

The Word Became Flesh

John 1:1-18

Worship Theme:



God lives with us.

Weaving Faith Into Life:



Children will praise God for being a part of their lives.



| Session Sequence | What Children Will Do | Supplies |
|--|---|---|
| <p>1 Let's Praise God! (up to 25 minutes)</p> | <p>Sing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "All Creatures of Our God and King" • "Jesus Is Alive" • "Be Strong in the Lord" (Ephesians 6:10) • "Create in Me a Pure Heart" (Psalm 51:10) • "Love the Lord" (Deuteronomy 6:4-9) • "God Loves Us So" | <p>KidsOwn Worship Kit: <i>KidsOwn Worship DVD</i></p> <p>Classroom Supplies: Video equipment, paper, bowls of lemon juice, paintbrushes, 1 cup water, tincture of iodine, old newspapers</p> |

Preschool

| Session Sequence | What Children Will Do | Supplies |
|---|---|--|
| <p>2 Let's Learn the Point! (up to 25 minutes)</p> | <p>* God Is With Us Learn that Jesus is the light of the world and came to live with them.</p> | <p>Classroom Supplies: Flashlight, globe, hand mirror</p> |
| | <p>God Lives With Everyone Learn a finger play.</p> | |
| | <p>Taste and See Drink clear liquid to discover a surprise.</p> | <p>Classroom Supplies: Serving of clear flavored water and paper cup per child, clear pitcher</p> |

Elementary

| Session Sequence | What Children Will Do | Supplies |
|--|--|---|
| 2 Let's Learn the Point! <i>(up to 25 minutes)</i> | The Word Became Flesh Examine John 1 to discover truths about Jesus. | Classroom Supplies: Bibles, paper, pencils, chalkboard or whiteboard |
| | * God Lives With Us 1, 2, 3 Play a goofy game to experience working with something they can't see. | Classroom Supplies: Blindfold, spoon, 2 bowls, and several handfuls of mini-marshmallows per 4 kids |
| | * Light as a Feather Praise God in a light and airy way. | Classroom Supplies: Craft feather per child, bowl |

| Session Sequence | What Children Will Do | Supplies |
|---|---|--|
| 3 Let's Pray! <i>(up to 10 minutes)</i> | The Offering Offer their gifts to God. | Classroom Supplies: Offering bowls, bowl of feathers |
| | The Good Life Name times God was with them, and put actions to a praise song. | KidsOwn Worship Kit: <i>KidsOwn Worship DVD</i> Classroom Supplies: Video equipment |
| | Thank You, Lord Repeat a prayer of thanks. | |

* Starred activities can be used successfully with preschool and elementary children together. Customize your session to fit your needs. You can separate preschoolers and elementary children for Section 2. Or, if you keep the children all together for the entire worship session, we suggest you choose from the starred activities.

The Word Became Flesh

John 1:1-18

To avoid confusion, it's important to note that the writer of John's Gospel was the Apostle John, one of Jesus' disciples—who apparently was closer to Jesus than many of the other disciples (John 19:26-27). He is not to be mistaken for John the Baptist, who is mentioned in this passage.

Today's passage, the opening of John's Gospel, can be confusing without some background. The first thing to know is that in these verses, "the Word" refers to Jesus, whom we sometimes call "the living Word of God."

The term used here carried special significance in both Greek and Hebrew cultures. Greek philosophers used the Greek word *logos* (which means "word") to refer to the mind of god, whatever god they were referring to. To the Jews, *word* carried with it the actions of God in their world, God's personal involvement. Thus, when John referred to Jesus as "the Word," he was clearly identifying him as God in action in our world!

Notice that in John 1:3, John emphasizes Jesus' deity by pointing out that he was active in the very creation of the world. Jesus didn't come into being when he was born in the Bethlehem stable; he existed as God with the Father from the very beginning. Not only did he exist, but as John 1:4 indicates, he was the source of life and light for the world—the source of light that could free humankind from the darkness of sin.

John 1:10-11 reveals the sadness Jesus must have felt when he came to earth. The very people he had created—who had been told of his coming by Old Testament prophets as well as by John the Baptist, to whom he had come to reveal God, for whom he had come to sacrifice his life—did not recognize or acknowledge him.

The good news is that Jesus loved them (and us) anyway! He didn't withdraw his offer of salvation. In fact, he made it broader than the Jews could have believed. John 1:12 declares the joyous truth: Anyone who receives Jesus and believes in him can become a child of God! Absolutely anyone can receive the new life Jesus offers!

The rest of today's passage, John 1:14-18, further establishes that Jesus is who he said he was. He lived among humanity, and those who followed him witnessed the reality of who he was. These verses make it clear that John the apostle knew it, the other disciples knew it, and John the Baptist knew it: Jesus is God, the one who brought to our world grace, truth, and an intimate portrait of the Father himself. All who believe in him receive God's grace, new life in Christ, and an inheritance in heaven!

Devotion for Leaders

A glorious benefit of putting our belief in Christ is that we can be children of God. This relationship brings us all the advantages granted to a child of the king—the King of the universe!

Weaving Faith Into Your Life: Dwell on John 1:12. What are the implications in your life of being a child of God? Live your life as if you are the child of the king of the universe. Say a prayer of thanksgiving to your heavenly Father for adopting you into his royal family.

Why We Worship for Leaders

God sent Jesus into the world to save us. These words have become so familiar that they risk becoming a cliché to many of us. But the wonder lies in the absolute truth of the statement. The dictionary's definition of *save*, which is the job Jesus came to earth to do, can help us today to worship God. *The American Heritage Dictionary* tells us that to save means to "rescue from harm, danger, or loss...to keep in a safe condition; safeguard...to prevent the waste or loss of; conserve...to set aside for future use...to treat with care." When we apply these definitions to Jesus' work on the cross for us, we can begin to understand the impact of a God who lives with us. Use this session to help kids learn what it means to have God live with us. Then lead them in joyful worship of the God who came to earth to be with us. No matter our age or status in life, God sees us all as his kids, with whom he wants to live.

Easy Prep for Leaders

Let's Praise God!

- Make sure your video equipment is ready.
- Cut plain paper into fourths; you'll need one piece for each child. Set the papers, small paintbrushes, and bowls of lemon juice on a table. Use a paintbrush and lemon juice to write, "God lives with us" or "Jesus" on a piece of paper. Do this early enough that it is completely dry before the worship session.
- Pour 1 cup of water into a bowl. Add 20 drops of tincture of iodine to the water and stir. Set the bowl in the worship area, and spread out old newspapers nearby.

Preschool Activities—Refer to the preschool pages for preparations.

1 Let's Praise God!

Play music videos from the *KidsOwn Worship DVD* as children arrive. Greet children by name, and ask them to think of a word (or words) that comes to mind when they think of God. Then instruct them to use lemon juice to write the word, or draw a picture of it, on a piece of paper. Ask early arrivals to prepare a few extra papers for children who come late. Have children take their papers with them to the worship area.

When all the children have arrived,

Say **Welcome, everyone! When you came to children's church today, you wrote some words or drew a picture on paper. We'll use them in a few minutes, but before we do, set them on the floor under your chair while we worship God.**

Did you know that God is here today? He is! He sent his Son, Jesus, to earth to be with us. He is with us today, he was with us yesterday, and he'll be with us tomorrow. Let's praise him for that!

▶ Sing "All Creatures of Our God and King."

Say ▶ We can have joy today because God lives with us. Our next song tells us why Jesus came. As we sing the words, celebrate that Jesus came to die for us, but he's alive today!

▶ Sing "Jesus Is Alive."

Say ▶ Jesus came to live among us so he could rescue us and give us life. What a great God we have! And Jesus gives us strength! Let's praise him for that.

▶ Sing "Be Strong In the Lord" (Ephesians 6:10).

Say ▶ God sent Jesus to live with us and show us how to live in a way that is pleasing to God. As we sing our next song, ask God to help you have a pure heart.

▶ Sing "Create in Me a Pure Heart" (Psalm 51:10).

Say ▶ Even though we can't see God, he's always with us. Take the "paintings" you made when you first came today. Show your paper to the people next to you, and see if they can tell what you wrote or drew. Pause while children show one another their papers. Then take the paper you prepared and stand near the bowl with the iodine and water solution.

It's hard to see anything on the pictures, isn't it? I can help with that.

Dip your paper in the iodine mixture for about 10 seconds and then hold it up for kids to see. (Hold it over the bowl so the mixture won't drip on the floor.)

Just because you couldn't tell what was on my paper doesn't mean it wasn't there. Just because you can't see God living with me doesn't mean God's not here. God lives with us even though we can't see him. Now it's your turn to come up and dip your paper in the solution. Then set it on the newspapers to dry.

Have kids come up in pairs or trios to dip their papers in the solution.

Say ▶ As we sing the next song, let's be sure we're telling God we love him. Let's really mean the words. Tell him that you love him even though you can't see him.

▶ Sing "Love the Lord" (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

Say ▶ Do you ever think about what it would be like if God were a different kind of God? What if God were a mean and nasty God or selfish and hurtful? Some people are like that. Maybe you know some people like that. Some people even think God is like that, but he's not. He's the opposite of everything bad. He is kind and good and loving. He proved it when he sent Jesus, his only Son, to die for us so we could be with him forever. That's how much he loves us! Let's worship God for being a God of love.

▶ Sing "God Loves Us So."

Worship Leader Tip

As a part of your preparations for "Let's Praise God!" you may want to set up a "drying station" with a blow dryer to dry as many of the papers as possible before starting the worship session.

Pray Oh God, we praise you for living with us. Thank you for being good and kind and loving. We love being loved by you. Help us to love you back this week by trying to be like Jesus and by believing that you live with us. In Jesus' name, amen.



2 Let's Learn the Point!

Preschool Activities, pages 79-80

At this time, have the preschool leader invite the preschoolers to go to their own room for this section of activities. Tear out the Preschool Activities page, and give it to the preschool leader. Have the preschool leader bring the preschoolers back to participate in Let's Pray! with the older children. If you prefer to keep all the children together, do the starred (*) activities. They will work well with both elementary and preschool children.

Elementary Activities

The Word Became Flesh

Have kids count off from one to seven and form groups with others with the same number. Give each group a Bible, paper, and a pencil, and have kids choose one person in the group to be the note-taker.

Say We're learning today that God lives with us. Let's find out what the Bible says about this. Open your Bibles to John 1. Each group will be assigned a few verses. Read the verses aloud together, and look for all the facts about God and Jesus. The note-taker in your group should write the facts down. Make a list for God and another list for Jesus. Some of you will have verses about John the Baptist, so make a list for him, too. Go through the verses several times so you don't miss anything.

After a few minutes, we'll share what we've discovered.

Starting with the Group 1, assign the following sets of verses from John 1 in order: verses 1-2, verses 3-5, verses 6-8, verses 9-11, verses 12-13, verses 14-15, verses 16-18. Circulate among the kids and help as needed.

On a whiteboard or chalkboard, write headings for the facts kids find. Then get everyone's attention.

Beginning with verses 1-2 and continuing in order, have groups read the verses and then name the facts they found about Jesus and God. As they name facts, write them on a chalkboard or whiteboard. Before moving on to the next set of verses, ask the rest of the kids if they noticed anything not mentioned.

Worship Leader Tip

Any regular paper works for the lemon juice activity during "Let's Praise God!" If kids want to know why it works, explain that starch in the paper combines with the iodine in the water. This forms iodine-starch molecules, which are blue-purple in color. Vitamin C combines with iodine to form a colorless molecule, so the area covered with lemon juice doesn't change.

Leader Skillbuilder

Children will readily accept the idea that God lives with us. But because it's an abstract concept, explaining to young children how he lives with us can be difficult. So come ready to supply kids with examples from your own life of how you've experienced God living with you. Look for ways to share your stories at different times throughout the session, and watch for opportunities for the kids to share their experiences. Thank you for creating a warm environment for sharing that will bless the faith of the children you lead.

Worship Leader Tip

Adjust the number of groups for "The Word Became Flesh" according to the number of kids you have. If your group is smaller (less than 20), count off into fewer groups, and put some of the verses together. If your group has more than 40 kids, have two groups of each number.

Worship Leader Tip

You may want to photocopy John 1:1-18 for "The Word Became Flesh" so kids can make notes on the copies.

- Ask**
- **According to John 1, who is Jesus?** (The Word; God; the light.)
 - **Why did Jesus come to earth?** (To save the world; to be a light; to live with us.)
 - **What does this mean for us?** (We can be saved through Jesus; we can become children of God.)

Say **Look at the list of things we learned about God and Jesus! We see that God and Jesus are separate people, and yet they are both God. Wow! Verse 12 says that we have the right to become children of God. Verse 14 says that the Word, Jesus, became a man and made his dwelling among us. God lives with us! Let's get ready to thank God for that in a fun way.**

* *God Lives With Us 1, 2, 3*

Have kids form groups of about four or five. (Adjust the number and size of groups for your situation and the availability of supplies.) Have each group sit in a circle and place a blindfold, a spoon, and two unbreakable bowls, one with mini-marshmallows in it, in the center of each circle.

Say **We're going to take a few minutes to try something goofy and see what we can learn from it. First of all, though, I know many of you are dying to eat a marshmallow, so take one now and eat it if you want. (Pause.) You'll get to eat more later, but for now, no more eating! When I tell you to begin, blindfold someone in your group. That person should try scooping as many marshmallows from one bowl into the other as he or she can using the spoon. Meanwhile, the rest of you will count, "God lives with us, one; God lives with us, two; God lives with us, three," and so on until you reach five. Then the person must stop scooping and look at how successful he or she was in moving the marshmallows from one bowl to the other. Then blindfold another person and do it again until everyone has had a turn.**

Circulate among the groups and help as needed. Encourage kids to move the activity along as quickly as they can. The goal is simply to give everyone a brief experience in scooping up what they can't see.

- Ask**
- **Was it easy or hard to scoop the marshmallows? Explain your answer.** (It was hard, because I couldn't find the bowl; it was easy, since the others were counting for me.)
 - **How is this activity like or not like believing that God lives with us?** (We can believe even when we can't see what we believe in; we can't see God, but that doesn't mean he isn't with us.)

ALLERGY ALERT

See Session 2.



The Word Became Flesh

John 1:1-18

Worship Theme:



God lives with us.

Easy Prep for Leaders

Taste and See—Put a bottle of any flavored water (make sure it's clear) in a clear pitcher. You'll also need a small disposable cup for each child.

Using Theo

Consider using Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet today in these ways:

- Have Theo lead the preschoolers from the main worship area to the preschool room.
- Have Theo hold the mirror up to each child in the "God Is With Us" activity.
- See the KidsOwn Worship Kit for a puppet skit written for today's worship session.



* God Is With Us

You'll need a flashlight; a hand mirror; and a globe, map, or atlas.

Gather the children and set the globe where they can see it. Open your Bible to John 1:1-18, and show it to the children.

Say Today we're learning that God lives with us. The Bible tells us that Jesus made everything. It tells us that Jesus is like a light in the darkness.

Ask • What does a light help us do?

Say Lights help us see when it's dark, don't they? Jesus helps us see, too. God sent Jesus to us so we could see and understand God. Turn on the flashlight, and shine it on the globe or map. The Bible says that Jesus is a light to the whole world.

This globe is what the earth looks like. Here's where we live. Point to your location on the globe. **Jesus came to show us what God is like. He's the light in our life. He also came to live with us. Let's see who Jesus wants to live with.** Pass the mirror around the circle. As each child looks in the mirror, say something like, "God lives with Jason."

God Lives With Everyone

Have the children sit in a circle.

Say Today we're learning that God lives with us. Let's find out when God is with us. Let's pretend we're babies. Show me how you acted when you were a baby. Give children a few moments to act like babies.

Did God love you when you were a baby? Of course he did! He was with you when you were a baby. Now let's pretend to be teenagers or big kids. Show me how you'd act if you were a really big kid. Give children a few moments to act like big kids.

Will God live with you when you're a teenager? Of course he will! Now let's pretend to be grown-ups. Act like you're a grown-up right now. Wait while children act like grown-ups.

Good job, everyone! Will God live with you when you're a grown-up? Yes! He will! He loves us and lives with us all the time.

Let's learn a little rhyme to help us remember that.

Have children hold up a hand and fold the fingers down over the thumb. Starting with the pinky finger, raise one finger on each line of the poem, ending with the index finger. Allow kids to use their other hand to help raise the fingers if they need to.

Here I am, little and small.

(Lift pinky.)

God lives with me, though I'm not very tall.

Here I am, just a little bit bigger,

(Lift ring finger.)

God's still here, never been better!

Look at me! I've grown big and tall!

(Lift middle finger.)

God's still with me, through it all.

Now I'm grown up, big as can be,

(Lift index finger.)

God is still here, always with me.

(Wiggle thumb.)

Taste and See

Hold up the pitcher of clear liquid, and ask the children what they think it is. Then, without telling them what it is, pour some into paper cups, and let the children taste it.

Ask • Is it what you thought it was? Explain.

• How did you feel when you took a drink?

Say We thought there was water in our cups. But we got a surprise! There was something special in it that makes it sweet and tasty. God is more than we expect, too. Listen to what the Bible says in Psalm 34:8. "Taste and see that the Lord is good." Of course, we can't really taste God with our mouths. But when we know and love God, it's like tasting his goodness.

ALLERGY ALERT



Be aware that some children have food allergies that can be dangerous. Know your children, and consult with parents about allergies their children may have. Also be sure to read food labels carefully as hidden ingredients can cause allergy-related problems.

(continued from page 78)

Say ➤ **Just like the marshmallows were in the bowl even though you couldn't see or feel them, God lives with us. Sometimes we can feel God's love and presence, but other times we can't. It's during those times that we have to have faith that he is there, just because he says he is. Pass the marshmallows around now and take some if you want. Just be sure everyone gets some. As you eat, thank God for living with you.**

Ask a few volunteers to collect the supplies and set them aside.

* *Light as a Feather*

Say ➤ **Now I want you to put one hand behind your back, and hold the other hand out in front of you. Close your eyes, and don't open them until I tell you.** Ask one or two volunteers to help you place one craft feather in each child's hand.

Keep your eyes closed, but shake your hand gently back and forth and try to figure out what we've put in it. Don't peek!

Ask ➤ • **Did you believe we actually put something in your hand? Why or why not?** (Yes, because I felt something soft; no, because it was too light to feel; yes, because you said you were going to put something into my hand.)

• **At first what did you think we put in your hand?** (Nothing; I thought you put paper in my hand.)

Say ➤ **God is like the feather sometimes; God is so quiet and gentle that we don't even know he's there! But he promises to live with us and take care of us. Let's praise him for that in a fun way. When I say "Go," blow your feather into the air and thank God for one thing before it hits the ground. You might say, "Thank you for living with me," or "Thanks for loving me." Then blow the feather again, and see if you can thank him for two things. Continue adding one more thing, and see how many times you can praise God before your feather lands.**

Give kids several minutes to praise God. Then collect the feathers in a bowl.

Say ➤ **Just as surely as the feather was in your hands, God lives with you. The feathers are so light you hardly know they're there, but they are! That's just how it is with God!**

3 **Let's Pray!**


The Offering

Say ➤ **When we give God something that's as important to us as our money, we honor him. Instead of passing the offering bowls, walk to the table where I've placed the offering bowls and the bowl of feathers. You may place your money offering in the offering bowls, if you brought money. Then take one of the feathers, and thank God for living with you. Keep your feather to remind you that God is always with you, whether you can feel him or not.**

The Good Life

Say ➤ **We learned today that God sent Jesus to live with us. Let's think about evidence in our own lives that God lives with us. Tell us about a time you knew God was with you.** Give a few kids time to share.

Those are awesome examples! God wants us to know without a shadow of a doubt that he lives with us. When we trust God to be with us, things have a way of turning out fine in the end, even when they look pretty bad, because we have his strength. I'm going to play a song to get your creativity going. You can work alone or with a group to think of some worship actions to the chorus of the song. When your group is ready, sit on the floor and wave at me. Then we'll all stop what we're doing and learn the actions you came up with.

 Play "Be Strong in the Lord" (Ephesians 6:10). Give kids time to develop and teach their actions.

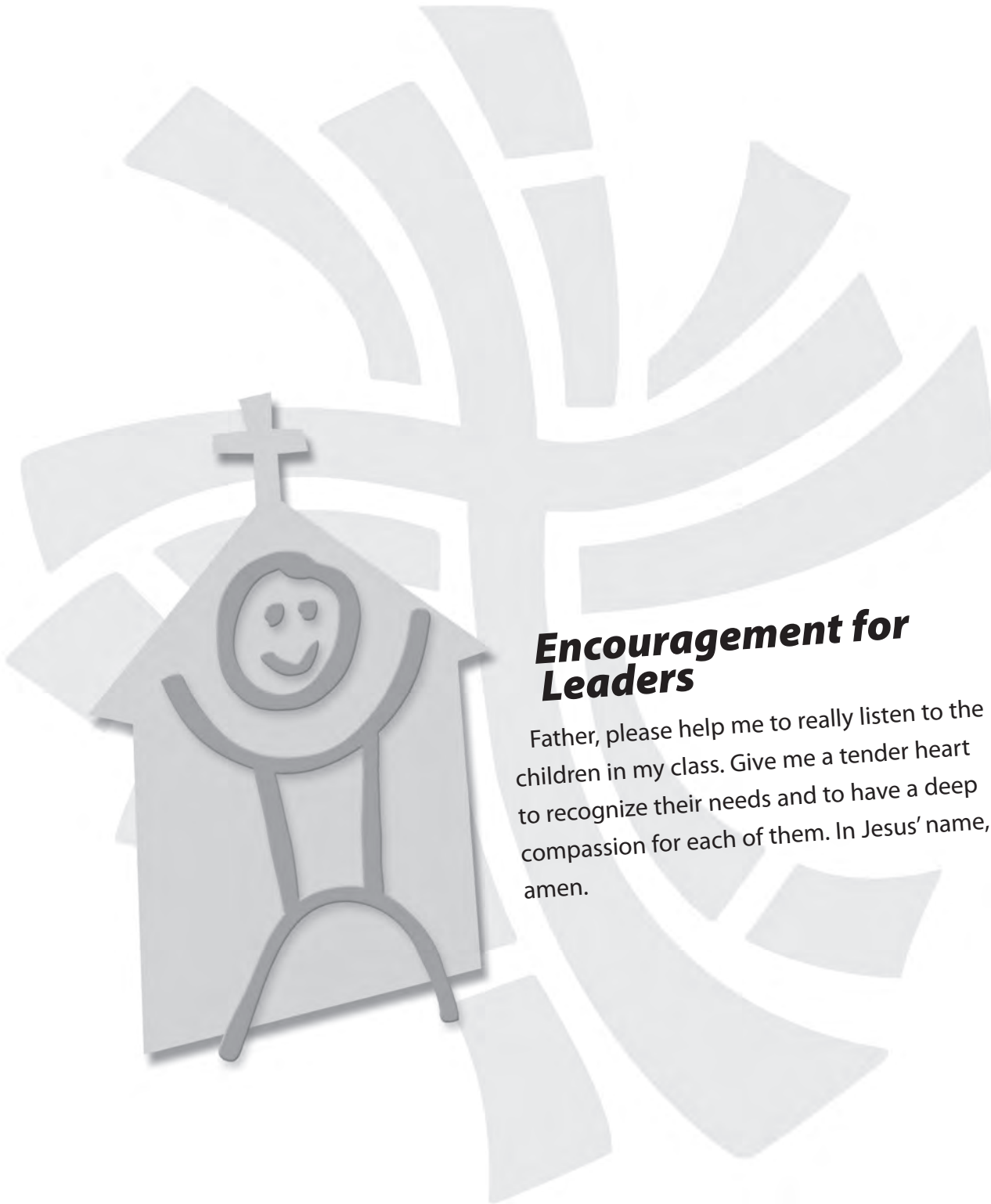
- Ask** ➤
- **How does it feel to know that God lives with you?** (I feel braver; I'm not lonely.)
 - **What are some ways you can thank God this week for living with you?** (I can pray to tell God thank you; I can try harder to live the way he wants me to.)

Say ➤ **Remember this week that God lives with you and gives you life.**

Thank You, Lord

Have children repeat each line of this prayer after you.

Pray ▶ I thank you today, Lord,
Because you live with me.
You take care of me and protect me.
You walk with me and lead me.
No matter how things seem,
You're always with me.
I love you, Lord.
In Jesus' name, amen.



Encouragement for Leaders

Father, please help me to really listen to the children in my class. Give me a tender heart to recognize their needs and to have a deep compassion for each of them. In Jesus' name, amen.