



Lesson 5

NEARTOWN CHURCH



STARTUP PREP

Each lesson in this Texas Missions for Kids curriculum volume tells the story of how one church is being the salt of the earth and the light of the world in response to Christ's Sermon on the Mount as found in Matthew 5. Each week prepare your heart for ministry by reading the Beatitudes and following verses as recorded in Mathew 5:1-20. The Bible verse for this unit is Matthew 5:16.

In the same way, let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:16

Each couple of lessons will also have a separate focal Bible verse to help the boys and girls in your church learn ways to minister as they focus on ministry throughout Texas and respond to the Word of God in their own lives.



Blessings on each of you who teach children about the missions work of God in Texas through the ministry of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention. We hope you will learn about our state missions efforts as you teach the children in your church and/or community.

STARTUP PREP

Please begin your preparation in prayer.

PRAY FOR

- Guidance from the Holy Spirit as you prepare to share about missions work in the state of Texas and in your own neighborhood
- Your students and their families - pray for the children to have open ears to listen and develop a love for missions work in their home state
- Missionaries, their families and their mission work

As you prepare for the following lesson, print the available downloadable material. Also, you need to acquire a Texas road map. Adhesive putty, yarn or string and a DVD player are also needed.

A family challenge is provided at the end of the lesson. This can be printed and sent home with each child or emailed to parents to explain the day's lesson and to give parents missional ideas to do together as a family at home.

What's Included + Needed

INCLUDED

- Intro activity
- Missions video ([download at sbtexas.com/missions4kids](http://sbtexas.com/missions4kids))
- Missions story
- Missions activities
- Park puzzle activity
- Family mission challenge (optional). Print to send home with children or email to parents

PRINTED SIGNS

- Unit theme verse, Matthew 5:16
- Focal Bible verse, 1 Peter 3:15
- Pastor Russell Cravens & family
- ABC's of becoming a Christian
- Allergy alert

NEEDED

- Texas state map
- Push pins/tape/adhesive putty
- Yarn or string (seven colors, one for each city or area)
- Video download & device to play video
- Chalk or masking/painter's tape
- Paper
- Markers
- Optional: jump rope
- Snack: sugar-free popsicles/sno cones



Focal Bible Verse

...Always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. **1 Peter 3:15**

INTRO ACTIVITY

Should last between five to six minutes

BEFORE CLASS—FIND OUT

- 1 How many miles it is from your town to Houston
- 2 How long (hours and minutes) it takes to travel from your town to Houston
- 3 Locate the towns on the map so you can guide the children to the correct location

LOCATE TODAY'S TEXAS CITY

OBJECTIVE Locate your present city and the cities being discussed.

As children arrive, ask them to gather or sit near the Texas map. Help ensure that each child can see the map.

ASK THE CHILDREN

- 1 Can someone locate our city on the Texas map?
- 2 Does anyone know where Houston is located on the map? (If no one knows, give them hints as to where it is located)
- 3 Ask students to put pushpins or use painter's tape to affix a star on your city and Houston
- 4 Ask if anyone has ever been to Houston before. Ask them the best way to get there from where you are... car, train, plane?

Be prepared to say how far and how long it takes to drive to these different cities.

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

- Texas state map
- Push pins/tape/adhesive putty
- Yarn or string (seven colors, one for each city or area)

Depending on the size of your group, this activity may be completed as a class activity or a small group activity.

If you choose to do this activity in small groups, please provide one set of supplies for each group.

Teachers, you can attach the yarn or string from your town to the different cities. For older children, allow a child to attach the yarn length to the map.

SAY "We have learned about church planting in the past. Can someone remind us what that means? Today we are going to learn about a church plant in inner city Houston. Let's begin learning about the ministry in Houston by watching a short video."



Focal Bible Verse

...Always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. **1 Peter 3:15**

MISSIONS STORY

(Play the lesson video: The video introduces the Texas Missions story for the day. It is not intended to tell the full story)

Today's story takes us to the most populous city in Texas and the fourth most populous city in the U.S.—Houston. Houston is home to the Texas Medical Center, as well as NASA's Johnson Space Center where the Mission Control Center is located ("Houston, we have a problem"). Along with its connections to the medical field and outer space, Houston has connections worldwide. Because of its growing population in various ethnic communities, Houston is considered to be the most diverse city in Texas and the U.S.

Russell Cravens and his family felt a sense of responsibility to help those with limited resources hear the gospel and have an opportunity to know Jesus, so they moved to the inner city part of Houston. To help them get to know people in their new community, Russell and his family would have a party in a local park every Saturday morning. The whole family pitched in and helped—even Russell's four kids! By living out their faith in front of the people living in their community, Russell and his family have had many opportunities to share the gospel and see several of their new friends accept Jesus as their personal Savior.

Russell and his family sensed God leading them to start/plant a new church in their community. In 2011, Neartown Church was started. Russell and Jeanie's four children have developed a heart for planting churches and living out their faith every chance they get. The whole family schedules activities around trying to meet others who may not know about Jesus. They love having the opportunity to meet unbelievers and share God's love with them. Russell's kids even try to find ways to share the gospel with their classmates and teachers at their school. His daughter had the opportunity to teach her class how to pray through a book report.

What are some ways we could tell others in our neighborhood, school or community about Jesus? Let's pray together for the Craven family and members of Neartown Church as they continue to share Jesus with everyone they can. Let's ask God to show us opportunities where we can share Jesus with others in our community too.



Focal Bible Verse

...Always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. **1 Peter 3:15**

MISSIONS ACTIVITY

OBJECTIVE TO PRAY FOR...

- 1 Do you tell others about God? Ask God to send you at least one person each day to share the gospel.
- 2 Ask God to give you boldness and excitement to share the good news with others.
- 3 Continue to pray for the ministry Russell and his family are doing at Neartown Church.
- 4 Ourselves as we think of different ways to share Jesus in our own neighborhoods and schools.
- 5 To learn our focal Bible verse, 1 Peter 3:15

You can choose between the activities below depending on your time and group size.

SNACK SUGGESTION Sugar-free popsicles or sno cones. Best if served outdoors.

ACTIVITY 1 MEMORY HOPSCOTCH

ACTIVITY 2 GOSPEL SHARE

ACTIVITY 2 ABC HIDE & SEEK

Activity details start on page 6.

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

PRINTED SIGNS

- Unit theme verse, Matthew 5:16
- Focal Bible verse, 1 Peter 3:15
- Pastor Russell Cravens & family
- ABCs of Becoming a Christian
- Allergy alert
- Park puzzle activity

NEEDED

- Chalk or masking/painter's tape
- Paper
- Markers
- Optional: jump rope
- Snack: sugar-free popsicles/sno cones



Focal Bible Verse

...Always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. **1 Peter 3:15**

MISSIONS ACTIVITY

ACTIVITY 1 MEMORY HOPSCOTCH

Play Hopscotch to learn the memory verse: "...Always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you." 1 Peter 3:15

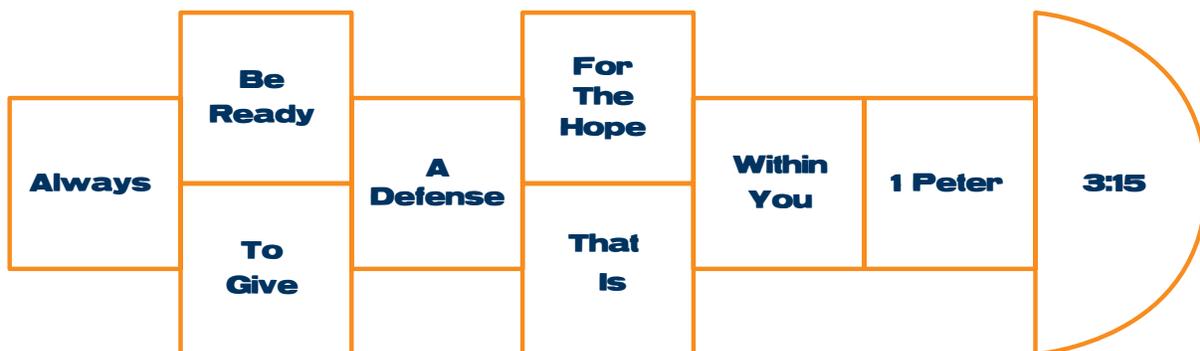
An easy game to play in a park is hopscotch. You can also adapt this general idea to the game of jump rope if you want to divide the class up into two groups.

Use sidewalk chalk to mark the hopscotch squares on the sidewalk. Or if you are playing inside, you can use masking or painter's tape to mark the squares and write parts of the verse on sheets of paper to tape down on each square. Divide the verse up into ten parts, as suggested below. As a student hops up and down the line, the other students can call out the word or phrase as the student lands on the square. As the student hops back from 10-1 they can say "...always be ready to give a _____ OR I can share with others at _____." Have the student who is jumping fill in the blank. Let students take turns. If you have time, you can erase or remove the words from various squares (one or two squares at a time) for subsequent turns and see if the class can learn the full verse together.

For older students, let them draw out and/or design their own jump sequence for this game.

Always | be ready | to give | a defense | for the hope | that is | within you. | 1 Peter | 3:15

At the conclusion of the game, ask someone to lead in prayer. Tell students they should ask God how he would like them to share the good news of Jesus with others.





Focal Bible Verse

...Always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. **1 Peter 3:15**

MISSIONS ACTIVITY

ACTIVITY 2 GOSPEL SHARE

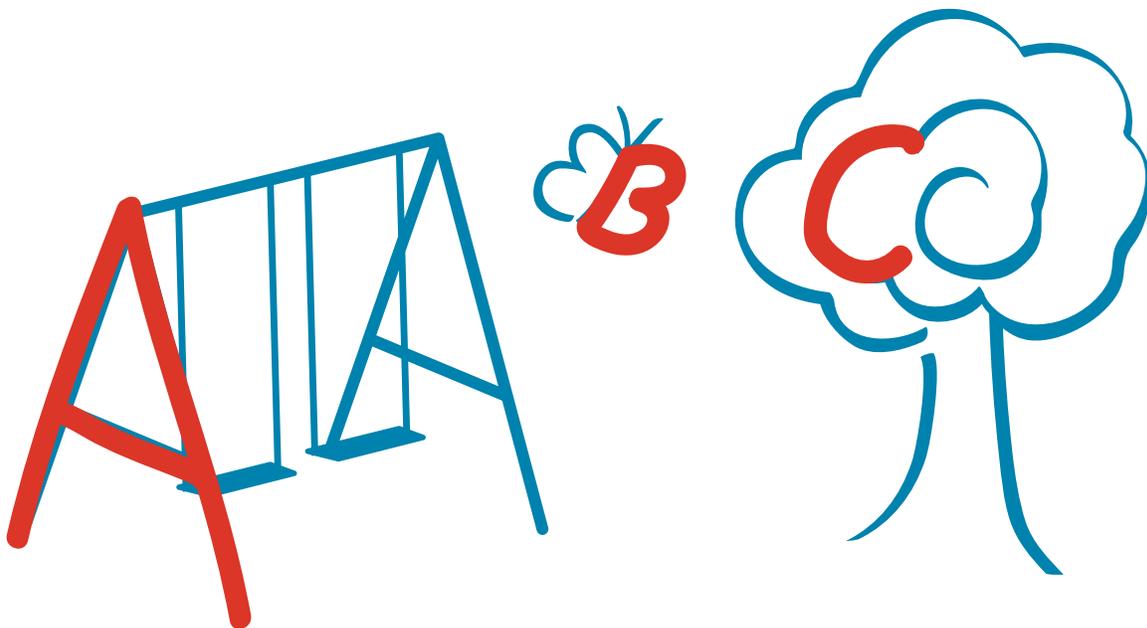
Pair each child up with a partner. Allow the children to practice sharing the gospel with one another. Encourage the students to actively share their love for Jesus with their friends, family and neighbors.

There are many resources available you could use in sharing the gospel. Here are a few resources for reference:

- **The Gospel: God's Plan for Me** - tracts by LifeWay
- **ABC's of Becoming a Christian** - printable copy available in this curriculum
- **The Wordless book** - walks through the plan of salvation by using colors

ACTIVITY 3 ABC HIDE & SEEK

Another fun game to play in a park is hide and seek. Weather permitting, take your students to a playground or local park. Have a snack and talk about the lesson. After you discuss the lesson let the children play ABC Hide and Seek. Use the park puzzle activity sheet (see below) and ask students to find as many A's, B's, and C's as they can. As they find the letters, review aloud the ABCs of Becoming a Christian.





Focal Bible Verse

...Always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. **1 Peter 3:15**

A FAMILY CHALLENGE

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Russell Cravens and his family felt a sense of responsibility to help those with limited resources hear the gospel and have an opportunity to know Jesus, so they moved to the inner city part of Houston. To help them get to know people in their new community, Russell and his family would have a party in a local park every Saturday morning. The whole family pitched in and helped - even Russell's four kids! By living out their faith in front of the people living in their community, Russell and his family have had many opportunities to share the gospel and see several new friends accept Jesus as their personal Savior. Russell and his family have developed a heart for planting churches and living out their faith every chance they get. The whole family schedules activities around trying to meet others who may not know about Jesus.

To see the full story as well as the suggested games and memory verse activities, please visit www.sbtexas.com/missions4kids and click on the Neartown Church under volume two. To reinforce what your child learned about this exciting ministry in Texas, one day this week invite your family to locate and read 1 Peter 3:15 "...Always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you." Ask your child if he or she can think of one way to share the gospel with a friend or neighbor. Have your child share with you the ABC's of Becoming a Christian he or she learned this week. Ask your child for suggestions about how your family can pray for the Neartown Church in Houston. Pray together a few times this week specifically for those who are ministering in Houston.

As a family, go to a local park and ask God to provide an opportunity for you to share the gospel with others in your community. Think about ways you can schedule your activities around trying to meet others who may not know about Jesus. Pray together that God will allow you an opportunity to share the gospel with someone this week.

Thank you for encouraging your child to pray for other people in Texas who share Jesus within their communities!

The ABCs of Becoming a Christian

by Ken and Kay Parker

"A" stands for Admit. A person must admit to God that she is a sinner. She must be sorry for her sin and turn away from sinning. Verses that support this step are Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23; Acts 3:19; and 1 John 1:9.

"B" stands for Believe. A person must believe that Jesus is God's Son and that God sent Jesus to pay the penalty for sin. Verses about believing include John 3:16; John 14:6; and Romans 5:8.

"C" stands for Confess. A person must confess her faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Read Romans 10:9-10, 13.

After a person admits to God that she is a sinner, repents and turns from her sin, believes that Jesus is God's Son sent to die to pay for the sins of the world, and confesses that faith in Jesus, she is a Christian and knows Jesus as her Savior.

The following is a sample prayer to use as a guide for praying with a child:

Dear God, thank you for choosing to love me! I know I am a sinner. I believe you sent your Son, Jesus Christ, to die for my sins. I believe he rose again and lives today. Today, I repent and turn away from my sin. Thank you for your wonderful love and for changing my life forever. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

Ken and Kay Parker have worked for LifeWay Christian Resources and now serve at Oak Valley Baptist Church in Franklin, Tennessee, where Ken is pastor.

Permission to include article granted by LifeWay. Visit lifeway.com for more resources

THE ABCS OF BECOMING A CHRISTIAN

by Ken and Kay Parker

ADMIT

A person must admit to God that she is a sinner. She must be sorry for her sin and turn away from sinning. Verses that support this step are Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23; Acts 3:19; and 1 John 1:9.

BELIEVE

A person must believe that Jesus is God's Son and that God sent Jesus to pay the penalty for sin. Verses about believing include John 3:16; John 14:6; and Romans 5:8.

CONFESS

A person must confess her faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Read Romans 10:9-10, 13.

Focal Bible Verse

...Always be ready to give a
defense to anyone who asks
you for a reason for the hope
that is in you. **1 Peter 3:15**

Unit Bible Verse

In the same way,
let your light shine before men,
so that they may see your good works
and give glory to your Father in
heaven. **Matthew 5:16**

Russell Cravens & Family



ALLERGY ALERT!

Today's Snack
