

Day 5 Bible Story:

The Great Commission

For the Leader:

Bible Story: The Great Commission, taken from Matthew 28:16-20

In this final story, we hear about the very last thing Jesus did on earth before ascending to heaven. He gave a crucial job to each and every one of us: Jesus wants His followers to teach people everywhere about Jesus so they will trust in Him as their Lord and Savior. The good news about what Jesus has done to rescue us from our sins is too great to keep to ourselves!

Activity: After the story, we will be making paper prayer chains to remind us of who we can share the good news with. It only takes a few simple supplies:

Supplies:

- Paper: any color and thickness
- Markers, pens, or pencils
- Scissors
- Tape or stapler

Bible Verse: John 15:12 “Love each other in the same way I have loved you.”

Say:

There's nothing like finishing up our VBS videos with a BANG! Weren't the rockets and gushing soda incredible? I am always amazed when you can put 2 normally “calm” things together and BOOM! You get those kinds of results! It actually reminds me of what happens in our lives when we add the power of Jesus to it: Life Change! Jesus came to earth and demonstrated the ultimate act of love by dying to rescue us from our sins. He taught us to love, and in return simply asks that we love others in the same way.

Today's Bible story, from Matthew chapter 28, accounts for Jesus' last moments on earth. After Jesus had been raised from the dead, He spent 40 days with His disciples, teaching them even more about God's kingdom. On that last day, He asked His disciples to meet Him at a mountain in Galilee. He had one last *very* important thing to tell them; one last command for all humankind. It was something we call the Great Commission. The Great Commission was the final instruction that Jesus gave to His disciples to pass on to all people everywhere and throughout time until Jesus one day returns to earth. It's really only a few sentences, but they mean so much! Let's break apart these verses and see what Jesus commanded.

Jesus told His friends, *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”* (verse 18) Jesus was reminding His disciples that He is and always has been God, the Son. He has full power in heaven and on earth. Jesus is the King over all creation, and He rules all of God’s Kingdom.

Jesus then commanded the disciples, *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,”* (verse 19a). We call Jesus’ friends His disciples because they were His close followers. When we choose to follow and obey Jesus, we become His disciples too. Jesus asks us to go out and tell people everywhere about His sacrifice. We are to tell people in our families, neighborhoods, schools, cities, states, countries, and all over the entire world about how they too can be rescued from their sins by believing in Jesus’ death and resurrection. Then, when those people believe, they will become disciples too!

He continued His instructions and said, *“baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,”* (verse 19b). For Christians, baptism is an outward sign of an inward commitment. In other words, once someone has chosen to believe in Jesus’ death and resurrection, and accept Him as their Lord and Savior, he or she is saved. By being baptized, Christians are following Jesus’ example and showing everyone else this commitment that was made. We baptize people in the name of the Father, who is God, the Son, who is Jesus the One who saves us, and the Holy Spirit which is the part of God that gives us the power to live a new life for God.

Jesus finishes His instructions by saying, *“teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”* (verse 20a) When people choose to let Jesus into their lives, they want to live new lives for Him. This means they need to learn to obey all the things that Jesus taught us while He was on earth. Jesus showed us how to love each other, how to treat others, and how to live God-filled lives. His lessons fill our Bibles. We are so lucky to have the Bible as our guide book for how to live like Jesus!

Finally, Jesus ends the Great Commission with the words, *“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”* (verse 20b) Jesus knew that He was not giving us an easy job. He knew that sometimes it would be hard to share the Good News of Jesus, that some people might not want to hear about it, or some might even get mad that we are trying to talk about Jesus at all! He wanted to remind us, that even when times get tough, He will always be here with us. That’s why He gives us the Holy Spirit! No matter what, His Spirit will always be in our hearts to guide us, and help us through our hard times.

After Jesus said these things, He was taken up to Heaven right before the disciples’ eyes! He rose up in a cloud and disappeared. The disciples must have been in awe of what was happening! Can you imagine what they would have looked like watching Jesus float up into the air until they could no longer see Him as the clouds covered Him? Amazed I’m sure! Once Jesus was out of sight, the disciples noticed two men dressed in all white standing with them. They reminded His friends that Jesus would one day return in just the same way He had left the earth. The disciples worshiped Him, and remembering Jesus’ Great Commission, they set out to get to work spreading the Good News of Jesus.

Say:

Now I have an activity that will help us with the Great Commission.

(Take the paper and cut strips that are about 2 inches wide by the length of the paper. Give everyone several strips to get started.)

First, we need to think of people we already know who need to hear about Jesus. Can you think of anyone? Maybe a relative, or a neighbor, or a friend?

(Help kids write one name on each strip of paper. Be sure to do some yourself – what a great example of discipleship when they see you following the Great Commission too!)

Now, we can think of people that we see in our town. Maybe we don't know their names, but we see them pretty often. Let's see... maybe people that work at the grocery store, or the Amazon delivery person, or your doctor? We can write them down on these strips as well.

Finally, let's think of people that maybe we don't know personally, but we know *of* them. Maybe someone who is a leader, or someone famous, or someone half way around the world that you may not ever meet! We can write their names down here too.

Ok – I think it's time to put these paper strips together. *(Show kids how to curl each strip into a circle and tape or staple the edges together. Then weave the next strip into that ring and tape or staple it together as well. Continue making your paper chain until all the paper strips are joined onto the chain.)*

Wow! Look at all those names! Jesus sure gave us a big job. I think we should take some time to pray for the people that each ring represents.



Pray:

Dear Jesus, so many people need to hear the Good News about You! Thank you for sending us the Holy Spirit to help us with Your Great Commission. Every time we look at this chain of names, we will remember to pray for them. Give us the courage to talk to those that we can, and pray for those that we can't physically speak to. We know that being one of Your disciples will not always be easy, but when we rely on Your strength we can overcome, because **Jesus' Power Pulls Us Through!** In Your precious name, Amen.