

# THE GREAT COMMISSION

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: MATTHEW 28:16-20



*The nations must be taught the instructions of the Lord.*

## The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

### Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

**Some of the disciples struggled to believe** – The eleven disciples were asked to meet Jesus on a particular mountain. When they saw Jesus, some worshipped Him, while others doubted. Rather than rebuke those who doubted, Jesus commissioned them all! What an encouragement to us when we struggle at times with our faith.

**Jesus commissioned the doubters** – In spite of the fact that some doubted, Jesus commissioned all eleven to go forth and teach all nations to obey everything He commanded, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Here, contained in a very small portion of Scripture, are some astounding truths. First, the apostles were not to limit their teaching to other Jews. They were to spread the teaching of Jesus to the Gentiles as well! In this Great Commission, Jesus applied this to us as well. Jesus also revealed the doctrine of the Trinity here when He says we are to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. By including Himself, Jesus again declared His deity.

**Jesus is with us as we go** – Matthew concluded his Gospel with amazing encouragement from Christ. Jesus told us that He will be with us always, to the very end of the age. Whenever we run into difficulty, we need to remember that Jesus is with us. Whenever we doubt, we should remember that Jesus is near. This is a verse we should remember!

## WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?

*Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.*

The Great Commission of Matthew 28:16-20 is not found in the other Gospels, but has a companion passage in Luke. Jesus had earlier commissioned the disciples to spread the message of His death and resurrection (Luke 24:46). Both passages tell us that the Gospel is to be preached to all nations. The salvation of Jesus Christ is not limited to the Jews, but is to go to all nations and all peoples. Mathew records that those who receive the message are to be baptized. That baptism, Paul later explains, is an identification with the death and resurrection of Jesus in the life of the individual believer (Romans 6:3,4).

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### ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

**Bible Passage: Micah 5: 4,5**

#### Connecting the passage to Christ:

Jesus is the shepherd whose greatness will extend to the ends of the earth. The promise to Abraham was that all the nations of the earth would be blessed through his offspring. Through Jesus, this promise is fulfilled. Those of us who believe are called the sheep of His flock who know His voice. Jesus is our peace. He said in John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

#### Questions for reflection:

- What part of this passage sounds like the Great Commission? (This passage tells us that Jesus' greatness will reach to the ends of the earth. In the Great Commission, the message of Christ, which conquers death, is to go into all the earth.)
- What kind of peace does the Lord give? (Jesus does not promise us freedom from earthly trials. He does promise us freedom from the wrath of God, a long with forgiveness, rather than judgment, for our sin. The result is an unshakeable peace, even in the midst of earthly trials.)

### SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

#### BE A DOER OF THE WORD

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.



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### ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

*Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?*

#### WE ARE ALWAYS HELD BY JESUS

**Supplies:**

- two 10' lengths of heavy cord
- two 6' pieces of sewing thread.

This object lesson is designed to show God's ability to hold us in contrast to our ability to hold ourselves. It illustrates our doubting faith vs. His great strength.

Tie both the rope and the thread around a belt loop on your pants and tie the other ends to something stable like a desk or table. Since the thread is shorter you will pull on its strength before the heavy cord.

Explain to the class that the thread represents your own faith in God and the cord represents God's faithfulness to us in Christ. Place a Bible on the desk or table and explain that our faith (the thread) can keep us close to the Lord, but sin can draw us away. Even if we doubt and are drawn away toward sin so that our faith is broken, (walk away from the Bible until the thread breaks), God is still faithful and keeps us from falling. Show them how the heavy cord holds you firmly.

Read 2 Timothy 2:13 and explain that the Lord's faithfulness does not depend on our obedience or faith, but in the work of Jesus on the cross.

Go back and read about the doubts of the disciples in Matthew 28:17 and ask the children why Jesus would commission those who doubted. (The answer, of course, was that their success did not depend on their perfect faith, but Jesus' perfect faithfulness.)



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### A SNEAK PEAK

**Supplies:**

Invite a person or two from another nation to share their testimony with your class.

Read Revelation 7:9-12. Tell the children that this speaks of the end of the earth as we know it. Ask them how this connects to the great commission. This is the fulfillment of the great commission. Ask the following questions:

- Can people from any nation, tribe, or tongue become Christians? (Yes. God loves all people, and the Gospel goes forth to all nations.)
- If God loves people from every nation, should we do the same? (Yes. We should not discriminate or treat others poorly based on where they live or what the color of their skin is. All men, regardless of their tribe or nation, are made in the image of God.)



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### NOT ALL TEACHING IS EQUAL.

**Supplies:**

- six feet of chain
- a keyed lock with a key that fits the lock
- eight index cards

Write the following on the eight index cards:

1. Remain calm at all times.
2. Hold your hands still.
3. Locate the hole in the bottom of the lock.
4. Don't try to break the chains. They are too strong.
5. Don't scream, it won't help.
6. The key fits in the hole in the bottom of the lock.
7. The lock will open when the inserted key is turned.
8. The key is in the Bible on the table.

The object of this lesson is to help the children realize that the Gospel is the most important teaching of Jesus for us to learn.

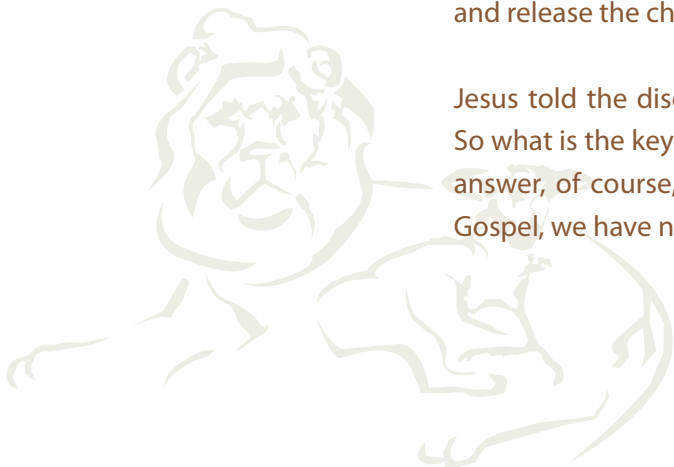
You will need another teacher to assist you.

Chain up your assistant's arms and have him/her sitting in the front of the class when the students come in. Ask for a volunteer to help him/her get free from the chains. The one in chains should request that the volunteer ask you for the key to unlock the chains.

Mix up the index cards, but withhold number 8. When the volunteer asks you for help, have him pick an index card and take it back to the teacher in chains.

The person in chains should ask for the card to be read. Obviously, only card number 8 can unlock the chains. After two trips, quietly insert the eighth card into the pile and continue the exercise until the key is discovered in the Bible and the lock is removed. Explain to the class that although all of the cards contained helpful information, only one of the cards had the information which would open the lock and release the chains.

Jesus told the disciples to teach everything He commanded them to all people. So what is the key teaching of Jesus that can unlock people's bondage to sin? The answer, of course, is the Gospel. If we teach everything else, but leave out the Gospel, we have not helped anyone.



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### PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

### IN CLASS PROJECT

**Supplies:**  
pencil and paper

Get an outline map of the world and have the students color all the nations that have unreached people groups. You can get this information from a mission agency or the internet. Have the children write the words, "Go and make disciples of all nations," across the top of their map.

### FOR THE OLDER GRADES

#### THE MISSION TO REACH THE NATIONS IS NOT OVER.

**Supplies:**  
information on ten  
unreached people groups  
(obtained by contacting  
a local mission agency  
or doing a search on the  
internet)  
• ten index cards

Write a short description of each of the people groups on the cards. Take time to review these with your students. Divide up the class into ten groups, and then have a time of prayer. Give each of the groups a card and position the groups in a larger circle. Each team of students should pray two minutes for the people group on their card. Students can take turns praying. At the end of two minutes, shift cards to the right and begin praying again. Continue this until all the teams have prayed over all ten cards.

Draw out the students about how praying for these people groups affected them. Remind them that praying is an important component to seeing the great commission fulfilled.



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### A LITTLE BIT MORE

**Baptism** – Jesus commanded that believers be baptized. In Acts, after Peter addressed the crowd in what might be considered the first large Gospel presentation, He commanded them to “repent and be baptized” in keeping with the Lord’s command. Throughout the book of Acts, new converts are baptized.

Paul explains that our baptism is a picture of our union with Christ in His death and resurrection (Romans 6:3-4). Prior to Jesus’s baptism, John preached a baptism of repentance for all those Jews who had fallen away from God by their sinful lives (Matthew 3:11). It was not unusual for converts to Judaism to be baptized as a sign of their conversion.

The word “baptism” comes from the Greek word “baptizo” which was used by the Greeks to describe the dyeing of a cloth or garment. This picture is most helpful and fits with the picture of burial and resurrection in Romans. The garment would be immersed into the water one color and come out another.

