

Unit 15: God's People Gather Together**Unit Big Question (and Answer):** Why Do God's People Go to Church?

To Worship God and Love One Another!

Unit Bible Verse: "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together." Hebrews 10:24-25, ESV**Bible Truth 5 Concept: To Worship God and Love One Another... By Baptizing People Who Trust in and Live for Jesus!**

Jesus told His disciples to baptize everyone who turns away from their sins and trusts in Him as their Savior. Baptism is a picture of the new life that begins when someone becomes a Christian. God has forgiven their sins and made them His people. God has filled their hearts with His Holy Spirit and made it new. They are leaving their old life behind and beginning a new life of living for Jesus.

Not just anyone gets baptized. Baptism is a big deal. The godly leaders at church want to make sure that the person being baptized really understands the good news of Jesus and what it means to live as one of God's people. Sometimes a person is ready to be baptized very soon. But sometimes, the leaders think it's best if the person has more time to make sure that they really understand the good news of Jesus and are ready to live it out. It may not feel good to be told to wait, but the leaders want to do what's best for this person and what's best for the church.

On baptism day, God's people gather together to watch, pray and celebrate. The person being baptized stands up and shares the story of how he came to trust in Jesus as his Savior. He tells of his desire to live God's way and to gather together with God's people.

Then at last, it's baptism time! The new believer wades into the water with one of the pastors. The pastor holds onto the person as they lean back into the water for a few seconds. This is to remember that Jesus died and was buried for their sins. It's a picture that their old life of disobeying God is over. That life died with Jesus. Then, the pastor helps him/her come up out of the water. This reminds them that Jesus rose from the dead for them. He completely paid God's punishment for the sins. He has forgiven them once and for all. With God's help, they are beginning a new life of knowing, loving and obeying God. Often, everyone claps and cheers as the new believer comes up out of the water. They are so happy that someone else is telling the world that they are one of God's people and want to live for Him forever. We can become one of God's people when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

Bible Truth 5 Bible Verse: Acts 2:38, ESV

"Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins."

Learn a Little: "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ."**Meaning:**

What a wonderful gift God has given us in Jesus! Through Him, we can be forgiven our sins and can become God's people forever. What do we have to do to receive this gift? Repent of our sins (that is, turning away from wanting to disobey God and live for Him instead) and trust in Jesus as our Savior. God promises to save all who come to Him like this! And what happens when someone does this? God hears his prayers and forgives him. God puts His Holy Spirit in their heart and they begin a whole new life with God.

God wants all who repent and believe in Jesus to be baptized as a special sign to everyone of what has happened inside their heart. Their old way of living is gone. They are forgiven! They are saved! And now they belong to God and live for Him! Have you ever been to a baptism?

We can become one of God's people, too, when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

Bible Truth 5 ACTS Prayer

- A** We praise You, God, for saving Your people, the Church, through Jesus. He is why we can become Your people.
- C** God, we know that we can never become Your people on our own. We have all turned away from You and Your good ways. We need a Savior!
- T** God, thank You for providing the way for us to become Your people through Jesus. Thank You for giving a new life to all who turn away from their sins and trust in Him. Thank You for giving us baptism to help us remember the new way of life You give to all who do this.
- S** God, work in our hearts. Help us to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Help us to one day be able to stand before God's people and tell the story of how You saved us. Help us to trust our leaders to know when we are ready to be baptized and when we need to still wait and grow. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Bible Truth 5 Story

The Case of the Up and Down Sign *Matthew 28; Acts 1-2, 8:35-36, 10:47, 16:14-15,31-34*

Songs Used in Bible Truth 5

Big Q & A 15 Song

Big Question 15 Song: Why Do God's People Go to Church?

Big Question 15 Bible Verse Song: Stir Up Hebrews 10:24-25, ESV

Big Question 15 Hymn: Brethren, We Have Met to Worship, v.1

Big Question 15 Praise Song: Praise the Lord Together

Bible Truth 5 Bible Verse: Repent, Repent and Be Baptized Acts 2:38-39, ESV

Extra Bible Truth 5 Bible Verse: The Time Is Fulfilled Mark 1:15, ESV

Extra Bible Truth 5 Bible Verse: The Time Mark 1:15, ESV

listen to or download songs for free at <https://praisefactory.org>: Deep Down Detectives Music page

The Case of the Up and Down Sign*Matthew 28; Acts 1-2, 8:35-36, 10:47, 16:14-15,31-34***Story-telling Tips**

Ahead of time:

1. Read the Bible verses and story. Pray!
2. Choose story action cues and prepare storyboard figures/Story Scenes, if using. (In Visual Aids book)
3. Practice telling story with the storyboard figures/Story Scenes, timing your presentation. Shorten, if necessary.

During your presentation:

1. Maintain as much eye contact as possible as you tell the story.
2. Put up storyboard figures/add story action cues/hold up Story Scenes as you tell the story. Allow the children to help you put them on the board, if desired.
3. Include the children in your story with a few questions about what they think will happen or words/concepts that might be new to them.
4. Watch the kids for signs that their attention span has been reached. Shorten, if necessary.

INTRODUCTION/ LISTENING ASSIGNMENTS

“Our story is called: The Case of the Up and Down Sign. Here is your listening assignment.” Read from Detective Dan’s Listening Assignment signs, but questions are summarized below:

Detective Dan’s Lesson #1 Listening Assignment:

I need to find out:

1. **What did Jesus tell new believers to do as a sign of their new life in God?**
2. **Why did they go up and down in the water when they did the special sign?**

Detective Dan’s Lesson #2 Listening Assignment:**Our Bible Verse is Acts 2:38, ESV***“Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.”*

I need to find out:

1. **Who repented of their sins? How did their lives look different?**
2. **What did they do as a sign that their lives have changed?**

Detective Dan’s Lesson #3 Listening Assignment:

I found six clues, but only 4 of them are in the story.

They are: a banana, the Holy Spirit living in a heart, a Bible, water, a tree, and listeners.

Hold each of them up for the children to see as you identify them.

I need to figure out:

1. **Which four belong in the story and which two don’t?**
2. **What did the new believers confess to God? How did they ask him to help them live?**

Read the assignment questions, THEN SAY,

“Ok, Deep Down Detectives! Put on your best listening ears and see if you can hear the answers to Detective Dan’s questions. When I finish telling the story, we will see if we can answer all the questions.”

*Read the Bible Truth story, answer questions, present the gospel and lead in prayer.**Answers to questions; the gospel; and, ACTS prayer are included with the story text.*

The Case of the Up and Down Sign *Matthew 28; Acts 1-2, 8:35-36, 10:47, 16:14-15,31-34*

Story with lines separating paragraphs (text in bold, optional interaction cues in italics)

“Wait, then go!” Jesus told His disciples. “WAIT in Jerusalem until you receive God’s Holy Spirit. He will live in your hearts and will give you the power to do everything God wants you to do,” Jesus told them. “Then, GO! Go into all the world, to all peoples, everywhere. Tell them about Me.” Jesus told His disciples.

“Tell them to turn away from disobeying God and trust in Me as their Savior. Teach them everything I’ve taught you. Baptize these new believers. This tells everyone that they are God’s people and My disciples. They are choosing to turn away from their old life and now live to please God, instead,” Jesus said. “You won’t see me anymore. I’m going to heaven now,” Jesus told His disciples. “But I still will be with you always until I return to earth, at the end of time,” He promised.

And that’s just what happened. Jesus went up, up, up to heaven, and His disciples went back to Jerusalem to wait for the Holy Spirit.

And wait, they did. One day, two days, three days, a week, even nine days! Still no Holy Spirit! Would He ever come? Had Jesus forgotten His promise?

What do you think?

NO, Jesus had not forgotten. YES, the Holy Spirit would come. He was waiting for the perfect time: DAY 10, the Day of Pentecost. Suddenly, “Whoosh,” there was a sound like a great wind in the room. Then, “Sparkle, sparkle,” something that looked like flames of fire appeared over their heads. After this grand announcement, the Holy Spirit came quietly to live in the hearts of all the believers who gathered together that day.

The Holy Spirit might have come quietly, but He came powerfully, too! He gave the believers strength and courage and wisdom to do everything God wanted them to do.

The believers had waited. The Holy Spirit had come. Now what it was time to do? Can you remember what Jesus told them to do?

Can you remember?

Now it was time to GO!

But, go WHERE?

Can you remember?

Story with lines separating paragraphs (text in bold, optional interaction cues in italics)

Jesus told them to go to the whole world. And **WHAT** were they to take to the whole world? Can you tell me what their special message was?

Can you tell me?

The good news of JESUS!

So, that's what they did, starting right there in Jerusalem. "Jesus is God's Son, come to save sinners from the punishment they deserve from God," Peter told a huge crowd in Jerusalem. "Turn away from disobeying God! Trust in Jesus as your Savior!" he urged them. "Be baptized as a sign that God has forgiven you and you are living a new life for Him."

The Holy Spirit helped Peter tell the good news of Jesus that day. The Spirit worked in the hearts of the listeners, too. Many people heard and believed. The Bible tells us about 3000 of them became God's people that one day! How wonderful!

When someone becomes one of God's people, God works **BIG** changes in them. There's a change of heart on the **INSIDE**, and a change of life on the **OUTSIDE**. They are like brand-new people. Jesus gave God's people a special sign as a picture of this new beginning. Can you remember what it is?

Can you remember?

It's baptism. One by one, Peter led these new believers into the water to be baptized. "I baptize you in the name of God, the Father, Jesus, the Son of God, and God, the Holy Spirit," he told each person. Then, Peter carefully lowered each down into the water. Down they went, as a picture of their old life gone and their sins forgiven, taken away by Jesus when He died on the cross and was buried in a grave. Then a moment later, Peter lifted them back up out of the water. Up they came, as a picture of their new life for God begun. A new life given to them by Jesus, who rose from the dead. He had beaten sin and death for them. Now, they would get to live forever with God!

Baptism was a big step for these believers. No, it didn't save them from their sins, or make them God's people. God saves all who turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior, whether they are baptized or not. But, baptism **WAS** a very **BIG** sign. It told everyone: "They will show you what Jesus is like and how God wants us to live, loving Him and loving one another!"

And others certainly did watch these new believers and all these baptisms. Enemies watched and were angry. But many others watched, and when they saw the changed lives of these new believers, they wanted to hear about Jesus, too.

Baptism was a sign of another very happy gift from God: the gift of a new family. God had made these new believers a part of His family, the Church. Now, they were God's children, and all the other believers were their new, adopted brothers and sisters through Jesus. They gathered all together, listening to preaching from God's Word and learning how to live as God's people. They praised God and cared for each other's needs. Oh, how the Church in Jerusalem was growing and enjoying new life in Jesus!

But Jerusalem was just the beginning of the "Go" Jesus had given them. Where else did Jesus tell them to go and make disciples?

Can you tell me?

To the WHOLE WORLD! So, away they went!

Story with lines separating paragraphs (text in bold, optional interaction cues in italics)

Philip went to the land of Samaria, just outside of Israel. The Holy Spirit helped him tell them the good news of Jesus: "Jesus is God's Son, come to save sinners from the punishment they deserve from God," Philip told the people of Samaria. "Turn away from disobeying God! Trust in Jesus as your Savior! Be baptized as a sign that God has forgiven you and you are living a new life for Him," he urged them.

The Holy Spirit helped Philip tell the good news of Jesus that day, and He worked in the hearts of the listeners, too. Many turned away from their sins, trusted in Jesus as their Savior and were baptized.

Philip gathered them together into a new, little church of believers. They listened to Philip preach God's Word, and they learned how to live as God's people. They praised God together and cared for each other's needs. Oh, how the Church in Samaria was growing and enjoying new life in Jesus!

But Samaria wasn't the ends of the earth. It was only the land next door to Israel. There were many more people, in many other places, who needed to hear the good news of Jesus, too.

So, away went Paul and Barnabas, Timothy and Titus, over the mountains and across the sea, to tell these people. "Jesus is God's Son, come to save sinners from the punishment they deserve from God," they told all who would listen. "Turn away from disobeying God! Trust in Jesus as your Savior! Be baptized as a sign that God has forgiven you and you are living a new life for Him," they urged everyone.

The Holy Spirit helped these men tell the good news of Jesus, and who else was He helping at the same time?

Can you guess?

The Holy Spirit was helping the people listening, too. He gave them the gift of faith to hear and believe.

They turned away from their sins, trusted in Jesus as their Savior, and THEN what did they do?

Can you tell me?

They were baptized! Then, Paul and Barnabas, Timothy and Titus gathered together these new believers into little churches. The believers listened to these pastors preach God's Word, and they learned how to live as God's people. They praised God together and cared for each other's needs. Oh, how the church in these faraway places was growing and enjoying new life in Jesus!

Many years have passed since Jesus sent out those first Christians to share the gospel with the world. But sadly, there are still so many people, in so many places, who have never about Jesus.

And that's why Christians today are still obeying Jesus' command to go. That's why they are still telling people to turn away from disobeying God and to trust in Jesus as their Savior. And, they are still baptizing all who do, as a sign that they have been forgiven by God and are living a new life for Him.

And Christians will keep on going, and telling, and baptizing new believers until the Church has finished growing and Jesus comes back. Then, at last, all of God's people will be gathered all together, as one, big family, to live with God forever. What a wonderful day that will be!

Cracking the Case: (story wrap-up for Listening Assignments)

It's time to see how we did with our Listening Assignment.

Detective Dan's Lesson 1 Listening Assignment:

1. What did Jesus tell new believers to do as a sign of their new life in God? To be baptized.

2. Why did they go up and down in the water when they did the special sign? They went down in the water to remember that their sins had been buried down in the grave with Jesus. They went up, out of the water to remember that God had forgiven their sins and was giving them new life with Jesus who rose up from the dead. Jesus had beaten sin and death for them!

For You and Me:

When we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior, a day will come when we, too, will be baptized. It will be a wonderful day of showing that we are turning from our old life of living for ourselves and have begun a new life of living for God, by the help of His Holy Spirit.

Detective Dan's Lesson 2 Listening Assignment:**Our Bible Verse is Acts 2:38, ESV**

"Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins."

1. Who repented of their sins? How did their lives look different? The new believers repented of their sins and trusted in Jesus as their Savior. The Holy Spirit lived inside of them. He helped them to love God and live for Him, instead of living their old way.

2. What did they do as a sign that their lives had changed? They were baptized so the world could know they were choosing to live as followers of Jesus.

For You and Me:

When we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior, a day will come when we, too, will be baptized. It will be a wonderful day of showing that we are turning from our old life of living for ourselves and have begun a new life of living for God, by the help of His Holy Spirit.

Detective Dan's Lesson 3 Listening Assignment:

Our six clues were: a banana, sin in a heart, a Bible, water, a tree, and listeners.

1. Which four belong in our story?

The Holy Spirit living in a heart, the Bible, the water and the listeners belong. The banana and the tree do not.

2.. What did the new believers confess to God? How did they ask Him to help them live? They confess their sins to God. They asked God to help them love Him and live for Him now.

For You and Me:

When we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior, a day will come when we, too, will be baptized. It will be a wonderful day of showing that we are turning from our old life of living for ourselves and have begun a new life of living for God, by the help of His Holy Spirit.

The Gospel (story wrap-up if NOT using Listening Assignments)**Our Bible Truth is:****Why Do God's People Go to Church?****To Worship God and Love One Another...****By Baptizing People Who Trust in and Live for Jesus!**

Why do God's people go to church? To worship God and love one another... by baptizing people who trust and live for Jesus!

It is a very special day when one of God's people is baptized. It's a special time that show to others that they have turned away from their sins and have trusted Jesus as their Savior. Their baptism is a sign to the world that their old way of life is gone. They are living for Jesus now. How do we become God's people? By turning away from our sins and trusting in Jesus as our Savior. He will fill you with His Holy Spirit and you will know Him in your heart. There will come a special day when you get to be baptized and share with the church the story of how God worked in your life and saved you! But even better than that day, will be the day when you leave this life behind and go to live with God forever! That will be best of all! God can help you do this, too! Ask Him to help you! He loves to answer this prayer.

Close in prayer.

Closing ACTS Prayer

- A** We praise You, God, for saving Your people, the Church, through Jesus. He is why we can become Your people.
- C** God, we know that we can never become Your people on our own. We have all turned away from You and Your good ways. We need a Savior!
- T** God, thank You for providing the way for us to become Your people through Jesus. Thank You for giving a new life to all who turn away from their sins and trust in Him. Thank You for giving us baptism to help us remember the new way of life You give to all who do this.
- S** God, work in our hearts. Help us to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Help us to one day be able to stand before God's people and tell the story of how You saved us. Help us to trust our leaders to know when we are ready to be baptized and when we need to still wait and grow.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Go to Lesson Plan, p.9 for the script to the rest of the lesson.