

Supplies: paper (1 sheet per child), scissors, markers, newspapers

Give each child a sheet of paper and scissors. Have kids cut out the shape of a large fish. They should also write their names on their fish. Line kids up side by side about twenty feet from a wall. Tell them to face the wall and lay their fish on the floor in front of them.

Say: **It may not look like it, but that wall in front of you is the ocean, and if your fish is going to survive, you've got to get it back into water.**

You'll do that by waving a section of newspaper behind your fish.

Give each child a section of newspaper. Say: **You can't touch your fish in any way—your fish must be carried by the wind you make with the newspaper all the way to the ocean. Start flapping!** If some kids struggle to get their fish moving, ask those who finish early to help others.

TIP

This activity works best on a tile floor, but if you're on carpet, you can easily make it work by having kids slightly crumple their fish before placing them on the floor.

When the children have finished, collect the newspapers and say: **Back when Jesus was on earth, he was around fish and fishermen. And He said something about fishing that was surprising. We'll take a look at what he said after we play a quick game!**

Surprising Sayings Game

GIDDYUP GET THERE

Time: about 15 minutes

Supplies: masking tape (or painters' tape), stopwatch

Say: I have good news, and I want to tell others as quickly as possible. If you had good news to share and wanted to deliver it to someone fast, you might try these methods.

Explain to the kids that they're all on the same team. They will run a relay twice—competing against the clock, not one another. Encourage kids to cheer one another on. Use tape to create a starting line and another line 15 feet away; kids will race to that line and back again.

Give each child a different way to move—that's the fun in this relay. And if you have just a few kids, it's okay to have each child run the relay several times in different ways. Just keep the number of laps consistent from round one to round two. Here are some examples of ways the kids can run the relay:

- gallop like horses
- waddle like penguins
- walk like crabs (on hands and feet, facing up toward the ceiling)
- walk like bridesmaids (step, pause)
- slither like snakes
- walk backward
- skip
- walk with toe-to-heel steps
- leap like ballerinas
- walk sideways
- hop like kangaroos

Say: Let's see how fast you can run the Giddyup Get There races! Tell the first child how he or she will move and then say: Ready? Go! Start the stopwatch.

Run the relay twice, comparing the time it took to complete the relay. When running it the second time, use the same list of movements but let different kids do them. Discuss:

- Which way was the easiest to move in a hurry? Which was the hardest? Why?
- Tell us about a time when you had to get someplace in a hurry. What happened?

After letting several kids share their stories, continue by saying: **Before we started our relay, I talked about having good news to share. But you didn't ask me *what* good news I was talking about. If you're going to go to the trouble of hopping, leaping, and crab walking, don't you want to know what message you have to deliver? We'll get to what the good news is, but first, let's join some people who are being asked to deliver good news. And they're being asked to do it in a very surprising way!**

Surprising Sayings Bible Story

FISHY FOLLOWING

Time: about 20 minutes

Supplies: Bible

Ask the kids to sit on the floor in a circle. Read Matthew 4:18–20 aloud. Then ask for three volunteers. Place two volunteers (Simon and Andrew) inside the circle and the third volunteer (Jesus) outside the circle. Tell the children that they will silently act out the actions you describe.

Say: **Those of us in the audience have a part to play too: we're fish. Show me your best fish face.** (pause as kids do as you've asked) **Perfect! Now we're ready to begin!**

One day, Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, which was actually a lake. (indicate that Jesus should walk slowly around the circle) **But people called it a sea because it was a really, really big lake. Two guys, who made their living fishing, were busy throwing their nets into the water.** (pause for some net-throwing action) **There was Simon—wave, Simon!** (pause) **And also Andrew. Wave, Andrew!** (pause)

Just beyond the nets were fish. Fish, make fish faces! (pause) **There were a lot of fish! Jesus stopped where Simon and Andrew could see**

him. (pause) They probably waved to Jesus because they'd seen him around. Jesus probably waved back, and then he said something very interesting: "Come follow me, and I'll teach you how to fish for people." Simon looked at Andrew. (pause) Andrew looked at Simon. (pause) They both looked at Jesus. (pause) The fish looked at the nets, which were no longer in the water. (pause)

Then Simon and Andrew did something the fish had never seen them do: they walked away from their nets and followed Jesus. (pause) The fish *loved* seeing the fishermen walk away from the water, so they slapped their fins together in applause! (pause) Thank you, actors! Ask everyone to sit in a circle and discuss:

- What do you think Jesus meant when he said Simon and Andrew would fish for people?
- Fishing for people is part of our job as Jesus followers too. How do we do that?

Tell the kids that many followers of Jesus don't talk about him much. Say: **Some people are afraid to talk about Jesus because they don't know much about the Bible. Or they don't think they're qualified because they still do wrong things.**

But you don't have to be perfect to talk about Jesus. And you don't have to know everything about the Bible. We can share who Jesus is, how Jesus has helped and changed us, and that Jesus is a friend who also wants to be friends with everyone. That's the good news we can share!

Ask everyone to find a partner. Find a partner yourself; you'll model what to say as you tell your own faith story. Keep it short and age-appropriate for your kids. Tell your partner who Jesus is: the Son of God who loves us. Tell your partner how knowing Jesus has helped you. For example, maybe you used to be afraid all the time but now you're not. Tell your partner that Jesus is your friend and wants to be your partner's friend too.

Lead kids in sharing their stories with their partners. Begin with the person in each pair who's sitting closest to you. Keep in mind that you might have children who are not yet Jesus followers. That's okay; they'll hear a faith story in this activity.

Walk kids through repeating who Jesus is, what change he's made in their lives, and saying that Jesus wants to be friends with everyone. Then the kids

can switch roles. When they're finished, say: **That's how you fish for people. You tell them about Jesus and who he is in your life. Now let's ask Jesus to give us opportunities to share our faith stories with others.**

CLOSING PRAYER

STORY THANKS

Time: about 1 minute

Supplies: none

Ask the kids to sit with their hands in front of them, palms up. Pray: **Thank you, Lord, for loving us and for giving us a faith story. We gratefully accept everything you give us.** Then ask the kids to turn their palms so they're facing out. Continue: **Lord, please give us the opportunity to share our stories with others. We want others to know you too. We know we have good news to share—good news about you. Amen.**

EXTRA-TIME ACTIVITY—OPTION 1

MUMBLE BUMBLE

Time: about 10 minutes

Supplies: none

Say: **Sometimes when we want to share good news with others, we don't know what to say. In those cases, we might not say anything or we might mumble.** Have the kids sit in a circle. Tell them to practice mumbling by sucking their lips in and acting as if they have no teeth. The goal is to talk about their favorite pizza toppings without letting anyone see their teeth. If a child shows his or her teeth while talking, that child is not going to be the champion mumblor.

Turn to a child next to you and tell him or her what you like on a pizza. Go around the circle and see how many kids can mumble about their favorite pizza toppings. When you've made it around the circle, say: **I don't think any of us will get trophies for mumbling—but that's a good thing. We have good news to share!** Discuss: **What's the best way to share the good news about Jesus—through what we say, what we do, or something else? Why?**

EXTRA-TIME ACTIVITY-OPTION 2**TURN THAT FROWN UPSIDE DOWN?**

Time: about 10 minutes

Supplies: paper plates, markers (or pencils)

Give each child a paper plate and a marker. Ask the kids to draw a big smile on their plates. Then have them turn their plates upside down—now it's a frown. Explain that you'll be reading some two-part situations. Kids will show with their plates whether they think what you say is good news (a smile) or bad news (a frown). Be sure to pause before reading the second part of each situation:

- **You got the flu ... which kept you from going on a fun field trip.**
- **You got the hiccups ... while playing hide and seek.**
- **You were invited to a friend's party ... and had a great time.**
- **You did a perfect dive off the high board ... but you can't swim.**
- **You love your new trampoline ... if only you hadn't fallen off and broken an arm.**
- **You crashed your skateboard into the curb and fell ... but that kept you from zipping in front of a speeding truck.**
- **You found a 100-dollar bill on the street ... then lost it on the way home.**
- **You found a penny on the street ... and you discovered that it's worth 1,000 dollars.**

Say: **Sometimes things happen that seem great, but they really aren't. And sometimes things happen that aren't so great, but they're good in the end. Here's something that's *always* good—the good news you can share about Jesus. Jesus wants you to go fishing for others by sharing the good news!**

EXTRA-TIME ACTIVITY-OPTION 3**GOOD-NEWS STORY STRETCHER**

Time: about 5 minutes

Supplies: none

The goal of this game is to turn bad news into good news—three words at a time! Tell the kids that you'll start by saying some bad news. Their job, as they go around the circle, is to add three words that turn the bad news into good news.

Here are some story launches you can use:

- **When Jacob slammed his fingers in the door ...**
- **Olivia wasn't just mad; she was furious because ...**
- **Flunking the test was a bad thing for Michael because ...**
- **After the bullies cornered Kaitlyn, the biggest bully said ...**
- **Jesus told Simon and Andrew, "You won't make money fishing for fish anymore, but ..."**

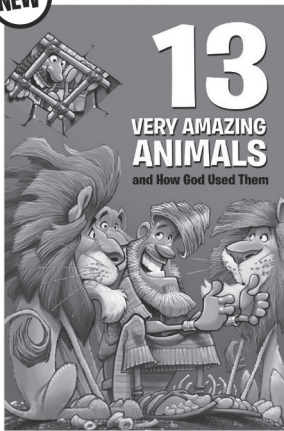
Say: **Simon and Andrew had good news to share about Jesus—that's why they fished for people. You have good news about Jesus to share too, so get fishing!**

WE SERVE A BIG GOD. Show kids how big!

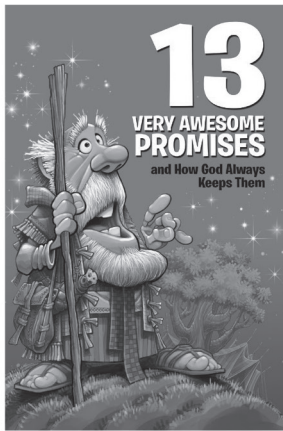
Kids will discover, think about, talk about, pray about, and apply what they learn.

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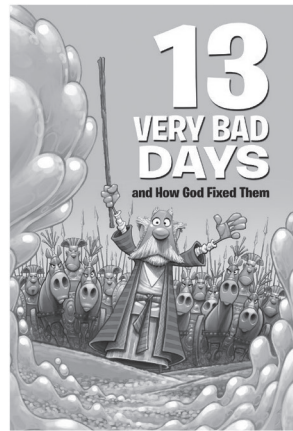
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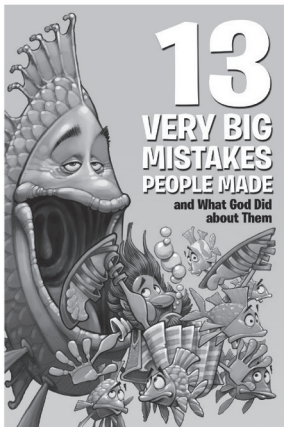
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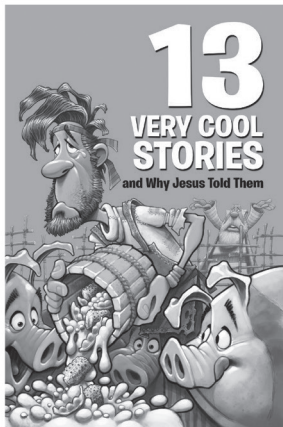
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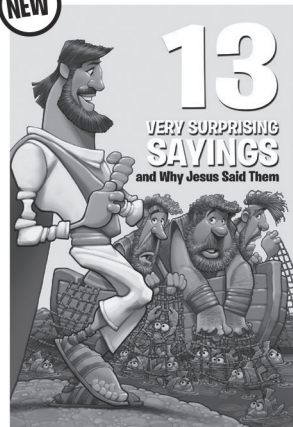


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