



### Important Dates

**October 3:**  
World  
Communion  
Sunday

**November 21:**  
Christ the  
King Sunday  
(Last Sunday in  
the Liturgical Year)

**October 31:**  
Reformation  
Sunday

**November 28:**  
First Day of  
Advent

**November 25:**  
Thanksgiving  
Day

## Your Great Commission

**J**esus' Great Commission is recorded in the Gospel of Matthew. Christ has been given all authority in heaven and earth, so the Great Commission is to be taken seriously by all of us who claim to be His disciples.

So, how are you fulfilling YOUR Great Commission?

The Holy Spirit empowers us to witness and is the one who convicts sinners of their need for Jesus. We will have success because Jesus, the Lord of heaven and earth, will be with us as we undertake His assignment to witness and teach!

One aspect of being a Sunday school teacher is having the assurance that we are at the center of God's will for us. We

know that we are obeying His command as we study His Word and share it with the children in our classes.

The motivation for the Great Commission springs from the heart of God. He loves us





and gave His Son for us. As disciples, we are sent out to continue what God began in the sending of His Son. The Great Commission is linked to God's words to Abraham: "all peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Gen. 12:3). You are a blessing to the children in your class and their families.

The story of Jesus begins with "Emmanuel" ("God with us") and ends with the greatest promise in Scripture: "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt. 28:20). Look for Him in your heart. He invites you to co-mission in the Great Commission!

Consider what a commission is:

- **"granting power to perform various acts or duties"** Jesus has granted you power to teach children!
- **"authority to act in behalf of another"** Jesus wants you to be His voice, His touch!
- **"a task entrusted to one as an agent for another"** Jesus is trusting you will represent Him faithfully!

- **"a group of persons directed to perform some duty"** Jesus called us as disciples to witness and teach!
- **"ready for active service"** Jesus wants you ready and willing!

*Jesus came to them and said,  
"All authority in heaven and  
on earth has been given to me.  
Therefore go and make disciples  
of all nations, baptizing them in  
the name of the Father and of the  
Son and of the Holy Spirit, and  
teaching them to obey everything  
I have commanded you. And  
surely I am with you always, to  
the very end of the age."*

**Matthew 28:18-20**





# Giving Thanks

## Through the Eyes of Little Children

Adapt these activities for your toddlers, preschoolers, and early elementary students. Consider sending them home for families to use together.

### Worship Song

Sing the following words to “Frere Jacques.” Let children suggest other things they are thankful for (Thank You for my teachers, Thank You for my sister, etc.). You’ll be singing a familiar but original song every week.



**I am thankful, I am thankful.  
Yes I am! Yes I am!  
Thank You God for family  
Thank You for my friends.  
Yes I am. Yes I am.**

### Hop the Hoops

**You will need:**

**Hula Hoops or circles of yarn**

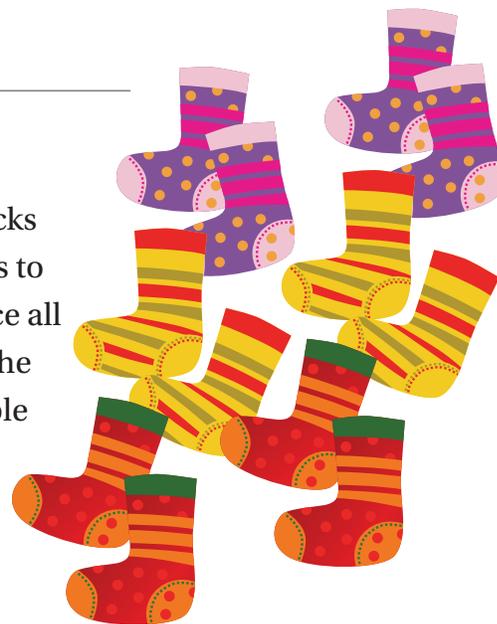
Place several hula hoops or circles of yarn on the floor in a zigzag pattern. Use more hoops or a more detailed pattern for older children. Show the children how to hop from hoop to hoop. As each child hops, have them say one thing for which they are thankful.



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### If I Only Had Some Socks . . .

Many charitable agencies need clothing at this time of year. Socks are usually among the items most needed. Challenge your class to collect socks to donate to an agency your church supports. Once all the socks are collected together, put them in a pile and gather the children in a circle around the pile. Pray a blessing for the people who will someday wear the socks.



# Jump into Worship–Drama Style with Elementary Students



Use summer as a time for children to explore worship with drama. This can be a method children use to tell God's story with a unique style.

## Prayer Pumpkin

### You will need:

- › A pumpkin (choose one as round as possible)
- › A marker
- › Poster paint

Use a pumpkin to help guide your prayers for different people around the world. Using the vertical lines on the pumpkin as longitude lines, sketch simple outlines of the continents on the pumpkin. Don't worry about how perfect they are—these are just a representation. Paint the continents and let dry.



In class each week, have a child choose one of the continents on your pumpkin globe. Talk a little about the continent including the names of some of the countries on that continent. Pray for the people who live on that continent. Be sure to pray for each continent at least once during the quarter.

## Pumpkin Prayer

Send home a copy of the prayer on page 7 of this supplement for each child. Children and families can use the prayer while carving pumpkins. Adults should supervise or do the carving depending on each child's age.



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# Youth Style:

## Finding Balance

**B**alance is tough. It's easy, especially for teens, to find themselves out of balance and frustrated with the tension this creates. Too often they find themselves over-committed to athletics, drama, studies, or social life and wonder how to ever get it all done. Use this devotion to encourage them to consider how to balance the conflicting demands of their lives.

Begin with a balance game. Choose from the following:

- » Walk across a 2 x 4 placed on stacked cement blocks
- » Stand on one foot and bend over to tie the shoe on the standing foot.
- » Outside: Use a tree stump or an old tire. How many can balance on the object?

Following the game, introduce a study of one of the balances in the Bible. Depending on your time frame, choose any of the following:

- » grace and works
- » mercy and justice
- » faith and reason
- » being in the world, not of the world

Using concordances, find and read Bible passages that apply to these balances. Talk through the following:

- » Where is the balance point between these two?
- » Think of your own life. Where do you go to extremes instead of striving for balance?
- » Who can help you keep a balance point in your life? Set up a way to be accountable to that person—include praying together and time to talk.

**End the time in prayer, asking for discernment to have greater balance in our walk with God.**



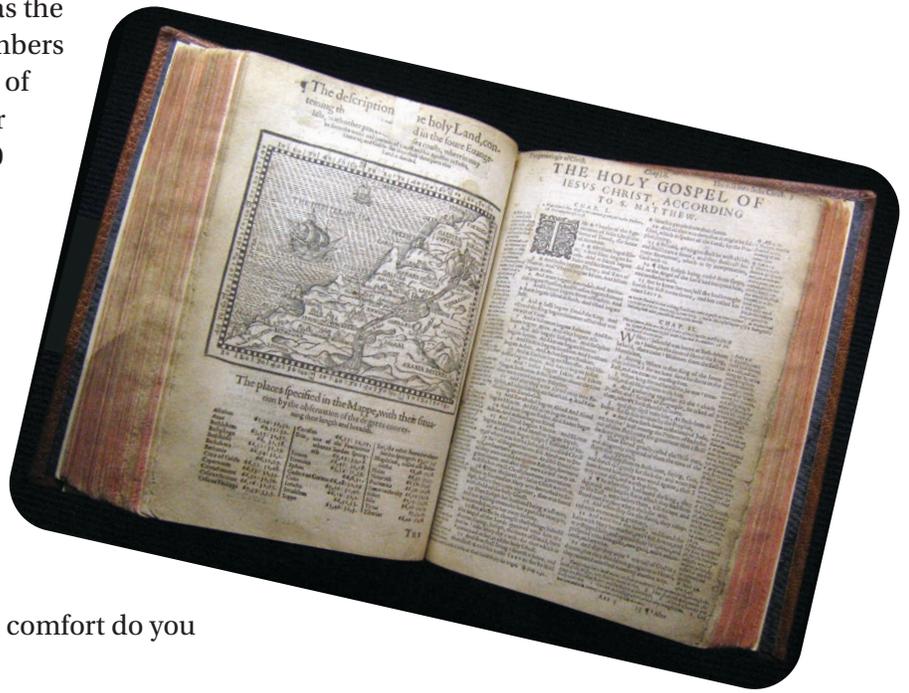
# TEACHER'S DEVOTIONAL

## A Look at *Commission* from the Geneva Bible

The Geneva Bible, originally printed in 1560, was the first English translation that included verse numbers as well as study aids. It is rooted in the theology of Calvin, Luther, Zwingli, and other reformers, for the general public. If you were a teacher in 1610 studying the Great Commission in the Geneva Bible, you might study this note:

**Matthew 28:20:** *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, [even] unto the end of the world. Amen.* (g) Forever: and this [refers to] the manner of the presence of his Spirit, by means [of which] he make[s] us partakers both of himself and of all his benefits, [even though he] is absent from us in body.

What do *forever* and *always* mean to you? What comfort do you have today that God is present with you now?



## FAMILY ACTIVITY

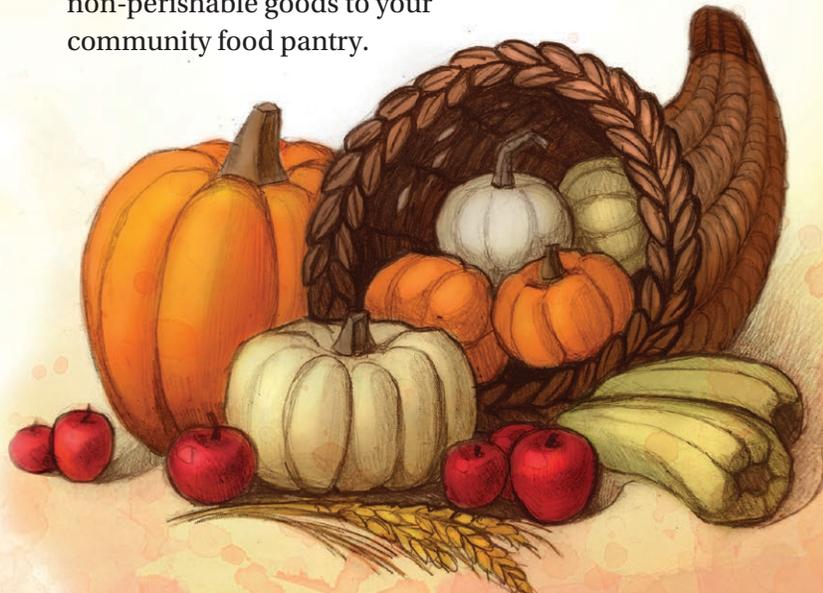
### Giving Thanks

Thanksgiving Day falls on November 25 this year. It's a time to remember God's blessings and offer thanks for all His gifts.

Days celebrating thanks are older than the first Thanksgiving with the Pilgrims. In Bible times, one of the Jewish festivals commanded by God is the Festival of Booths. It is an eight-day celebration during September or October to remember God's care during the 40 years of desert wanderings. Shelters or booths are built to represent the type of homes Israelites used while wandering the desert. The booths are decorated with hanging fruits and vegetables as a reminder of the good harvest God has provided.

For Thanksgiving this year, share God's blessings with your family and friends. Spend part of your mealtime

reading God's Word and saying prayers of thanks. Some possible Bible verses are Deuteronomy 16:15 and Psalm 105:1-4. Decorate with fruits and vegetables as a reminder of the blessings God has provided your family. If possible, share your blessings by bringing non-perishable goods to your community food pantry.



# Pumpkin Carving Prayer

Use as a family while carving pumpkins

Note: Adults should supervise or do the carving depending on each child's age.

Dear God,

Open my mind so I can learn about You; *(Cut off the top of the pumpkin.)*

Take away all my sin and forgive me for the wrong things I do; *(Clean out the inside.)*

Thank You for all You have done for me; *(Cut a nose in the shape of a cross.)*

Open my eyes so I will see Your love; *(Cut eyes shaped like hearts.)*

Open my mouth so I can tell others about You; *(Cut mouth in the shape of a smile.)*

Let Your Light Shine in all I say and do! Amen. *(Put a shining light inside the pumpkin.)*



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# Threads in the **ROYAL ROBE**

Scripture reveals to us who God is, what He requires of us, and how He shows His love to us in mighty saving acts of grace. We can never begin to know all there is to know of Him, but our gracious God is able to show us enough of Him in order to have life, health, and peace.

Through the written Word of God, the Holy Spirit teaches us all we need to know of the triune God. We learn what He desires to make known to us.

The Bible does not teach us in neat theological categories. Rather, God makes Himself known through accounts of His work in the lives of real people, through prophecies and prayers, doctrinal teaching, and wise sayings.

When we follow all these threads of truth, we see a pattern emerging—a royal robe woven from the gathered truths of Scripture adorns our King and displays His love.

To see God more clearly, we express what we learn from Scripture in a coherent way, known as the essentials of faith. The Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed both express the essentials of faith.

The great Reformation confessions of faith further laid out the teaching of Scripture in a

systematic way, weaving together the Golden Threads of Scripture, bringing forth the royal robe that glorifies Jesus our King. By studying them, we grow in our understanding of God. Such knowledge leads us to put on the robe of Christ by faith. This means that we take our place in union with Him, growing in love and obedience by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The essentials of faith are not all Scripture has to say about God, but they represent the Golden Threads around which the whole royal robe is woven. Under the heading of “Teacher Devotionals,” every Bible lesson in this curriculum is keyed to the Golden Threads it expresses. The Stray Threads section picks up additional ideas or notes the ways in which the Golden Threads may get distorted.

Believers in the Reformed tradition are a people who celebrate that God can be known because He has graciously made Himself known. A crucial part of our faithfulness is learning and studying the essentials that have been revealed. So, we offer these in hopes of enriching every Bible lesson, enabling you as a teacher to trace the threads of Christ's Royal Robe in the teachings of Scripture.

## **1 ESSENTIAL NUMBER ONE: The One True God is the Triune God of Grace—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—Whom Alone We Must Worship and Serve.**

In the Old Testament, we learn that the LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is the creator of the entire world and the constant redeemer through the mighty acts of the people Israel. In the New Testament, we see the LORD, Israel's God, actually is the Triune God, who reveals Himself to be the eternal Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He has entered into covenant faithfulness with His people and will not leave us or forsake us.

## **3 ESSENTIAL NUMBER THREE: Holy Scripture is the Word of God Written, Through Which, In the Power of the Holy Spirit, We Truly Meet the Triune God.**

One of the great achievements of the Reformation was the recovery of Scripture as our sole authoritative source for knowledge of God and its return to the ordinary people of God. The traditions of the church could be helpful in interpreting the Bible but must always remain beneath the written Word of God. The Reformers affirmed at the same time that what needs to be known about God from Scriptures can be known by ordinary people who engage in a plain reading of the Bible. The Bible is clear enough in its essential teaching for all who read with prayerful reliance on the Holy Spirit to speak through the Word.

## **4 ESSENTIAL NUMBER FOUR: The Triune God is Sovereign Over All.**

Our religion is not simply a human invention, nor is it subject to human whims for change and supposed corrections. We do not have the freedom to decide who we would like the Lord to be. God is, and He has made Himself know to us in Jesus Christ and the Scriptures. While what we may know of the triune God is true and reliable, we always recognize that we never know all there is to know about Him. The Lord God is high and holy, completely other, beyond our grasp and control, and splendid in His glory. God is moving history toward its appointed end. The triune God of grace is in control. He reigns. He alone is Judge. He alone is worthy of our praise. We never have dominion over Him. God alone reigns.

## **2 ESSENTIAL NUMBER TWO: The Eternal Son of God Came to Us as a Human Being in Jesus Christ.**

In the fullness of time, God the Son took up our humanity as He came to us as Jesus, the man from Nazareth. Jesus is both fully God and fully human. He is all that God has to say to us, in word and deed, about who He is and how He loves us. And Jesus is all we have to say to God, as the one man who lived a life of perfect obedience to Him, on our behalf. In Jesus' relationship with His Father, and in His promise of the Holy Spirit to dwell in us, we come to know that the one God is triune: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

## **5 ESSENTIAL NUMBER FIVE: Humanity Has Fallen Into Sin.**

The Scriptures teach us that, although God created us good, through our own willful choices, humanity sinned against Him. The sin of our first parents rocked and wracked the world with terrible consequences. Now, by nature, we are prone to suppress the truth and to choose against our God and our neighbors again and again. There is nothing we human beings do in this world that is not without the taint of our sin. We are helplessly lost in our sin. This means the death of ever hoping to get to the Father on our own. Such a realization is the beginning of crying out in repentance and faith for the rightness and goodness that only can come from the Lord Himself. Jesus, the eternal Son of God, who comes to us as a man, has enacted perfect obedience, free from sin, on our behalf.

# 6

## **ESSENTIAL NUMBER SIX: We are Made Right with God by Grace Alone Through Faith Alone.**

Our salvation from our sins and our sinfulness is all from Christ Jesus. We never can earn our way into God's favor, whether by our good works, zealous worship, or many prayers. The Father forgives our sins by the work of Jesus Christ alone. Christ's death alone takes away the guilt of our sin. Christ's faith and obedience alone, the living sign of His covenant faithfulness, comprise our reconciliation with God. He gives us Christ's righteousness. Our record before God is replaced with Jesus' record! When this happens, we believe in who Christ Jesus is and what He has accomplished. We confess that He is our Lord and Savior. But even this belief and confession is a gift of God, the result of the Holy Spirit's work inside us. Salvation is all of God. We simply rest in what He has done for us.

# 7

## **ESSENTIAL NUMBER SEVEN: Election: God Chose Us to Be His Children and Servants.**

God chose us to believe in Him now that we might spend the rest of our lives serving Him and telling others about Jesus. The essential teaching of election is the awareness that we do not make our way to the Father; He has come all the way down to where we are to claim us. Election, then, is not to a life of ease but to one of service. Those whom He calls, He sends to bring His message to a lost world. If we know Him, it is because He chose us. If He chose us, He sends us to tell others, "Believe the good news and discover your chosenness!"

# 8

## **ESSENTIAL NUMBER EIGHT: The Holy Spirit Makes Us More and More Like Jesus.**

Sanctification means "to make holy," and it refers to the work of the Holy Spirit to form Christ in us. For we not only receive a new record of righteousness in Christ, but we also receive a new nature. God places His own Spirit within us, and a wonderful series of benefits begins:

- ▶ The Holy Spirit unites us to Jesus Christ so that all that belongs to Him comes to belong to us (John 16:14-15).
- ▶ The Holy Spirit comes to dwell inside us, fashioning us more and more in the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29).
- ▶ The Holy Spirit opens our hearts and minds to the Scriptures so that we might be transformed by hearing the Word (John 14:26).
- ▶ The Holy Spirit prays within us, crying out to the Father for us and through us (Gal. 4:6).
- ▶ The Holy Spirit assures us that we are children of God (Rom. 8:16), and His presence is the guarantee of our salvation (Eph. 1:13).
- ▶ The Holy Spirit gives us the power to be faithful witnesses to Christ (Acts 1:8) and enables us to do the ministry and works of Jesus (see Matt. 10:1 and John 14:12).

Of course, the old, sinful nature still remains in us and, thus, the new and the old are in conflict. Christian growth involves a hard struggle. We can never do it on our own. We live in constant need of "the sanctifying work of the Spirit" (1 Pet. 1:2). The person of the Holy Spirit then moves us to live in obedience and empowers us to keep going even after we fail or when the way is difficult. His work will continue until we meet Jesus in heaven at last.

# 9

## **ESSENTIAL NUMBER NINE: We Are Called to A Life of Obedience.**

The people of God, Christ's Church, bring His Word and His love to a broken world. We are in the world, even though we do not belong to this world (John 17:16). We serve the world even though we are aliens and strangers here, passing through on our way to our heavenly homeland. Psalm 84 notes that those who "have set their hearts in pilgrimage" to the city of God cause the dry, desert lands to become a place of springs as they pass through. With the Holy Spirit prompting us and empowering us, with the grace of Jesus cleansing us, with the love of the Father beckoning us, we both gather for worship and move out in service to God. So, even though the church does not belong to the world, it strives to love the world as Christ did.