For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.

—Ephesians 2:8

Welcome to This Changes Everything, where you and your campers are given the opportunity to experience how the life-changing love of God in Christ—grace—changes everything. Sin and death, which held humanity captive, have been defeated. This love that God has for us and for all creation changes everything about our world, creating a new community of followers of Jesus Christ who reflect that love of God for the world.

Learning Objectives for the Study
Through this Bible study, elementary-age campers and their leaders will:

- Learn how grace, God’s unconditional love for us in Christ, has changed everything.
- Recognize this change present in their hearts, identity, purpose, community, and perspective.
- Show how their lives have been changed by that grace and show God’s life-changing love to others.

Age-Group Characteristics
This study is written for campers ranging in age from five to twelve, approximately kindergarten through grade six. Suggestions for adapting an activity for younger or older elementary-age campers are included in each day’s Bible study.

Following are additional hints about working with this range of ages.

Lower Elementary Campers
Lower elementary campers are excited to learn, but some may not do well in traditional learning environments. Younger children need opportunities for active learning. By alternating between activities that require campers to sit and active games and opportunities to express creativity, your Bible study times will go more smoothly and engage multiple styles of learning. Most campers in this age group learn best by doing, so give them hands-on opportunities to engage with the material and keep their interest.

In the early elementary grades, reading and writing skills vary widely, so your group may have a wide range of skill levels. Encourage campers to try reading, but keep in mind that some may not be ready or comfortable reading aloud.

Upper Elementary Campers
Many upper elementary campers are excited to be at camp for a week trying out their new independence. Others may be quite nervous. Regardless of how your campers are feeling about coming to camp, they still need and want help and guidance from adults.
Upper elementary campers can also be at different developmental and physical stages. Some may act like their younger peers, but others may look and act like young teens. Making an effort to get to know them as individuals will not only help them get more out of their camp experience but will also help you as you plan your week together.

Many upper elementary campers are involved in a variety of activities and are becoming comfortable forming new friendships both at school and outside the classroom. They are also becoming more independent and might be interested in spending time alone. Making space for quiet time in your daily schedule will allow all personality types to have their needs met and give campers some down time—a rare thing for this generation that is often overscheduled.

**Special Hints and Suggestions**

**Preparation**

Become familiar with the Bible studies and activities. Go over the study for each day, read the Bible story in advance, and gather all the materials you will need. Some activities will take much less time than you expect, while on other days you may get through only a small portion of what you have planned. It is always a good idea to have a couple of extra activities planned so that you are ready no matter what happens.

Routines and structure are very comforting to young campers, so taking the time to create routines in your Bible study time will build anticipation as the kids look forward to what is coming. Most young campers are excited to help, and giving them opportunities to help plan or lead portions of the day helps build confidence and leadership abilities.

Throughout this Bible study, there are questions to use as a basis for your conversation about the Bible story for the day. These questions are organized in three groups: “Basic,” “Beyond the Basics,” and “Digging Deeper.” Use the basic questions with all ages of campers and the more challenging questions as appropriate according to the developmental readiness of your camper group each week.

**Being Flexible**

Sometimes campers may take the discussion in a way that you had not planned. If it seems to be appropriate, follow their lead. If not, be prepared to direct the discussion back to the topic. Unplanned situations such as a sudden rainstorm or a twisted ankle may also happen. If something disrupts the schedule, encourage campers to help you come up with a solution.

**Being an Example**

Remember that your campers are watching what you do and learning from you every minute. You can have a real impact on their lives even though you will only be together for a short time. Modeling a positive attitude and an enthusiasm for faith will have a big impact on them in the future. You may think that you are expected to know everything, but admitting when you don’t know the answer to a question can empower campers to be more open to learning.

**Discipline**

Your excitement for spending a week with your campers and clear expectations for behavior will help set the tone for a great week together. Encourage them to
experience all of the fun that camp offers, while at the same time set appropriate limits.

**Different Learning Styles**
Remember that everyone learns in different ways. Adjust activities and games to match the unique abilities and interests of your campers. What works for one group might not work as well for different campers the next week.

**Time for Yourself**
Take some time out each day to spend time alone with God and reflect on how your day, week, and summer are going. How has God’s life-changing love changed your life? How are you being called by the Holy Spirit? Paying attention to your own faith development will make you better able to guide your campers.

**Time for Fun!**
Being a camp counselor is one of the best jobs in the world. Who else gets to spend time outside in God’s creation while learning and playing with kids who are excited about God’s love? Remember to enjoy the time that you get to spend with these campers and have fun!

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First Night (or Orientation)

Camp Tour
Take your campers on a tour of camp. As you show the group where things are, such as the dining hall and swimming pool, start telling your campers about what you will be doing this week. Campers who are unsure about being at camp may be a little more comfortable when they know what to expect—what the daily routine will be and where things are.

Name Ball
*Materials: a soft ball such as a beach ball or a ball made out of sponge. Optional: second ball, marker.*

Since your group will be spending a lot of time together this week, it is important that you begin to get to know one another. If you have a favorite get-to-know-you game, feel free to use it. Here is one option.

Have the group sit in a circle.
*For lower elementary campers:* Begin by saying your name and then gently tossing the ball to someone across the circle. Explain that when the ball is thrown to someone, they should try to catch it, say their name, and then gently toss it to someone else.

*For upper elementary campers:* Go around the circle and have each person say their name. Then take the ball and say the name of someone across the circle before you toss the ball gently to them. That person then says the name of someone else and tosses the ball to them. Keep going until each person has had a turn and see if you can start going faster. Campers might also like the challenge of having two balls going in the circle at one time.

If you want to do more, use a permanent marker to write categories such as “favorite food” or “favorite sport” on different colored sections of a beach ball. When the ball is tossed in the circle, the person catching it looks at the part of the ball their right hand is touching and shares information about that topic with the group.

Name Flags
*Materials: construction paper, crayons or markers, masking tape for hanging the flags.*

When campers arrive, have them create a flag about themselves. These flags can simply have the camper’s name on it, or you have them include a few facts about themselves. For example, have them draw something in each corner that says something about them such as their favorite food or color. When everyone has had a chance to make a flag, provide the opportunity for campers to talk about their flags with the group.

Evening Rituals (Upper Elementary)
On their first night at camp, most campers will probably be excited and a little nervous. On your first evening together, create a ritual as a group that you will do every day. Rituals not only bring closure to the day, but they can also be a comfort for homesick campers. Here are some examples.

- Light a candle for evening devotions.
- Pray together.
- Share high and low points from the day.
- Share a story or retell the day’s Bible story.

Having campers take turns leading your ritual in the evening gives them ownership and something to anticipate.
**Group Covenant**

*Materials: paper and a pen, pencil, or marker.*

Talk with campers about the word *covenant*. Do they know what it means? *(A covenant is an agreement between people.)* As a group, come up with an agreement about how you will act and treat each other during your week together. Some camp rules, such as not keeping food in your cabin, should be included, but encourage campers to think of their own things to add. Having rules that you have all agreed upon is helpful; however, too many rules can be intimidating.

**Introducing the Daily Bible Study**

Take a few minutes to introduce the theme of the Bible study for the week, *This Changes Everything*.

Before explaining what “this” refers to, read the theme verse from Ephesians 2:8 out loud: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.”

Ask campers if the Bible verse provides any ideas about what changes everything.

After campers have shared their ideas, reinforce the idea that “this” refers to God’s grace—God’s unconditional love for us and for creation. Each day this week during Bible study, campers will explore how God’s grace changes their hearts, identity, purpose, community, and perspective.
Day 1
Our Hearts

Focus Question
How does God’s grace change our hearts?

Theme Statement
God’s grace in Jesus changes our hearts and brings new life for all.

Learning Objectives
This Bible study will help elementary-age campers and their leaders:
- Know that the death and resurrection of Jesus is life changing for them and all people.
- Trust that Jesus is with them in all circumstances.
- Practice ways that they can show God’s life-changing love to others.

Bible Text

Materials
backpack or tote bag (this will be used all week)
Bibles
large blanket or sheet
toy butterfly or a picture of a butterfly
yellow construction paper
markers or crayons
other paper
scissors
pen
bread or other snack
seeds (optional)

Gather
What Would You Pack?
If your group has already done some kind of get-to-know-you activity, review names. One way to do this is to sit in a circle and ask for a volunteer who thinks they can go around the circle and say each person’s name correctly. If no campers volunteer, do it yourself.

If you have not done some kind of get-to-know-you activity, see the “First Night” section of this Bible study for ideas.

Talk with the group about packing for a trip. If you are in a day camp setting, talk about what campers might bring if they were packing for a trip.
- What do you usually pack when you are going somewhere? Ask about a few common items that campers may have brought with them to camp, such as a toothbrush, a sleeping bag, or a flashlight, and have them raise their hand if it is something that they packed.
- Is there something special that you like to take with you when you go somewhere?
- What is one thing that you were careful to bring with you to camp? Some campers may have brought a favorite stuffed animal or other comforting object with them to camp. If you have something special that you brought with you, tell about it too.

Have campers sit in a circle and tell them that you are going to play a game about packing for a trip. This game will also help you and your campers remember the names of everyone in your group. Pretend
that your group is going to go on a trip together. Ask the group for suggestions about where you might go and decide together on a pretend destination. Have each person think of something that they are going to pack for your trip that begins with the first letter of their first name.

For example, Susannah might take sunglasses and Carlos might decide to take crayons.

For lower elementary campers: Thinking of something that starts with a particular letter might be difficult for some younger children, so they might need help. Encourage the group to help brainstorm ideas for others, or if it seems easier, just have campers think of an item to pack. Have one person stand in the middle of the circle and point to each person, one at a time. When they point to someone, have that person say their name and what they would pack. Or, you can have the whole group say the name of the person who is pointed to.

For upper elementary campers: When everyone has thought of what they will take, go around the circle and have each person say their name and what they are going to pack. After everyone has had a turn, ask if there is anyone who thinks that they can go around and say each person’s name and what they want to pack. Can anyone say everyone’s name around the circle without making any mistakes?

**Why Can't You Tell Who I Am?**

Once you have reviewed everyone’s name or played a name game, divide campers into two smaller groups. Explain that you are going to play a game where each group will have to guess who is speaking from the other group by just listening to their voice.

Get out a blanket or a sheet, and ask two campers to hold it up so that each group is on one side of the blanket and cannot be seen by the other group. (Depending on the size of your group, you may need to find taller campers or camp staff to hold the blanket.) Tell each group that they should pick someone to go first, but that they should do this without speaking. This may be difficult for younger campers. Explain that they can gesture or point to make their selection.

Choose one group to go first and tell their chosen speaker to step in front of the group on their side of the blanket and ask the question, “Do you know who I am?” The camper can decide if they want to use their normal voice or to try to disguise their voice in some way. When the person has spoken, have the group that has listened decide together who they think it was. When the group has decided, have them say the name and then drop the blanket. Was their choice correct?

Repeat this several times as time allows, alternating groups each time and then talk together about it using these questions.

- What did you think of this activity?
- What made it challenging to figure out who was speaking?

**What’s in the Pack Today?**

**Preparation:** Find a backpack or tote bag that you will be able to use all week, and find something to go in it that has a butterfly on it. This could be a picture of a butterfly or a toy butterfly of some kind. Use a bookmark to mark today’s story in a Bible and place the Bible in the pack as well. When campers see the pack, they will know that your time with the Bible is about to begin.

Show the group your backpack or tote bag and explain that this is your Bible study pack. When they see this, they will know that it is time for them to learn about the Bible together. Tell campers
that you will put something in the pack each day that will clue them into what they will learn about that day.

Give campers dues about what is inside your Bible study pack today to see if they can guess what is in it without seeing it. Start with general clues and get more specific. The clues can be about what it looks like or what it does. After about three guesses, take the butterfly out of the pack. Did anyone guess correctly? Ask these questions.

- What do you know about butterflies? (Butterflies begin as something that looks completely different—caterpillars.)
- Does anyone in the group know how caterpillars become butterflies? (Caterpillars hang from a twig and spin a cocoon around themselves. Then over the course of several weeks, their body changes and emerges from the cocoon as a butterfly or moth. The process is called metamorphosis.)
- Can anyone think of something else that changes into something completely different? (Tadpoles change into frogs.)
- How does a caterpillar’s life change when it changes into a butterfly or moth? (It can fly and it eats a different kind of food.)

Explain that in today’s story, campers will hear about people whose hearts were changed so that their lives became completely different. These people were on a journey home when a stranger joined them on their trip. He turned out not to be a stranger, but someone they knew very well.

**Opening Prayer**
Open your time together with prayer. Explain to the group that you are going to pray a butterfly prayer. Have campers put their hands in front of them and cross their thumbs so that their hands look like a butterfly. Then show them how to keep their thumbs crossed, but bring their hands together for prayer.

Begin the prayer by thanking God for each person in your group and for bringing your group together. At the end of the prayer, say “Amen” as a group and have campers open their butterflies, letting their prayers fly away as butterflies would.

**Word**

**Reading the Bible Together: The Walk to Emmaus**
Get out your Bible study pack and tell the group that you have something else in it that is for everyone. See if they can guess what it might be. After a few campers have guessed, take out the Bible and ask:

- Does anyone know what this is?

Explain that the Bible is the word of God, and that it is for everyone. Ask campers what they know about the Bible.

Show the group where you have marked today’s story, Luke 24:13–35. If campers have not brought it up, explain that the Bible has two sections, the Old Testament and the New Testament. Today’s story is from the New Testament, and is in one of the gospels, which tell the story of Jesus.

If you have upper elementary campers, you might ask for a volunteer or volunteers to read today’s story for the group. If no one volunteers, you can read the story out loud.

After reading the story, ask if the campers have any questions about it. Talk about the story as a group, using the following questions to guide the discussion. They are organized in three groups: “Basic,” “Beyond the Basics,” and “Digging...
Deeper.” Use the basic questions with all ages of campers. Use the more challenging questions if they are appropriate to the developmental readiness of your camper group, and accept all the campers’ answers.

**Basic**
- What were the two disciples doing when they were walking? *(They were talking about what had happened in Jerusalem, vv. 13–14.)*
- Jesus found the disciples as they were walking to the village of Emmaus and talking about everything that had happened. What events were they talking about? *(They were talking about the death of Jesus and thought that since he was not in the tomb he must be alive.)*
- What happened when they saw Jesus? *(They didn’t recognize him, v. 16.)*
- What did the disciples tell Jesus about the women and the tomb? *(The women told the other disciples that the tomb was empty when the women went there, vv. 22–24.)*
- What happened when they came near the village where they were going? *(Jesus walked ahead of the disciples, like he was going to keep going. The disciples invited him to spend the night with them, vv. 28–29.)*
- What happened when Jesus took the bread, blessed it, and broke it? *(The disciples finally recognized him, v. 31.)*
- What happened when the disciples recognized Jesus? *(Jesus disappeared.)*
- What did the disciples do after he disappeared? *(They went back to Jerusalem right away and told the other disciples what had happened, vv. 33–35.)*

**Beyond the Basics**
- How do you think the disciples were feeling when they were talking about what had happened in Jerusalem?
- Why do you think the disciples didn’t recognize Jesus?
- Why do you think their “eyes were kept from recognizing Jesus”?
- Who do you think they thought Jesus was?
- What do you think the disciples thought when Jesus said he didn’t know what had happened in Jerusalem?
- Why do you think the disciples wanted Jesus to stay with them that evening?
- Why do you think they recognized him when he broke the bread for them to eat?

**Digging Deeper**
- What do you think the disciples thought when they finally recognized Jesus?
- How do you think seeing Jesus again made the disciples feel?
- Why do you think this story is important for us to hear today?
- Can you think of a time that you didn’t recognize someone you knew very well? Why did this happen? What had changed that made it difficult to recognize them? How did it make you feel when you figured out who the person was?
- Can you think of a time when you experienced something that changed you?

To sum up this discussion, share with campers that in the beginning of the story, the disciples were sad that Jesus was no longer with them. At the end, they knew that Jesus would always be with them, even if they couldn’t see him.
The Feelings in the Story
(Lower Elementary)
Preparation: Cut small circles out of yellow construction paper, making sure that you have enough so that each camper can have at least five circles. They will be using these to draw faces to correspond with the feelings in the story. Or you can give each camper a piece of paper and have them draw faces as you go along.

If you prefer, this activity can be done by having campers simply make faces that go with the emotions in the story.

Give each camper five yellow circles and crayons or markers. Tell them to draw different faces on the circles that show different feelings. Make sure that they draw a happy face, a sad face, a confused face, a surprised face, and something else. Explain to the group that you are going to read the story, and that they should hold up a face that shows how the people in the story are feeling at the time.

Read the story from Luke 24:13–35 aloud for the group again, as follows.

- Read verses 13–16 and then pause to ask campers how they think the disciples were feeling when they talked to this man they didn’t recognize. Have campers hold up the face they think shows how the disciples were feeling.
- Continue reading the story, pausing after verses 17, 21, 24, 27, 29, 32, and 35. Each time you pause, ask campers how they think the disciples were feeling during this part of the story and have them hold up the face that matches that feeling.

Talk about these questions as a group.

- Do you think the disciples expected to see Jesus again?
- How do you think seeing Jesus again made them feel?
- How do you think it might have changed them to hear that he was alive again?
- What do you think the disciples wanted to do when they found out that Jesus was alive again?

Putting the Story Together
(Upper Elementary)
Preparation: Cut out strips of paper and write verses or pairs of verses from the story on each one, for example, Luke 24:28–29. Do not write out the verses. Take the number of campers that you have into account when writing the verses. You will need at least one strip of paper for each camper.

Give each camper a slip of paper and help them look up their verse or verses in a Bible. After everyone has read their verses, have them stand up and arrange themselves in the order of the story by their verses. Then have each person read or recite their verse out loud to see if they are in the right order.

If you have time and your campers are interested, invite another group or staff from the camp or church to come and hear the story verse by verse. Have campers spread out so that others are taking a short walk as they hear the story about the walk to Emmaus.

In the Breaking of the Bread
The disciples finally recognized Jesus when he blessed and broke the bread and gave it to them (vv. 30–31). Read Matthew 26:26–28 together as a group. Have campers heard these words before? Where? Do they know what they mean?

Some campers may have heard these words during worship at a church. Explain that it was common in Jesus’s day to share a meal in this way, “breaking bread together.” Jesus and his friends had done this together many times, so when they
heard him say and do this at their home in Emmaus, they finally recognized him.

In the Sacrament of Holy Communion, followers of Jesus share this meal and are forgiven. Taking into account any allergies that campers may have, share some bread (or another snack) together. While you eat, talk with campers about any special meal rituals they may have with their families. For example, some families pray a special prayer before they eat. Other families use special dishes for special meals.

As a group, make up a prayer that you can pray together at mealtimes during the rest of this week.

Send
What Does God’s Grace Change? Everything!
Preparation: For “Part 1—Silly Solutions,” think of a list of five things or situations that elementary-age children would be familiar with and for which you can think of silly or outlandish way to change the situation completely. (The situations you describe should not be things one would actually change in real life.) Here are some examples.

- Some people would be scared of a grizzly bear. How might you change it so that it’s not scary? You might put a clown nose and hat on it. Then it doesn’t look scary anymore.
- On a 120-degree Fahrenheit [49-degree Celsius] day it would be much too hot to be outside. How might you change it so that it wouldn’t be too hot? Everyone could wear clothes filled with ice or there could be huge fans every 10 feet [3 m].

For “Part 2—Serious Solutions,” think of real life, serious situations that campers might come across that need changing. Examples of situations could be someone at school doesn’t have anyone to play with during recess, the food pantry in their community doesn’t have enough food, or their local park is filled with trash.

Part 1—Silly Solutions
Tell campers that you are going to describe situations or things, and you want them to be creative and think of ways to change them. Explain that you want them to think of as many ways that they can to change the situation, no matter how silly or impossible.

Describe the situations that you prepared for part 1 and encourage the group to be as creative as they can to change the situations. If campers have a difficult time thinking of ideas, get them started by being silly yourself!

For lower elementary campers: Instead of describing situations to them, draw simple pictures and have campers take turns drawing on them to make the changes.

Part 2—Serious Solutions
Now tell them that you are going to describe situations and you want them to think of ways that campers could “change everything”—solve a problem or fill a need. These are the situations you prepared for part 2. Encourage campers to think of ways that they could help change these situations by showing God’s love to others. If they are thinking too big, bring the situation back to something that a child could actually change.

Talk about change with the group. Jesus’s love and presence with us changes our hearts. What are real ways that we as Christians can show God’s life-changing love to the world?
Like Water for a Flower
Preparation: Find a plant or flower that you can show to campers. Ask if there is a place at camp or the church, in a congregational day camp setting, where your group can do some weeding.

Take campers to see where a flower or plant is growing and bring along some seed packets if you wish. Use these questions.

- What do plants need to grow? (*Plants need water and sunlight. They need a place to grow.*)
- What happens to a plant that doesn’t get water? (*The plant will dry up and it might die.*)
- Have you ever watered a plant that had started to dry up? What happened to it?

The love that God showed us through the death and resurrection of Jesus is like water for us. It is life changing. After we know about it, we are different.

- What are some ways that we show that difference?
  Talk about this as you do some weeding, making sure that campers are only pulling weeds. (If you have seeds, plant them together.) When campers see a flower or plant, they can be reminded of how God’s love is life changing, like water for a plant.

Closing Prayer
Have your group sit in a circle and make sure that they know the name of the person on their right.

Before praying, explain that you are going to close your time together in prayer, and when you say “Thank you for . . .” you will go around the circle and have each person say the name of the person on their right.

Tell campers that each day they will help with the closing prayer by saying something. As you go through the week, perhaps campers will have ideas for what they would like to pray about.

Then close in prayer by thanking God for your group and for the way Jesus changes hearts. Say, “Thank you God for . . .” and name the person to your right, going around the circle as each camper names the person to their right. Ask for God’s help in bringing God’s life-changing love to the world.
Day 2
Our Identity

Focus Question
How does God’s grace change our identity?

Theme Statement
We are followers of Jesus, who helps us to see what God wants for the world and to show it to others through the way we live our lives.

Learning Objectives
This Bible study will help elementary-age campers and their leaders:
- Know that their identities are shaped by the grace of God through Jesus.
- Accept that following Jesus sometimes means being different from the rest of the world.
- Show to others their identity as a follower of Jesus.

Bible Text
Acts 9:1–18

Materials
Bibles
backpack or tote bag that you are using as your Bible study pack
name tag or name badge
slips of paper or sticky labels, one per camper
white drawing paper
construction paper or sticky labels
clear tape
pens, pencils, markers, and crayons
extra-large, plain T-shirt
permanent marker

Gather
Who Am I? (Lower Elementary)
Preparation: Write each person’s name on a slip of paper or sticky label.
Tape a slip of paper with a name on it on each camper’s back, making sure no camper gets their own name. Ask the group not to tell anyone whose name they are wearing, because you will be playing a game where everyone needs to guess “who they are,” or whose name is on their back.

The other campers can give clues to help each camper guess the name on their back. You can do this as a group or divide campers up into pairs.

Give campers an idea of what kind of clues they can use. For example, they can say, “You have brown curly hair,” or “You have glasses.” Each person should be given at least three clues. If a camper has guessed three times without guessing correctly, that camper can be told whose name is on their back.

How Many People Are You? (Upper Elementary)
Divide campers up into small groups of two or three people and together have them figure out all of the different roles they have. As an example, explain that you are a son or a daughter, but you are also a camp counselor and a friend. How many different “people” are they?

Have campers help their partners brainstorm if necessary. Your campers might be sisters or brothers, daughters or sons, students, soccer or baseball players, girl or boy scouts. You might even have a camper that is an aunt or an uncle! Try to
encourage campers to go beyond family identities, as some may not have stable family relationships or may live with guardians instead of parents. (Here are some nonfamily identities to get them started: student, friend, child, youth or young person, musician.)

When campers are done brainstorming, encourage them to think of even more. For example, they are all campers this week. What else can they think of?

Come back to the larger group and share. Use these questions to guide your discussion.

- How many “different people” were they?
- Have you ever heard the word identity? Can anyone explain what it means? One dictionary defines identity as “the condition of being oneself and not another.” Another definition is “the distinguishing character or personality” of a person. Another way to describe identity is what makes you you.
- What are some identities that you all share? (Person, child of God, helper.)
- Can your identity ever change?
- If one of your identities changes, what about the others? (If one identity changes, others may stay the same. For example, a child may become an older sibling when a new baby is born, but they would still be a child or grandchild. Or if someone begins a new hobby such as playing the piano, they would now be a musician, but could still be a cousin.)

What’s in the Pack Today?

Preparation: Find a name tag and put it in your Bible study pack. This can be a name tag sticker that says, “Hi, My name is . . . ” or it can be a name tag that is used for someone’s job. Use a bookmark to mark today’s story in a Bible and place the Bible in the pack as well.

Give campers clues about what is inside your Bible study pack today to see if they can guess what is in it without seeing it. Start with general clues and then be more specific. The clues can be about what it looks like or what the object is used for. After about three guesses, take the name tag out of the pack. Did anyone guess correctly?

- Talk about name tags with the group.
- What are name tags used for? (They are used to identify someone.)
- What happens if a name tag gets lost? (You might have to get a new one.)
- Write your name on the name tag and put it on someone else. What happens if someone wears the wrong name tag? (Other people might be confused. They might think that you have a different name.)
- If you wear a name tag that has another name on it, does that make you someone else?

Explain that in today’s story, campers will hear about someone who was changed. He was the same person, but he was also different.

Opening Prayer

Have your group sit or stand in a circle holding hands. Open your Bible study time in prayer.

Tell the group that for today’s prayer they are going to thank God for making them the way they are, passing the prayer around the circle. After each person prays aloud, they will squeeze the hand of the person next to them. That is the signal that it is the next person’s turn to pray.

Have each person thank God for one thing that they like about themselves and then squeeze the hand of the person next to them. Pass the prayer around the circle until it gets back to you. Close the prayer
by thanking God for what makes us all unique.

**Word**

**Reading the Bible Together:**

**The Conversion of Saul**

Take your Bible out of your Bible study pack and show campers where you have marked today’s story, Acts 9:1–18. Explain that like yesterday’s story from the Gospel of Luke, this story can be found in the New Testament. The book of Acts comes after the gospels. In Acts we read about the actions of the apostles, people who were spreading the word about Jesus.

Make sure each camper or pair of campers has a Bible. If you have upper elementary campers, you might ask for a volunteer or volunteers to read today’s story for the group. If no one volunteers, you can read the story out loud. Before beginning, explain that the man named Saul in the story was also known as Paul. Some campers might have heard Bible stories about Paul.

After reading the story, ask if the campers have any questions about it. Talk about the story together, using these questions to start your discussion.

**Basic**

- **What was Saul planning on doing if he found Christians (people who belonged to “the Way”—that is, people who followed Jesus)? (He would bind, meaning “tie,” them up and take them to Jerusalem, vv. 1–2.)**
- **What happened to Saul as he came to Damascus? (A light from heaven flashed around him, and he fell on the ground, vv. 3–4.)**
- **What did the voice say to him? (The voice asked Saul why he was persecuting him, v. 4.)**
- **Who was the voice? (It was Jesus, v. 5.)**
- **What was Jesus also called in this story? (Lord.)**
- **What did Jesus tell him to do? (Jesus told Saul to go into the city and that he would be told what to do, v. 6.)**
- **What did the men who were traveling with Saul do? (They just stood there. They heard the voice but didn’t see anyone, v. 7.)**
- **When Saul got up from the ground how had he changed? (He couldn’t see, even though his eyes were open, v. 8.)**
- **How long couldn’t Saul see? (Three days, v. 9.)**
- **What was the name of the disciple in Damascus whom Jesus spoke to? (Ananias, v. 10.)**
- **What did the Lord tell Ananias to do? (He told him to go and find Saul and to lay his hands on him to heal him, vv. 11–12.)**
- **What did Ananias say? (He didn’t want to go and see Saul because he had heard about all the terrible things Saul had done, vv. 13–14.)**
- **What reason did Jesus give Ananias for healing Saul? (Saul would become “an instrument” who would tell everyone about Jesus, v. 15.)**
- **What did Ananias tell Saul? (He told Saul that Jesus had sent him to heal Saul and to fill him with the Holy Spirit, v. 17.)**
- **What happened when Ananias laid his hands on Saul? (Something that looked like scales fell from Saul’s eyes and then he could see, v. 18.)**
- **What happened then? (Saul was baptized, v. 18.)**
Beyond the Basics
- What do you think Saul thought was happening when the light flashed around him on his way to Damascus?
- How do you think Saul felt when he couldn’t see?
- How did Saul’s thoughts and feelings about Jesus change from the beginning of this story to the end?
- What do you think Ananias was feeling or thinking when he was on his way to heal Saul?

Digging Deeper
- Why do you think this story is important for us today?
- How do you think Saul’s life became different after this happened?
- Why do you think God chose someone who had been persecuting Christians to tell other people about God?

Retelling the Story
Explain to your group that you are going to retell the story together. Sit in a circle and ask who would like to start by telling the first part of the story. Go around the circle and have each person say one sentence about something that happened in today’s Bible story. Can you make it around the circle without rereading the story? Have everyone switch places and then try it again. Can you do it if the group is sitting in a different order?

A Cartoon about Saul
Read today’s story again and then explain that you are going to work together to create a cartoon or comic strip of the story. Put out the markers and pencils and give each camper a piece of paper. As a group, decide who is going to draw which scene in the story. If you have a large group, campers can either draw scenes together, or you can create more than one comic strip. When each person has fin-
ished their part of the comic strip, have them share it with the group. To make the pictures into one strip, you can tape the pictures together in order or hang them up in order.

If campers are interested, invite another cabin group or camp staff to come and see their representation of the story.

For lower elementary campers: Look at the story ahead of time and decide how many scenes there are to draw. This way you can assign parts of the story to campers, which might make it easier than having them decide. It may also help younger campers if you brainstorm together what could be drawn in each picture. Talking about it as a group might give ideas to campers who are not as confident as others.

Send
Child of God
Preparation: If you are using construction paper, cut small pieces to use as name tags. Write “Follower of Jesus” on one name tag as an example.

Give each camper a name tag and crayons or markers. Show them your name tag that says “Follower of Jesus” and talk about what it means. When you wear it, someone would see that you are someone who follows Jesus.
- What are other ways that someone might know that you follow Jesus? If you weren’t wearing the name tag, how do you think others might be able to tell?

Help campers write “Follower of Jesus” on their name tag. Encourage your group to wear their name tag for the rest of the day as a reminder of their identities as followers of Jesus.
One, Two, Three . . . Grace!

Preparation: Take an extra large T-shirt and use a permanent marker to write the word GRACE on the front in big letters.

Ask the group if they have heard the word grace. Some campers may know someone named Grace, and others may use it to mean a prayer before a meal. Explain to campers that the word grace is also associated with God. Share these points with campers.

- God has given us new life through Jesus’s death and resurrection, even though we don’t deserve it.
- According to the world, what would be fair would be to let us be punished for our sins, but the grace of God changed that through Jesus’s death and resurrection and, instead, we are forgiven.
- Grace completely changes us and changes our hearts so that we can change unfair things in our world and reflect God’s love.
- Can campers think of a time when they did something wrong and someone forgave them or responded in a kind or nice way that they didn’t expect or didn’t think they deserved?

In groups of twos or threes, have campers act out situations where people aren’t being very nice to one another. An example for younger campers might be that someone isn’t sharing with another person. An example for upper elementary campers might be that someone is making fun of another person.

Explain that as they are acting out their scenario, you will say, “One, two, three . . .” and everyone will yell “grace!” Then ask for a volunteer. This person will put the GRACE T-shirt on over their clothes and join the skit and change the situation. For example, in the sharing scenario another camper might run in and offer to share their toy. For the example with someone making fun of another person, another camper might run in and stick up for their friend.

What are other ways that they can think of that as followers of Jesus they might help bring the grace of God to others?

Closing Prayer: Praying in a New Way
Close the Bible study with a prayer thanking God for sending Jesus, who gives his followers a new identity and shows them the way to share God’s love with others. Encourage campers to add petitions and pray aloud if they are comfortable doing so.
Day 3
Our Purpose

Focus Question
How does God’s grace change our purpose?

Theme Statement
Jesus calls us to serve others. When we serve others, we are serving him.

Learning Objectives
This Bible study will help elementary-age campers and their leaders:
- Learn that Jesus calls them to serve him by serving others.
- Value the needs of others as much as their own.
- Identify ways they can serve others.

Bible Text
Matthew 25:31–46

Materials
Bibles
backpack or tote bag that you are using as your Bible study pack
small stuffed sheep or a picture of a sheep
several newspapers or Styrofoam peanuts
construction paper, a variety of colors
scissors
crayons or markers
basin or bucket full of water
towels for drying feet
writing paper
pen or pencil

Gather
Follow Like a Sheep (Lower Elementary)
Ask for a volunteer to be a shepherd. The rest of the group will be the sheep. Explain that sheep need their shepherd to tell them where to go and to protect them. Explain to the shepherd that they must take care of the sheep and make sure that the sheep stay safe.

Have the shepherd lead the group around the area for a few minutes, making sure that the sheep are following. Allow the sheep to choose if they want to crawl on all fours like a sheep or not. “Baa-ing” like a sheep can be part of the fun! After a few minutes, ask campers if anyone else would like a turn being the shepherd.

After you have played a few rounds, talk about what it was like.
- How was it to be one of the sheep?
- How was it to be the shepherd?
- What might have happened to the sheep if they hadn’t had a shepherd?

Switch! (Upper Elementary)
Preparation: Crumple up individual pieces of newspaper into balls. Ideally, you will have at least 100 newspaper balls. Or you can recycle Styrofoam peanuts for this activity. Find a playing area that can be evenly divided with a clear line and mark two different areas.

Divide campers into two groups and assign each group to one side of the playing area or the other. Spread the balls of crumpled up newspaper or Styrofoam peanuts between the two groups. Explain that you will be playing a game in which
the object is for each team to get all of the newspaper balls on their side, starting when you say “go.” Campers cannot hold on to the balls of newspaper, sit on them, or hide them from the other team; they should make sure that no one gets hurt.

Try this for a few minutes and see what happens. Then stop the game and place all of the balls near the center again. Tell the group that you have some special instructions for each team. Gather each team individually and tell them quietly (so that the other team cannot hear) that the game will now change. When you say “go,” the object of the game is now to make sure that the other team gets all of the newspaper balls.

Play the game for a few minutes and see what happens. How did this change the game? Talk about the game together.

- What team ended up with the most balls of newspaper?
- Which part of the game was easier? Why?
- Was it difficult to switch what you were doing?
- Which game was more fun?
- How did it feel to help the other team?
- How was this game different from most games that you play?

What's in the Pack Today?
Preparation: Place a small stuffed sheep or picture of a sheep in your Bible study pack. Use a bookmark to mark today’s story in a Bible and place the Bible in the pack as well.

Give campers clues about what is inside your Bible study pack today to see if they can guess what is in it without seeing it. Start with general clues and then become more specific. The clues can be about what it looks like, or it does. After about three guesses, take the sheep out of the pack. Did anyone guess correctly?

- What do you know about sheep? (Accept various answers.)
- Why do people keep or raise sheep? (For their wool or for meat.)
- What kind of food do sheep eat? (Grass and hay.)
- How do sheep act in a group? (They follow one another and follow the shepherd, or person that is taking care of them.)
- What might happen to a sheep who doesn’t have someone to follow? (The sheep might get lost and not be able to find its way home.)

Explain that in today’s story, they will hear about sheep and how Jesus wants his followers to help others. Without a shepherd, sheep would have trouble finding their way and taking care of themselves. Just like a shepherd helps their sheep, we can help others.

Opening Prayer
Open with a prayer asking God to help us assist other people. Pass the prayer around the circle like you did yesterday, with each person thanking God for people who have helped them in their lives. Close the prayer by thanking God for sending Jesus to be our shepherd and for showing us the way to serve others.

Word
Reading the Bible Together:
The Parable of the King, the Sheep, and the Goats
Take the Bible out of your Bible study pack and show campers where today’s story, Matthew 25:31–46, can be found. Do any of them know what part of the Bible this story comes from? Explain that this story is in the New Testament, and like the story about the disciples walking
to Emmaus, it is in one of the gospels, which tell the story of Jesus. Explain that this is a story, or a parable, that Jesus told his followers. Encourage campers, as they listen, to imagine that Jesus is speaking to them.

Make sure that every camper, or pair of campers has a Bible. If you have upper elementary campers, ask for a volunteer or volunteers to read today’s story for the group. If no one volunteers, you can read the story out loud.

After reading the story, ask if the campers have any questions about it. Talk about the story together, using these questions to start your discussion.

Basic

- How does the passage say that people will be separated? (The sheep will go on the king’s right hand and the goats will go on the left, v. 33.)
- Which group would be blessed by the king? (The sheep on the right, v. 34.)
- Why did the king say that they would inherit the kingdom? (Because they took care of him when he was hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, and in prison, vv. 35–36.)
- What did the “righteous” (meaning those who do the right thing, those who are “good”) ask the king? (They asked when did they see him hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, or in prison? v. 37–38.)
- How did the king answer them? (He told them that whenever they helped one of “the least of these,” they helped him, v. 40.)

Beyond the Basics

- What is hard to understand about this story?
- What would the king say about when we didn’t help someone?

Digging Deeper

- Who do you think are the “least of these” that are mentioned in the story?
- Why is it difficult to help other people?

Sum up by saying that this story teaches us that by serving others we bring God’s life-changing love to the world.

Foot-Washing Activity

Preparation: Fill a basin or bucket with warm water and take it somewhere where a spill is okay. Make sure that you have plenty of towels for drying. It may be helpful to have a chair, but it is not necessary.

Show campers where they can find John 13:3–17 in the Bible. Ask these questions.

- Does anyone know in what part of the Bible the book of John can be found? (The book of John is in the New Testament and is one of the gospels.)
- Does anyone remember what we hear about in the gospels? (The gospels tell us the story of Jesus.)

Read John 13:3–17 as a group. Ask these questions.

- Has anyone heard this story before?
- Why Jesus would wash his disciples’ feet?

Explain that during the time that Jesus lived, when someone went somewhere, they usually walked. Since most people wore sandals and roads were not paved, this meant that their feet would get pretty dirty. When a visitor came to someone’s house, it was customary to provide a way for people to have their feet washed. If someone had servants, they were usually the ones who washed the feet. So when Jesus said that he was going to wash his disciples’ feet, this was not what his disciples were expecting!
For lower elementary campers: Explain to campers that you are going to wash their feet like Jesus did in the story. Have campers take off their shoes. If you have a chair, have one camper at a time sit in the chair as you gently wash their feet. Some campers may feel uncomfortable having their feet washed, and this is okay. If someone doesn’t want their feet washed, don’t make them. Just have them sit quietly while you wash the feet of the rest of the group.

For upper elementary campers: Explain to campers that they are going to wash each other’s feet like Jesus did in the story. The easiest way to do this is to have campers sit in a circle and have each person wash the feet of the person on either their right or left. Having the person whose feet are being washed sit in a chair will make it a little easier, but it is not necessary. Take turns washing feet until everyone’s feet have been washed. Some campers might be a little uncomfortable with this, so there may be some giggling. Encourage the group to be quiet while the campers take part in this activity.

After everyone’s feet have been washed, talk about it with the group.

- Why do you think it was important that Jesus washed the disciples’ feet? (Jesus was showing the disciples that he was a different kind of leader [or teacher or king]; he didn’t come to be served but to serve others.)
- What do you think the disciples thought would happen? (They might have thought that a servant from the household would wash their feet, or that they would wash their own feet.)
- How do you think the disciples felt when Jesus washed their feet? (They might have felt uncomfortable because they may have thought that they should be washing Jesus’s feet.)
- If someone came in and saw Jesus washing the disciples’ feet, what do you think they might have thought? Who do you think they might have thought Jesus was? (They might have thought that Jesus was a servant or that he was someone who wasn’t very important.)
- How did it feel to have your feet washed? (Accept various answers.)
- Have you ever had a time when someone did something for you that you didn’t expect? How did it make you feel?

Send
Whenever You Did This for the Least of These . . .
Read through Matthew 25:35–36 again with the group. Now ask the group to think of people who could be put in the passage instead of the ones who are named. For example, instead of “for I was hungry and you gave me food,” you could say “for I had no home and you gave me somewhere to stay,” or “for I had been bullied, and you came and stuck up for me.” What other situations can your group think of? Some ideas might be modern, but the needs mentioned in this passage are still needs that people have today.

Serving Certificates
(Lower Elementary)
Preparation (optional): Cut construction paper into four pieces and write “Serving Certificate” across the top of each piece.

Let campers choose a piece of construction paper. Make sure that everyone has access to crayons or markers. Explain to the group that you will be making certificates that show others how campers can help them.
As a group, brainstorm ways that campers might serve others. For example, a camper might help set the table at home before a meal, or they might help sweep the floors at home. Then remind them of some of the people from the Bible story—for example, do they know anyone who is sick or a new person at school (a stranger)? Think of a variety of things that campers could do, so that each person has some choices.

If you have not already done so, help campers cut their piece of construction paper into four pieces and encourage them to think of four ways that they could help their family or friends. Then have campers write or draw a picture of one serving activity on each of their four small pieces of paper. Campers can take these serving certificates home and give them to others to tell them how they will serve them.

How Can We Serve Others?
(Preparation: Upper Elementary)

It might be helpful to think of some ways your group could serve others. These could be scenarios that take place at camp or an opportunity to serve others in the outside community.

As a group, brainstorm ways that kids their age can serve others. Remind them about some of the people, “the least of these,” from the Bible story. Make a list, if you like. You may need to provide a few examples to get them started.

When you have a list, write each idea on a piece of paper and put them in a pile. (Or you can have each camper think of a way to serve others and write it on a slip of paper without showing anyone.) Take turns having each camper choose a piece of paper. Without showing anyone their slip of paper, have campers act out, without speaking, the way that we might help serve others. See if the rest of the group can guess.

After everyone has had a chance to act, ask the group to think of a way that you can serve others as a group here at camp today or another day this week. Is anyone sick or homesick? Is a camper feeling sad about the death of a grandparent or pet? How might your group help that person? In addition, talk about ways your group can serve others who aren’t at camp. Perhaps some of the canteen money could be donated to a charity that helps others, such as a local food pantry. Be creative.

God’s Grace Changes Our Purpose

Ask campers if they know what the word purpose means. Accept their ideas, then explain that it’s like a goal, something we work toward. For example, if we are students, our purpose is to learn what our teachers teach us.

Those who follow Jesus have a special purpose. Jesus served people, and our purpose as Christians, followers of Jesus, is to follow his example and share God’s life-giving love with others by serving others too. Remind campers that there are people all around them whom they can serve.

Closing Prayer

Before you pray, divide your group up into twos or threes. Have each person share with their group about one thing that they would like to pray for. Once each person has shared, have the group come back together.

Explain that for today’s prayer, you are going to ask each person to pray for someone else. Remind the group to think about what other people said they wanted to pray for.

Go around the circle, and have each person pray for two things: first, what
their partner wanted to pray for, and second, something for someone else in the world. Remind them of the people your group thought of during the “Whenever You Did This for the Least of These . . .” activity.

When each person has had a turn to pray, close the prayer by thanking God for the opportunity to help and serve others.
Day 4
Our Community

Focus Question
How does God’s grace change our community?

Theme Statement
God’s grace is for everyone. As we follow Jesus and his practice of including others who are different from us, a new community is created.

Learning Objectives
This Bible study will help elementary-age campers and their leaders:
• Learn that they are called to love one another, even those who are different from them.
• Value the diversity of creation and of community in Christ.
• Identify others to welcome into a new community.

Bible Text
Matthew 15:21–28

Materials
Bibles
backpack or tote bag that you are using as your Bible study pack
parachute (optional)
picture of a group of people that is not a family
paper
pens or pencils
blindfolds
large paper or newsprint
crayons or markers
scissors
construction paper in various colors
beach ball or soft ball made out of sponge

Gather
I Love Everyone Who . . .
Have the group stand in a circle. Explain that they are going to play a game in which people will have to trade places quickly.

Choose someone to be the person in the middle. The rest of the group should stand together so that there are no spaces between them. The person in the center of the circle says, "I love everyone, especially people who _______." To fill in the blank, they say something that people around the circle have in common, such as things they like or personal characteristics. For example, the person in the middle might say, "I love everyone, especially people who like to skateboard."

When the group hears this, everyone who likes to skateboard should then run across the circle and trade places with one another. When this happens, the person in the middle tries to find a place to stand as well. Whoever cannot find a place to stand becomes the person in the middle and the game begins again.

For lower elementary campers: Gather your group around a parachute. Have the group practice lifting the parachute together a few times. When the group has mastered this, lift the parachute up and yell something that some of the group have in common, such as “everyone wearing green!” Those campers wearing green should run through the center of the circle, under the parachute, and trade places with someone else who is also wearing green. They need to trade places before
the parachute comes down and catches them!

Try this several times, calling out different things until everyone has had a turn. At the end, lift up the parachute and call out, “everyone who is loved by God!” Everyone should end up under the parachute together.

**What's in the Pack Today?**

*Preparation:* Find a picture of a group of people, who don’t appear to be a family (perhaps around a table or a campfire), and put it in your Bible study pack. Use a bookmark to mark today’s story in a Bible and place the Bible in the pack as well.

Give campers clues about what is inside your Bible study pack to see if they can guess what is in it without seeing it. Start with general clues and get more specific. The clues can be about what it looks like, or what the object is used for. After about three guesses, take the picture out of the pack. Did anyone guess what it was? Talk about the picture with campers.

- What do you see?
- What does the picture mean to you?

Explain that in today’s story they will hear about a time when someone became part of a new group of people.

**Opening Prayer**

Invite campers to think about how people who cannot hear might pray, or how people who cannot see might pray. For example, someone who is very sensitive to loud noises might pray very quietly, and someone who cannot hear very well might need someone to pray loudly so that they can hear.

As a group, think of a prayer that you can pray without words, thanking God for the opportunity to be together this week and part of the camp community. You might put your hands over your heart for the word *love* and put your hands together to say “dear God.” Practice your prayer together, and perhaps you can use it again before the week at camp ends.

**Word**

**Reading the Bible Together:**

**The Canaanite Woman**

Take your Bible out of your Bible study pack and show campers where today’s story, Matthew 15:21–28, can be found. Does anyone remember what part of the Bible this story comes from? Explain that this story is in the New Testament, and like two other stories this week, it is one of the gospels, which tell the story of Jesus.

Make sure that every camper or pair of campers has a Bible. If you have upper elementary campers, ask for a volunteer or volunteers to read today’s story for the group. If no one volunteers, you can read the story out loud.

After reading the story, ask if the campers have any questions about it. Talk about the story together, using these questions to aid your discussion.

**Basic**

- What did the Canaanite woman yell to Jesus? (*She asked him to have mercy on her because her daughter was tormented by a demon, v. 22.*)
- What did Jesus do when the woman yelled at him? (*He didn’t answer her, v. 23a.*)
- What did the disciples want to do to the woman? (*They told Jesus that he should send her away because she kept shouting at them, v. 23b.*)
• What did Jesus say? *(He said that he was only sent for the lost sheep of the house of Israel, v. 24.)*
• What did the woman do? *(She came and knelt before Jesus and asked him to help her, v. 25.)*
• What did Jesus say when the woman asked him to help her? *(He told her that it wasn't fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs, v. 26.)*
• What did the woman say when Jesus responded in this way? *(She told him that even dogs get crumbs that fall from the table, v. 27.)*
• How did Jesus answer her? *(He told her that she had great faith, and he healed her daughter, v. 28.)*

**Beyond the Basics**

• How do you think the woman felt when Jesus didn't answer her? *(She may have felt frustrated, hurt, or angry.)*
• What do you think the disciples might have thought Jesus would do when the woman asked him again to help her? *(Accept various responses.)*

**Digging Deeper**

• Why do you think Jesus didn't answer the woman in the beginning of the story?
• Why do you think the woman kept asking Jesus to heal her daughter after he told her no?
• What did the woman mean when she said that "even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table" (v. 27)? *(Allow campers to explore this. Affirm that she's implying that there is enough of God's life-giving love for everyone.)*
• Why do you think Jesus ended up healing the woman's daughter?
• What does this story say to us?

At first Jesus won't heal the woman's daughter, but then he changed his mind. At first Jesus said his purpose was to help "the house of Israel," the religious community he was part of. The woman was not part of the house of Israel; she was from a different country and practiced a different religion. But then Jesus changed his mind and he healed her daughter.

**One Body, Many Members**

Help campers find 1 Corinthians 12:12–27 in their Bibles. Can they remember what part of the Bible this book is in? (This passage is in one of the books in the New Testament that comes after the gospels.) Tell campers that this reading is part of a letter that Paul (also called Saul), from the Day 2 Bible study, wrote to the followers of Jesus who were living in a place called Corinth. After Jesus changed Saul's life on the road to Damascus, Saul traveled to different places telling people about the love of God in Jesus. Read this passage together, and when a part of the body is mentioned, have everyone hold it up. For example, when you read the word *foot*, have everyone hold a foot in the air. When you read the word *eye*, be creative! Then talk about it as a group.

**Basic**

• "In the one Spirit, we were all baptized into" what? *(One body, v. 13; the body of Christ, v. 27.)*
• What does this passage say would happen if an ear would say it was not a part of the body because it was not an eye? *(That would not make it less a part of the body, v. 16.)*
• How did God make the parts of the body? *(God made them as God wanted them to be, v. 18.)*
• What happens if one part of the body suffers? *(All the other parts suffer with it, v. 26.)*
• What happens if one part of the body is honored? *(All celebrate together with it, v. 26.)*

**Beyond the Basics**
• Why is this passage important for us?
• Why do some people want to be like other people?
• Why do you think members of the body of Christ aren’t all the same? Do you think the body of Christ would survive if everyone were the same? Why or why not?
• What does this passage tell us about being part of a community (like a church)?

Give each camper a piece of paper and have them write their names using their left hand. What happens? For some people, writing with their left hand comes naturally. For some campers, writing with their left hand may be very difficult and you may not be able to read the result.

Now help everyone to put on a blindfold and write their name with their left hand again. What happens this time? Can anyone read what they have written? After everyone has had a chance to look at their writing, have them write their names with their eyes open and with the hand they normally use.

Share these points with campers. The passage they just read says that the body of Christ—meaning everyone who follows Jesus, Christians—is like a human body. If a body only had feet, it wouldn’t be able to do anything. If all Christians were exactly alike, the church wouldn’t be able to do as many things, or even survive. Jesus calls us to include and appreciate those who are different from us so the whole world will know that God’s love is for everyone.

**Send**
A Rainbow of God’s Love *(Lower Elementary)*
Give each camper a large sheet of white construction paper and set out markers or crayons to share. Have campers draw and color a rainbow to fill most of the paper. Have them draw enough stripes so that there is one for each person in the group plus one or two extra. Have them color each stripe a different color.

Once everyone has finished their rainbows, have each camper write their name on one of the stripes on each camper’s rainbow. When they’re done, each camper should have a rainbow with everyone’s name on it, one name per colored stripe.

As a group, talk about the rainbow, how it’s made up of many colors to be something beautiful. Also point out the colored stripes where there aren’t any names. Say that this can remind them that there is always room for more people in God’s community of love.

Alike and Different—We Are One Community in Christ *(Upper Elementary)*
Give each camper a piece of paper and something to write with.

At the top of the paper have them write “Alike and Different—We Are One in Christ.” Then have them make three columns on their paper.

• In the first column, they should list the names of each person in their camper group this week, but not their own name.
• In the second column, they should write something they have in common with that person.
• In the third column, they should write something unique about the person, a positive quality that distinguishes them from the others. If someone is having trouble coming up with ideas, offer to help them, but do it privately to avoid hurt feelings.

Then go around the group and have each person share what they’ve written. If time allows, do one or all of the following options.

Take a large piece of paper or newsprint and draw a cross on it. Color or decorate the cross shape as a group. When you have decided as a group that the cross is finished, cut it out with scissors. Cut the cross into pieces, so that you have a piece for each person. Hand the pieces out and have each camper write their name on their piece. Encourage campers to keep their piece with them throughout the day so that they can remember how they are all part of one community in Christ Jesus.

Ask campers to imagine these situations that can exclude or divide people and then discuss possible responses.

• Imagine a new camper joined your group in the middle of the week. What could you as a camper group do to help them feel part of your community?
• Imagine some people in your camper group got into a disagreement and wanted others in the group to choose sides. How could you address this problem together as a camper group?

Create a song or rap using the refrain “alike and different—we are one,” or some variation of that phrase, and working into the verses something about everyone in your camper group. Use the descriptions from the lists that everyone created.

Closing Prayer

Have your group stand in a circle and tell them that you are going to pray in a different way today. Explain that you will open the prayer and then you will gently toss the ball to someone across the circle. When that person catches the ball, have them pray for someone they can welcome into God’s community. Make sure that the ball goes around the circle enough times so that each person has the opportunity to pray at least one time.

When the ball comes back to you, close the prayer by thanking God for the new community your group has created this week and ask God to be with your group as they continue to invite others into community by showing them God’s life-changing love.

Then, exchange pieces from the cross that your group made earlier and have campers pray for the person whose piece they now have.
Day 5
Our Perspective

Focus Question
How does God’s grace change our perspective?

Theme Statement
The love of God through Jesus frees us to look at the world through God’s loving eyes.

Learning Objectives
This Bible study will help elementary-age campers and their leaders:
- Learn that the love of God calls us to look at the world in a different way.
- Love others unconditionally.
- Practice unexpected, surprising, extravagant grace.

Bible Text
Luke 15:11–32

Materials
Bibles
backpack or tote bag that you are using as your Bible study pack
pair of sunglasses
two pairs of very large shoes (borrow some from a staff member or find some at a local thrift store)
cones (optional)
white paper
crayons, colored pencils, or markers
Bible time costumes and props (optional)
red or pink construction paper
scissors

Gather
The Same Thing, but from a Different Perspective (Upper Elementary)
Preparation: Before your Bible study time, choose something that everyone can look at and draw from different angles. This could be a tree that your group can sit around, or you could place an object, such as an apple, on a picnic table and have campers sit in different places around the table. Gather paper and crayons, colored pencils, or markers for the group. It might also be helpful to provide a hard surface for campers to draw on.

Show the group the object that you are all going to draw, and help each person find a place to sit around it. Explain that you are all going to draw the same thing, but from the way that they see it from where they are sitting. Ask for a volunteer to help pass out drawing materials. When everyone has what they need, tell the group to begin drawing. Encourage the group to be quiet so that those who need quiet may concentrate.

When everyone has finished drawing their picture, share them with the group. Use these questions for discussion.
- What do you notice about the drawings?
- Why do the drawings look different if everyone was drawing the same thing? (Everyone was seeing the same thing, but from a different place, or a different perspective.)
- Have you heard of the word perspective before?

Seeing something from another perspective means being able to look at
something in the way that someone else does.

Now pass out more paper and have campers try to draw the same thing but in the way that they think that it looks to the person sitting next to them. Can they do it? How?

After everyone has tried to draw something from someone else’s perspective, talk about it.

• What makes it hard to try to see something the way that another person does?

Walk in Someone Else’s Shoes
Preparation: Measure out a distance of about 20 feet (6 m) or so. Make a line or other marking for a starting point, and place a cone at the end for a turn-around point for each team.

Divide campers into two teams or groups and explain that you are going to have a relay race. Each person will put a large pair of shoes on over their shoes, run or walk to the cone, turn around, run back to the starting line, and tag the next person. Running this way may be difficult, so be sure to remind campers to encourage one another. After each person has done this one time, experiment with other ways of moving through the relay such as skipping or hopping. What works the best?

Have the group sit down and talk about how this worked.

• How did it feel to race while wearing the shoes?
• What made this race difficult?
• What would have made it easier?

As a group, brainstorm ways that you could make this task easier. If they are interested, try some of them out and then come back together to talk about how that worked.

• Did your solution work like you thought it would?
• What finally made it easier?

Talk with the campers about the saying “walking in someone else’s shoes.” The whole saying is, “Before you judge a person, walk a mile in their shoes.”

• Have you heard anyone say this before?
• What do you think that it means?

Explain that this saying means to try to think of something from another person’s point of view or the way that another person might think.

• What do you think about this? Is this easy or difficult? Why?
• Can you think of a situation where it would be important to try to see something the way that another person does or understand what another person experiences?

What’s in the Pack Today?
Preparation: Find a pair of sunglasses and put them in your Bible study pack. Use a bookmark to mark today’s story in a Bible and place the Bible in the pack as well.

Give campers clues about what is inside your Bible study pack to see if they can guess what is in it without seeing it. Start with general clues and then become more specific. The clues can be about what it looks like or what the object is used for. After about three guesses, take the sunglasses out of the pack. Did anyone guess correctly?

• Talk about sunglasses as a group.
• What are sunglasses for? (People usually wear sunglasses to keep the sun out of their eyes.)
• How do things look different when you see them through a pair of sunglasses? (Things are not as bright when you look through a pair of sunglasses. If
you wear sunglasses when it’s dark, it can be hard to see at all.)
- Can you think of anything else that can change the way you see something?
- Can you think of a time when something caused someone to see you differently or in a way that you didn’t expect?

Explain that in today’s story they are going to hear about someone who does something unexpected because love affects how he sees the situation.

Open in prayer by thanking God for your group and for this opportunity to see in a new way. If campers are comfortable with it, have them pass the sunglasses around the group and try them on. Have each camper take a turn wearing the sunglasses and saying one way that this week has changed them. When they are done praying, have them pass the sunglasses to the next person. Or when it is someone’s turn to pray, you can have them hold their hands up in front of their eyes like glasses.

**Word**

**Reading the Story Together:**

**The Parable of the Prodigal Father and the Wayward Son**

Take your Bible out of your Bible study pack and show campers where today’s story can be found, Luke 15:11–32. Do any campers know what part of the Bible this story comes from? Explain that this story is in the New Testament, and like most of the other Bible stories this week, it is one of the gospels, which tell the story of Jesus.

Make sure that every camper or pair of campers has a Bible. If you have upper elementary campers, ask for a volunteer or volunteers to read today’s story for the group. If no one volunteers, you can read the story out loud.

After reading the story, ask if the campers have any questions about it. Talk about the story together, using these questions to start your discussion.

**Basic**

- What did the younger son ask his father? *(He asked his father to give him his share of his father’s property, v. 12.)*
- How did the father respond? *(The father gave the younger son his share of the property, v. 12.)*
- What did the younger son do then? *(He took “all he had” and went traveling to another country, v. 13.)*
- What happened to the son when he was gone? *(He wasted all of his money and lived recklessly. Then there was a famine and the son didn’t have a way to get any food, vv. 13–14.)*
- What made the son decide to go back home? *(He was working for a farmer, feeding the farmer’s pigs. He thought to himself that even his father’s workers had food to spare, and he had none, vv. 15–17.)*
- What did he plan to say to his father? *(He planned to tell his father that he had sinned against heaven and before his father, and that he was no longer worthy to be his son, vv. 18–19, v. 21.)*
- What happened when the father saw his younger son coming? *(The father ran to his son and hugged him and kissed him, v. 20.)*
- What did the father ask his servants to do for his son? *(The father told them to get his best robe for his son and to kill a calf to eat for a party to celebrate, vv. 22–24.)*
- What did the older son do when he heard about the party for his younger brother? *(He got angry and said that he wouldn’t go into the party, v. 28.)*

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• What did his father say to him when he was angry? *(The father told his older son that his younger son was dead, but now was alive so this was a time for celebrating, vv. 31–32.)*

**Beyond the Basics**

• Why do you think the younger son thought that his father would be angry when he came home?
• Why do you think his older brother was angry?

**Digging Deeper**

• How do you think the younger son thought things would be when he came home?
• How did he expect to be treated when he came home?
• How do you think the world would expect the father to view the son that had gone away and come back? *(Most people would expect him to be mad or perhaps punish the son.)*
• How does God see the son? *(God sees things differently than the world. God sees the son through loving eyes.)*
• How does God see us? *(God sees us through the eyes of love.)*

Sum up the discussion by touching on these points: This parable teaches us about God’s generous and unconditional love, what is also called grace. It is unexpected and surprising, because, like the son in this story, we receive God’s love even when we have made bad decisions or have done something wrong. That’s not the way things usually work in our world. But God has a different perspective. Like the father in the story, God forgives us. God’s love for us is unconditional—God loves us no matter what.

**Our Turn! Acting Out the Story**

*Lower elementary:* Explain to campers that you are going to act out the story. Review the characters from the story and decide who will play what roles. (For a large group, you may want to divide into two small groups and have both groups act out the story. This will also give you an audience! If you have campers who are interested in being the same character, act out the story more than one time with campers switching characters.)

Reread Luke 15:11–32 aloud. Encourage the group (or groups) to be creative with how they act out the story. With younger campers, you may need to help direct the play. Practice the story a few times, and then act the story out for one another. If campers are interested, you can invite another group of campers or staff to watch. After you are done, talk about the story together.

• What is surprising about this story?
• What would you expect the father to do when the younger son comes home?

Like the father in the story, God loves us in ways that we don’t expect or understand, no matter what we do. How does that kind of love make you feel?

*For upper elementary campers:* Explain to campers that you are going to act out the story as if it were on the news on TV. Decide on the characters you will need. (For a large group, you may want to divide into two small groups and have two newscasts.)

Reread Luke 15:11–32 aloud and talk about how to make each scene work as part of a newscast—such as a reporter interviewing people who were there or video footage showing of various scenes.
Encourage the group (or groups) to be creative in how they act out the story. Give campers time to practice, and then act out the story for one another. If campers are interested, you can also invite another group of campers to watch. After you are done with your newscast, talk about it together.

- Is this story surprising? Why or why not?
- If you thought it was surprising, what is the most surprising part?
- When you heard the first part of the story, what did you think was going to happen?
- What title would you give this news story?
- If someone who worked in the house where the father and sons lived went home and told their family what happened, what do you think they would say? What would their family think?
- How do you think the younger son’s friends would have responded after they heard about how he was treated when he came home?

Then act out the story again, but as if it were happening today. What would be different? As a group, think about what parts of the story might change. For example, instead of a fancy robe, the father might give his son a suit or a tuxedo to wear for the party. What else might be different? After campers act out the new story, talk about it.

- How would we expect the father to treat his son who went away, wasted all his money, did some wild, maybe illegal things, and then came back?
- How do we expect God to treat us?
- What is surprising about the love that God has for us and for everyone?
- How does that love make you feel?

After you have talked about the story, perform your skit again for another cabin group. Talk with them after they watch the skit.

**Send**

God Loves You—No Matter What!

*Preparation: To save time, or for younger children who may have trouble cutting with scissors, you may want to cut hearts out of paper ahead of time. Do this by folding a piece of construction paper in half lengthwise. Cut out half a heart. This way the two sides of the heart are even.*

Cut a heart out of construction paper to show your campers.

- What does the heart make you think of?

Tell them that every time they see a heart, they can remember that God loves us no matter what. We can also use hearts to remind other people about God’s life-changing love for them.

Pass out the construction paper and set out scissors and crayons or colored markers. Invite campers to each make a heart.

Then have each person think of one person who seems to need this good news. It could be a neighbor who lives alone and isn’t able to leave their house very often or a child at school who doesn’t have very many friends. Show campers how to write “God loves you... no matter what!” and other messages of love on their heart.

Be sure that your campers take the hearts home to help spread God’s love!

**Affirmation Prayer of Sending**

Have your group sit in a circle and talk about your week together at camp.

- What was the best part of the week?
• What was the most challenging part of the week?
• What will you miss when you go home?

For many campers, reentry into the real world when they go home is a challenge. An intentional closing prayer can help them prepare for going home. Explain that as a group, you are going to go around the circle and pray for each person. When it is someone’s turn, everyone else in the circle will say a prayer for them. This can be a prayer of thanks to God for a new friend or thanking God for something specific about that person.

Start the prayers by including an affirmation of each camper, thanking God for creating that person to be the special person they are. For example, you might pray, “Gracious God, thank you for the chance to get to know Evan this week. He has made us all smile with his jokes and that has been a treat.”

After each person has prayed for the other people in the group (including you!), join hands and close by saying “Amen” together.